**Team Learning**

**Definition:** Team learning focuses on the abilities of a group working together. It involves the interaction of people learning from each other as well as from the task at hand. The learning takes place through the transfer of skills by observing others in action, collective problem-solving and experimentation, questioning assumptions and reviewing outcomes as a group.

**Team Learning helps to:**

- Share prior skills, knowledge and experience enhancing the learning experience for the team.
- Force participants to present, promote and negotiate their views leading to better retention.
- Develop open, effective communications within the organisation as individuals learn the value of sharing info with colleagues.
- Create co-operative working practices and build better links within organisations.
- Reveal new insight about colleagues
- Build trust and create a supportive environment allowing participants the confidence to explore beyond their perceived limitations.
- Generate competition between teams, which motivates individuals to work harder and learn more.
- Allow team members direct the learning within the group making the training more enjoyable, relevant and effective.

**Making the most of Team Learning:**

- Mix normal work teams up. Establish cross-departmental teams or those made up of employees from all levels of the organisation. The more skills and experiences individuals can bring to the group, the more effective the learning will be.
- Make the environment as informal as possible. Using only first names and changing out of normal workplace clothes can remove work place hierarchy. This will give participants more confidence in offering their own opinions. If practical, hold the activity away from the workplace to a neutral location.
- Rotate leadership in the teams. This allows everyone in the team a chance to have his or her say. Quieter, less assertive member may feel over shadowed otherwise.
- Ask each team to make notes to capture the learning generated through the activity. These can
then be shared with all the participants after the event.

- Whatever the activity, be it bridge building or orienteering, set specific tasks so the team has a goal to work towards and their success can be measured. This will help install a sense of achievement.

- Keep the learning going. After a set time ask participants to share how their working lives have changed following the activity and what they'd still like to improve on. Follow up with more team learning on a regular basis looking at the areas identified from participants.

**Useful websites:**
http://www.simulations.co.uk/team.htm
http://www.ex.ac.uk/middevon/team%20learning.html
http://www.innovativeteambuilding.co.uk/pages/articles/benefits.htm
http://www.ex.ac.uk/middevon/team%20learning.html
http://www.trainingzone.co.uk and search for “team learning”