

# Framing Activities

The basic framework for the Successful Learning Community activity process is:

- The frame (or brief)
- The activity (or experience)
- And the debrief (or processing of the experience)
  - Which leads into the next frame, activity, debrief, and so on

Framing an activity is the art of setting the activity up so that participants become engaged and get out of the activity the things that you want them to get. The activity is what it is, and the debrief is the opportunity help participants get the most out of the experience and cement their learning.

Framing is an important component in the process of helping a group make progress toward their goal or learning target.

**Framing (or Briefing) includes:**

- A description of the activity
  - Sometimes it is useful and engaging to use a story or metaphor to frontload an experience. I find that small children and adults often enjoy a good metaphor. I have learned the hard way that adolescents often get stuck on the details of the metaphor and spend more time trying to find loopholes than on solving the problem. I generally do not use metaphors with adolescents anymore. It depends on the group.
- Rules for the activity
  - Be specific. Incomplete rules can water down an activity to the point that the participants don't get out of it the concept that you want them to get.
  - Often I will let it go, but sometimes, when I forget a rule, I stop the activity and add it. This usually results in temporarily unhappy participants, but can make for a great debrief on rule changes and how they occur in life and how that makes you feel and how you deal with them.
  - Inserting handicaps into a frame can help participants get more out of it. For more info, see the "handicaps" section on the website.
- A discussion of safety concerns
  - I review safety concerns for every activity. Often I start by asking the group about safety concerns that they might have after I explain the rules. It gets them thinking and they usually identify all of the concerns that I would identify.
- Questions and answers if appropriate
  - I generally will not answer any questions while I am explaining an activity. I tell group members to hold questions to the end because I usually do a good enough job that if they pay attention, all of their questions will be answered.