



## ALP Certification Curriculum



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### Introduction to ALP

The Outdoor Pursuits Adventure Leadership and Play (ALP) Seminar and Certification is a text-based small-group teambuilding facilitation certification. Additional content and a variety of options including all online live interaction (Zoom or Teams) and face-to-face small group activities can be arranged at Outdoor Pursuits to complete the experience for students, faculty and staff.

For those who are new to small group facilitation, the ALP provides an introduction and overview while for experienced facilitators, ALP can provide an opportunity to share and learn new activities and ideas. While ALP is designed for the MSU Denver community, the skills, knowledge and techniques are transferable to other settings.

### Ground Rules

- Challenge by choice
- Respect for others
- Emotional safety
- Physical safety
- Title IX

The Outdoor Pursuits (OP) ALP Seminar provides students, faculty and staff of MSU Denver opportunities to learn about teambuilding and acquire skills so they can facilitate groups. These are train-the-trainer events intended to enrich the community by providing more opportunities for developing effective work groups.

Student participants benefit additionally by practicing public speaking, leading groups, planning events, increasing skill sets and by adding the certification to their resumes.

In general, the ALP program provides teambuilding and leadership development facilitation for students, faculty and staff of MSU Denver.



## **ALP focuses on teambuilding and leadership in three main areas:**

- OA student staff development – creating opportunities for staff seeking facilitation skills in support of academic and professional success
- Professional Development – professional and student staff of offices and programs within Auraria institutions seeking to develop into teams
- Student Groups – Organizations and their members such as student government organizations and clubs interested in accelerating their formation into teams

Defining teambuilding on the Auraria Campus – conducting activities intended to accelerate the process of groups becoming teams and assisting in the assimilation of members into the team.

## **How do we do it?**

ALP builds teams by facilitating physical and cognitive problem-solving activities. These activities typically use simple props and scenarios to represent complex interpersonal workplace situations. Activities promote and demonstrate valuable practices, roles and sensitivities essential to successful performance of team members. Our activities are participative and based on scenario and experiential learning theories. These activities also help to facilitate multiple learning styles. We endeavor to engage auditory, visual, kinesthetic, and tactile learning modalities within the array of teambuilding activities included in an experience.

## **Processing**

Most activities are followed by guided discussion designed to highlight the lessons learned from the activity and show how these might apply to working with the team. At a minimum, processing provides participants an opportunity to express themselves and share their thoughts.

## **ALP Learning Outcomes**

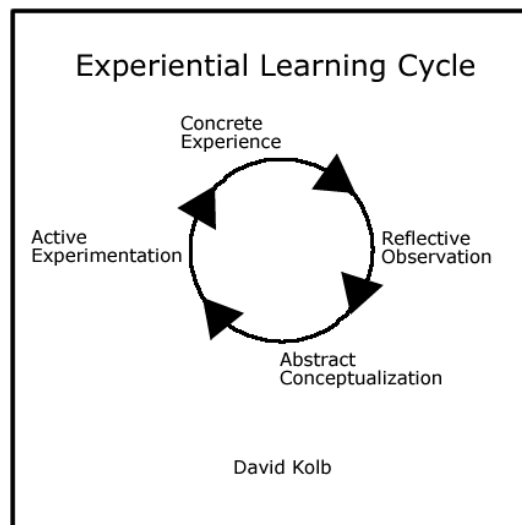
- Successful Learners will be able to:
- Identify campus locations well suited to teambuilding activities
- Utilize ALP resources to plan a teambuilding event
- Utilize ALP resources to conduct ice breakers and teambuilding activities
- Utilize ALP resources to solicit feedback on activities
- Utilize ALP resources to inform clients of risk
- Utilize ALP waiver to develop their own waiver
- Understand the importance of participant safety
- Utilize ALP webliography to further research topics
- Utilize ALP resources to conduct processing discussions

## Learners will be exposed to:

- Experiential learning theory
- Assessment practices
- Exploration of facilitation and interpersonal styles
- Learners will participate in scenario-based learning opportunities
- Each will give and receive feedback
- ALP facilitation staff will provide feedback

## Course Design - Experiential Learning

- This seminar design is based mostly in the experiential learning model presented by Kolb and Lewin:



- Experiential learning is learning by doing. It is effective in formal learning environments when learners are guided through each of the stages of the cycle. Learners should be encouraged to engage in reflection between experiences. This seminar will include opportunities for participants to engage in each of the stages through online and small group participation.

