

Activity: Labour Spectrum



TIME ESTIMATE
15-25 minutes



MATERIALS

Sheets of paper and writing materials for all participants; a whiteboard or projector (or printed handouts)

PURPOSE

To identify and recognize the different lived experiences of work amongst peers through active listening and effective questioning.

DESCRIPTION

This activity will have participants reflect on their past experiences of work and learn from others through an interview format discussion. Ideally, the classroom set-up will have an open area (ie. in front of the classroom) and either a whiteboard or projector (or printed handouts with prompts on page 2) to disperse interview questions to the participants.

STEPS

- 1 Instruct participants to arrange themselves in a line based on the age of when they started their first paid job with the youngest person at one end of the line and the oldest at the other end.
- 2 Going from the youngest age, to the oldest, have students talk about their first job in a sentence, explicitly stating their age.
 - Example: "My first job was when I was 16, and I worked as a cashier at the Superstore near my house."
- 3 Pair participants up, starting with the person at the ends of the spectrum, and working down the line until everyone is matched. If the group size is more than 12, group the pairs together to form groups of four. Tell participants to interview one another about their working history, taking notes of the person's response to report back to the group.
- 4 Disperse or display the prompts (on page 2) either on a whiteboard at the front of the class, through printouts or digitally. Facilitators are encouraged to come up with your prompts.
- 5 Debrief with the classroom, asking each group to share brief, notable takeaways from their conversation (1 min per group).
- 6 After each group has shared, use the following questions to guide discussion or come up with your own questions based on the themes of what each group shared.
 - Did access to transportation play a large role in being able to work?
 - What was the motivation for taking on these jobs?
 - What kinds of jobs were considered 'work'?
 - Did a trend emerge? (e.g. service-work, manual labour (considered "unskilled jobs"))
 - Were the jobs challenging? (physically, mentally, emotionally)

PROMPTS

- How would you categorize the job? (ie. manual labour, desk job, etc)
- How did you get the job? (ie. family, friends, referral)
- What did you wear at the job? (ie. uniform, casual)
- How did you get to and from your workplace?
- What was the environment like?
- What did you do with your paycheck? (ie. school, savings, movies)
- Were there opportunities for growth in this position?
- When did you leave the job and why?
- How has this job differed from subsequent jobs?

ASSESSMENT: WRITTEN REFLECTION

Write a ~3 paragraph reflection on the experience, using the “What? So What? Now What?” Model, reflective model was researched and [developed by Rolfe et al. in 2001](#) and has also been attributed to Henri Lipmanowicz and Keith McCandless, the creators of [Liberating Structures](#).

[This post](#) by Gustavo Razzetti, of the Liberationist, provides a good overview of the reflection format:

- What: Understanding the event
- So What: Make sense of the facts and their implications
- Now What: Identify course of action or new solutions based on the reflection

These reflections can be picked up at the end of the class as an ‘exit ticket’, where learners submit their short reflection before leaving the class or workshop.

NOTES: