



Novice - Ninja

What is it for?

.....
A way of identifying skills in a group.

Time & People

.....
20 - 30 minutes
15 - 50 people

Materials

.....
Blank A5 paper in two colours
Pen/pencil per person
Bell/ringer/music

Source

.....
Marc Hudson askfortheworld.net

And...

.....
You can also use this in smaller groups around a specific action (eg organising a workshop, writing a report, making a website). Have people sit in groups of three and make a list of all the skills that are needed to make that happen. Get them to prioritise those skills in a rough ranking of essential, needed in most circumstances, nice to have.

Get them to write those down on the left side of a self-audit assessment sheet, with four columns relating to novice - practitioner - expert - ninja. Then get them to rate themselves on those skills, all on the same sheet. They will quickly see what they have and what is lacking.

Give each individual two sheets of paper and a pen. Ask them to write down something they are good at on the white paper, and something they would LIKE to be good at on the coloured paper. Ask them to hold up their sheets of paper and walk around seeing if anyone gets a match (suggest they swap contact details).

Have everyone line up, shoulder to shoulder. With enough space for them to all step forward four paces. They are standing on the 'Don't know' line.

Introduce the other lines:

- Novice
- Practitioner
- Expert
- Ninja

Make sure people are clear that this activity is NOT about judgement or advancing their skills. Sometimes we are happy with being a novice or practitioner and don't want to spend the time and energy advancing those skills.

Encourage honesty. Don't boast, and don't be falsely modest - it doesn't help the rest of us. The more truthful you are, the more everyone benefits.

Try an example, eg changing a bicycle tyre. Ask people to either stay where they are if they don't know how to do that, or step forward one pace to novice, two paces to practitioner, three paces to expert, four paces to ninja.

Ask about whatever skills are appropriate to the group. Can use the skills written on the white, then coloured sheets. In a smaller group, can ask the ninjas/experts how they developed their skills. Also point out, that the person most likely to be able to help novices is not the ninjas, it's probably the person just one step ahead.

Finish by either reflecting on the skills in the room and what the activity revealed, or do the follow-up activity described under the heading And...