

TECHNO BAG EXERCISE

Purpose:

To have workshop participants experience what it is like to not know the names of technology based items because they have not had any early exposure to them. Often this exercise can be easily done by men and not so easily by women further illustrating the lack of exposure women have to technology tools and supplies.

Prepare materials:

In zip lock bags place one of each of the following items. These items and many others are available at any electronics store:

- Piece of fiber optic
- Capacitor
- Transistor
- Resistor
- Telephone jack
- Piece of coaxial cable
- Coaxial cable connector
- Female wire clamp
- Flexible computer cable ribbon
- Ear plug (these are items to confuse them!)
- High tech tooth pick (these are items to confuse them!)
- Zip tie
- Rubber grommet
- Anything small related to technology that most people don't know the names of

Introduce exercise:

One of the root causes for the lack of participation and completion of students in nontraditional CTE programs is a lack of early exposure to many of these fields. This lack of exposure can often lead to a student's lack of interest due to a lack of knowledge or even fear of the career area due to a lack of background.

Only introduce the exercise briefly as much of what the exercise can illustrate will become apparent after it is completed.

Give instructions:

Give a bag to small groups (three is ideal) and ask them to name each of the items in the bag and give them about 5 minutes. Encourage lots of sharing among the group but none between groups. Walk around the room and observe and listen carefully. Note peoples frustrations, who knows the names of the items easily, and the comments made to one another.

Process the exercise:

When it appears that each of the groups have completed the naming of the items ask the group to reflect on the process they used to do this and how they felt about it. Were they frustrated, discouraged, embarrassed that they didn't know the names – or – proud, powerful and felt good about themselves if they did. Have them imagine a teenager enrolling in a nontraditional CTE program where they are immediately exposed to things – tools, equipment, materials – that they are unfamiliar potentially surrounded by students of the opposite sex who are already knowledgeable about these things. Have the group explore how students who are considering participating in a nontraditional CTE program but lack much exposure to the field might access some basic knowledge before enrolling to assist them in feeling comfortable to stay.

Once you have processed the experience – don't forget to identify the names of the items and their uses– this can be fun to hear the names some people give the items in the bag!