## Definitions

- Assessment – Simply stated, assessment is a way of finding out how things are going – are we doing what is needed and are we doing it right? More importantly, assessment at ALP creates practices that allow for planning, development and communication. Find more on ALP assessment in the Assessment chapter.
- Challenge by Choice (C2C) - Our clients are invited to participate in each challenge or activity. Each is free to choose not to participate actively (i.e. egress) for any reason (no reason need be given). The success of each activity is dependent on the premise that everyone is free to join in or sit out. Ask those who opt out to observe so they might contribute to the post activity discussion.
- Cognitive Challenges – These activities require mental faculties such as judgment, knowledge, reflection and deduction. There may be cognitive components to physical activities.
- Experiential Learning - Learning from place-based experience, action and doing is experiential learning. Elements of observing, doing, reflecting, receiving corrective input, practice and, then, more doing are included. Experiential learners often increase their knowledge and skill through additional reflection and teaching others.
- Facilitator – In the context of teambuilding, this person brings together resources that allow people to participate in initiative, trust building or icebreaker activities. This person's role may vary but the word facilitator implies that we create an environment in which others may participate.
- Framing - Creating a scenario or frame of reference for an activity that helps the group understand the relevance of the activity and transfer the new learning to real life situations.



## **Definitions (continued)**

- Group Dynamic – Describes how individuals within a group interact with one another. Often not well defined or concrete and based on individual perception. Some may feel the dynamic was good while others may disagree. By performing teambuilding activities, we hope to have an affect the group’s dynamic.
- Icebreakers – Most often, icebreakers are fun and informative activities designed to help people get acquainted. They serve to accelerate formation of team by helping people learn each another’s names, get people chatting and find things in common.
- Leadership – Theories abound but ultimately, leadership boils down to moving people to take action or behave in certain ways. Examples include leading by example, inspiring others to act, supporting others so they may act.
- Name Games – Within the family of icebreakers, name games are interactive games designed to help people learn the names of other team members.
- Processing – Follow most activities, we facilitate guided discussion related to an experience. Much of the benefit of performing teambuilding activities comes from talking about the experience. Adult learners, in particular, benefit from and want to participate in such talk. Often, an expectation of a teambuilding facilitator is that she facilitates some sort of processing with participants.



- Risk – As facilitators, we do everything we can to reduce risk of injury to learners. The perception of risk can be used to help accomplish teambuilding outcomes, but real risk of serious injury should not be part of our teambuilding experience.
- Safety – Every time we agree to perform in a facilitative role, we accept responsibility for our learner’s emotional and physical safety. Safety is our number one concern and we take whatever measures are appropriate to assure the safety of everyone involved, including us. Safety practices include increasing awareness (warning and coaching) spotting, selection of suitable location, environmental concerns, proper equipment selection and equipment maintenance and assuring that our learner’s nutrition and hydration needs are met.
- Teambuilding – Conducting activities designed to facilitate and accelerate the process of individuals’ assimilation into and formation of effective work groups.

## Risk and Safety

Risk management is the process of acting or taking steps to reduce the exposure of staff and programs to financial loss associated with legal liability.

Steps include:

- Employing appropriate safety practices
- Utilizing liability release forms
- Informing Participants of risk and specific injuries associates with each activity
- While risk management (liability) is an important concern, it is safety that we really must focus on as facilitators. Liability is a legal term focused on assigning responsibility and arranging for financial compensation in the case of injury. Safety, on the other hand, is a focus and a set of practices bent on preventing injury to all who participate. Our discussion of safety includes both physical and emotional safety.

## Safety and Environment



For participants to enjoy an activity and gain the most value from the experience it must be safe. Assuring safety includes taking steps to prevent injury. Actions Include

- Careful Planning
- Maintaining Equipment
- Identifying risks
- Setting and enforcing ground rules
- Explaining dangers
- Using spotters
- Monitoring activities
- Leading by example
- Providing safety equipment
- Providing or requiring items to mitigate exposure to environmental factors. These may include water, food, sunscreen, insect repellent, proper clothing and adequate footwear.

As programmers and facilitators, we spend far more time on safety than we do on liability issues. We check the liability practices off the "to do" list but practice safety techniques throughout the duration of each experience.

