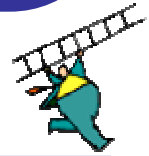


LADDERS Cards Tip Sheet

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Getting Started—Your 1st Facilitated ‘game’



Deal the cards and take turns answering the questions

One of the easiest and quickest ways to get started, especially if you are using the cards with a small group, is to play the “Interview Game”.

As a group, agree on the one topic of group practice that you will all try to describe to the best of your ability. You must all work on the same topic. It helps if this is something you have recently been working on.

Remove the title and description card from the pack. Shuffle the cards. Then deal the cards out among the group. Everyone should have at least one or two cards.

Now take turns answering the questions, performing to your peers around the table, as best you can. Go round the group as many times as you have cards.

It’s really key that the question gets answered—like an exam paper question—and not a different one! One of the temptations is to provide the information you have to hand and not to answer the question that has been asked. So the listeners need to check and provide feedback. The exercise is as much about fine-tuning skills in process as it is about providing content.

Did you know?

- The questions on the cards are all evidence based
- The questions come from the theory and practice of how good practice is spread and adopted
- The questions are very specific and designed in a particular way
- The questions are never quite as easy as you think they are!
- It’s good to respect copyright...

When is a good time to use them?

The purpose of the cards is to help individuals and teams find ways to accelerate the spread and adoption of good practice. They do this by fine tuning their communication skills, specifically the ways in which they are able to describe their good ideas and better practices.

So a really good time to use these cards and to play these games is when good practices have been generated and at the stage when you are intending for these to be spread to others. It is about now that everyone needs to hone their skills at describing just what it is they are doing well and to be able to describe it in a way that makes sense to the potential adopters. That is what you are aiming to achieve.

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Sorting through

This exercise is a good one if you have limited time and there is a team all working on the same topic and you need to gather as much information as possible about your area of good practice in a way that will benefit potential adopters.

Make sure you have agreed on the focus of your discussions before you continue with the exercise. What will be the area of good practice that you will be paying attention to? Put the title and description card to one side and shuffle the rest of the pack. Deal the cards out amongst the team so everyone has an equal number.

Each team member will then answer the questions posed on the cards by writing them down. Give everyone 5-10 minutes to do this. This information can then be collated by the team leader. You can then go round the table and gather a summary of what has been written down and discuss any questions that some team members have had difficulty in answering.



The Set up

OK, so this one might not sound very nice and you may prefer to warn your presenters before you “set them up”! If you have speakers at a workshop giving a short presentation on a topic of good practice you can provide each member of the audience with a card (one way might be to put a card under each chair and at a time in the session suggest they look for it, or “set up” a few people with cards before hand...) and these people then ask the presenter the question on the card.

This becomes a learning exercise for both the speaker and the audience. This is an exercise that needs to be carried out in a safe environment and one where you don’t stress out the presenter too much! It is a good test of whether the good idea is ready to be “pushed” onto an audience and whether the audience is ready to adopt what is being proposed.

“The ladder of success is best climbed by stepping on the rungs of opportunity”

Ayn Rand

Check through

If you are on your own, or equally this works well if you are working as a team, you can use the cards to check how well you know your stuff. A good time to do this is before you present your work at a conference, before you end a project, as part of developing a spread plan or just checking whether you think it will be adopted by others.

Work your way through the pack, one card at a time, checking how well you can answer the questions. This time it is worth making notes for the answer to each question. You can do this on a flipchart or if you are on your own, in a notebook.

This process will help you feel an empathy with the potential adopters of your work. You will also get a very good idea of how much more work you may, or may not, still need to do to develop your “description” and communication skills regarding your good practice.



Build the Classic Ladder

You can carry out this exercise either on your own or as a team. Remove the title card and the description card. Shuffle the rest of the pack. Now take each card and flip through them quite quickly, sorting them into two piles. On one pile stack those you feel you can answer relatively easily and on the other pile put those you think you can't yet answer or will need help in doing so.

Arrange the first pile in a long line—like a ladder. Check your way through each of these “easy-to-answer” questions, proving that you can indeed answer them.

Now attend to the other stack. Arrange these in a long line and then work your way through this list by picking up a card, answering the question posed and when you have done so, then putting it on the line formed by the first pile. What you are doing is forming a “ladder” reaching out to your potential adopters. And this is how the game initially came to be named!



Pick 'n Perform

This one always reminds me of the “Chance” card in Monopoly... This game is good if you have a team of anywhere from 2 upwards and need to share a deck of cards.

Firstly you need to agree the area of good practice that you wish to describe. This could be the same one that you will all be talking about, or you could each be describing a different one. You must agree this before starting the next step.

Remove the title page and description card. Shuffle the rest of the pack. Put them in the centre of the table, face down. Take turns to draw a card and carry out the action that is suggested on the card. Answer the question that is posed.

It is important to answer the question with as much detail and accuracy as possible. You are performing to the rest of your peers.

“Courage is the ladder on which all other virtues mount.”

***Carol Booth
Luce***

Your own version?

There is no right or wrong way to use the cards. The more you use them we know you will develop games and techniques of your own. Please email us and let us know your techniques so we can share them with others.

We'll send either a free pack of Ladders Cards, or a book, to anyone who submits a new and useful technique of how to use the cards.

Send your ideas to contact@www.sfassociates.biz



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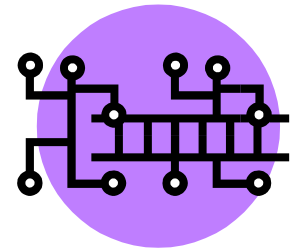
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NEED MORE CARDS?

You will find three packs of cards inside every “Keys & Links and Ladders—Games for accelerating the spread of good practice” training pack. This training kit has two types of game in it. You will find it useful in many different circumstances.

If you would like only the cards, then contact us by email and place an order. These are available for £5.00 / \$10.00 per pack, plus taxes and postage. We don’t advertise these packs on our website as their availability for sale is dependent on stocks so please contact us.



Where did the “Ladders” name come from?

Good question that I’ve been asked many times.

The prototype set of cards was being tested with a number of teams in an Improvement Collaborative and one of the teams started to use them in a way that looked a little like the “Classic Ladder” style. They were working through the questions, laying out two columns of cards; one represented the questions they could easily answer and the other, those they couldn’t. Then they worked on the pile of cards with which they were having difficulty and one by one as they answered them they laid them out onto the “easy” column so they built a “Ladder” from themselves across to their potential adopters. Well, that was how they explained to me they were doing and it made sense to me at the time.



I liked the idea of building a bridge to adopters, of taking small steps at a time. This was very much like the PDSA—Plan-Do-Study-Act improvement cycles that many teams were familiar with and also using. Ladders also reminded, like much of the clip art used in this Tip Sheet, of reaching up for something that might be out of sight or a bit difficult. Just like the spread and adoption of better practice!

Sarah