## Assessment



Teambuilding events require planning, preparation and review to be successful. Included in the process are three types of assessment - **pre-assessment, formative evaluation and summative evaluation.**

Whenever we solicit feedback, it is key that we respect the effort of those who respond by carefully considering the information and opinions provided, keeping in mind that we need not act on every piece of feedback.

Team members can view giving and receiving feedback as risky. A positive outcome from a teambuilding experience might include creating an environment and culture focused on giving and receiving feedback. Encouraging an environment where giving and receiving feedback is viewed as a positive part of our work and facilitation experience. This can be a delicate practice and staff and participants can deter the progress of the team by being carelessness or disrespectful of colleagues. Conducted properly, feedback contributes to both personal and team success and organizational quality.

**Pre-assessment** - Is there a need and can we meet it? Included in pre-assessment is needs assessment. We ask the question "is there a need to do teambuilding?" Often significant resources are required to engage in teambuilding events so, hopefully, some careful thought and consideration goes into deciding what training is important. At ALP, we accept that if a group is contacting us they have already identified a need so in that case we do not conduct an additional needs assessment.

After we decide a teambuilding event is appropriate and needed, it is the facilitator's responsibility, during pre-assessment, to establish that we can meet the needs of the group before moving forward with planning and event development.

Prior to moving into the planning stages of any training, it is important to understand where group members are relative to the content of the training (e.g. beginners or advanced). If the training includes teambuilding, the facilitator needs to understand how the group is currently functioning and where they are in the stages of development. Are they brand new? Been working together for a long time? Are there new members? Are they embarking on a new challenge?

# **A**dventure **L**eadership & **P**lay

## **Examples of questions you might keep in mind include:**

- What are the planned outcomes?
- Is this a brand-new group or have they been working together for a long time?
- Has the group done other teambuilding activities?
- Who is participating (i.e. bosses and subordinates together)?
- How many will be participating?
- What accessibility issues may direct development?
- Are group representatives aware of any specific issues they would like the activities to address?

## **Based on what you learn during pre-assessment you can decide:**

- Does this exceed the scope of your program? Does it exceed your skill level?
- Does it exceed your interest level?
- Can you meet the expectations of the group?
- Do you have the equipment to work with this group? Can you accommodate all members of the group?
- Can the facilities available to you accommodate this group?

**Formative Evaluation** - If you agree to work the event, formative evaluation occurs at various intervals during the planning and conducting of the event. It provides the leadership team members with opportunities to provide feedback to one another, solicit input from clients and opportunities for participants to express their views, reactions and responses.







### **Formative Evaluation** (continued)

While planning and developing activities and content, formal and informal formative evaluation provides event staff opportunities to give and receive feedback. This is facilitated by scheduling formal group feedback times, one-on-one meetings and creating email groups, Teams or text groups to facilitate feedback.

Participating in formative feedback helps to assure that work is progressing, efforts are aligned with planned outcomes, scope is maintained, and team members are not duplicating one another's work.

**Summative Evaluation** - After the event: Summative evaluation describes bringing all the events experiences and evaluations together. It often includes participant and facilitator post event evaluations, evaluation of development process. Even an evaluation of the evaluation process might be included.

Soliciting feedback from participants is the most common type of event evaluation. Participants will expect to have that opportunity. At ALP, we recommend leaders inform the group of the type of feedback they will be asked for during introductions.

Feedback requests often include a modified Likert scale but should also include open-ended prompts to encourage written feedback. OP can provide examples of feedback forms. You may choose to modify or create your own form based on specific needs.

Summative evaluation asks; was the room too cold or hot? What did you learn? And, did the activity have the desired results? Were new practices implemented. So, summative evaluation could include follow-up questions, interviews or focus groups months or even years later. In fact, these longitudinal evaluations have the added value of reminding the learner of the events and gives them a chance to reflect again on the experience – actually increasing the value of the experience.

**Search Kirkpatrick on evaluation for more!**





## Event planning

Once we know we are going to do a teambuilding activity, it is time to start planning. For bigger events, a formal planning process might be required with a timeline and a series of deadlines. Use the strategy or software package that works best for you.

There are three types of questions that fit into event planning. Some you ask yourself and co-facilitators, others you ask your client(s)

### Planning Considerations



#### Qualitative:

These are desired characteristics and participant outcomes of the event.

#### Examples

What does the group representative want to see members get from the activity?

What is the expectation for quality? Are expectations realistic?

#### Quantitative:

These are things we can measure and count.

#### Examples

What are your staff to participant ratios?

How many participants are going to be involved?

How much time is allotted for the event?

How many widgets do we need to do this activity with this group?

How big a space is needed?

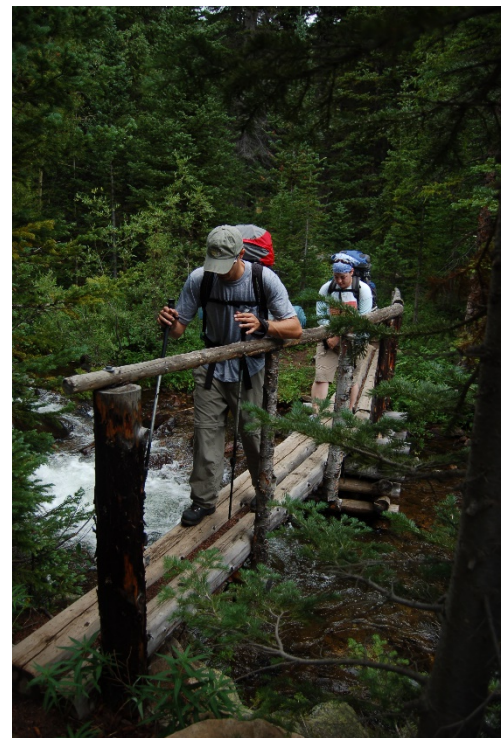
#### Logistical:

This generates the "to do" list that supports the activities aimed at the qualitative and quantitative outcomes.

#### Examples

Do we go outside?

How far is the venue from OA? What are our transportation needs? Do we provide refreshments?





## There Are Tasks Along the Way:

Make appropriate reservations Recruit staff

Arrange for parking Address any access issues

Check that the gear is available and in working order Get your liability waivers signed, if need be  
Send invitations

Notify maintenance crews (you don't want the sprinklers to come on!)

Schedule leadership team meetings

Your event is unique - there may be other things to do... Please click for the Planning and interview support document

## ALP Certification Curriculum - Ice Breakers

ALP Ice Breakers are fun and informative activities designed to help people get acquainted. They serve to accelerate formation of teams by helping people learn each other's names, get people chatting and find things in common.

Name-games and get-to-know icebreakers are indispensable when working with newly formed groups. On the other hand, they are a waste of time with groups that have been together and know one another.





## Warm-up Activities

Although icebreakers also help to warm up the group, often, additional specific warm-up activities are valuable and should be included in the plan. These include activities that warm and stretch the muscles and help people ramp up to greater challenges. Many teambuilding activities can be used to warm-up the group.

Here is a list of icebreakers you can find in the Resources:

- Autographs! Secret Identity Introducing!
- Iceberg | Iceberg hand-out
- ALP Certification Curriculum - Teambuilding Activities



## Initiatives and Trust Building

Teambuilding Activities are often broken into two main activity groups.

### Initiatives

These activities require the group to work together to find a solution to a problem or reach a well-defined goal. The props and equipment are simple, and solutions range from simple to complex. The key is that the activity cannot be performed, nor the goal reached without group members working together. Examples include bullring and chasm crossing.



## Initiatives and Trust Building (continued)

### Trust Building

Activities designed to require members of a group to rely on one another, often the activity is perceived as high risk. Examples include trust falls, willow in the wind and leading blindfolded participants.

### Here's a list of teambuilding activities found in the Resources:

- Willow in the Wind Acid River
- Can Do It
- Chasm Crossing
- Marble-tubes
- Bull Ring

Each resource includes a description of one of these activities. The pages can stand alone as a resource for that particular activity. You will find a copy of each of these descriptions within the teambuilding loaner kits.

### Here is what is included in the Resources:

- Activity Name Equipment Description
- Directions for Participants Rules
- Coaching Tips Processing Tips Considerations Safety
- Use each page as a hands-on resource to guide you through the process of facilitating an activity until you have it down

### ALP Certification Curriculum - ALP Kits

The gear required to conduct each activity is included in the portable "ALP Kit".

Kits are inventoried each time they are loaned out and each time they are returned to assure everything you need is included.

### Additional equipment is also available including:

- Acid River
- Add-a-Tube A-Maze-U
- And many more activities are available at the Outdoor Pursuits Cents!

