

An Introduction to Labyrinths

This is a workshop for teachers. Use this workshop if you have no previous labyrinth experience, and if your staff members have no previous labyrinth experience. It could also be used to introduce students to the world of labyrinths.

It is largely experiential, and is designed as an introduction to the labyrinth and its construction, to give a labyrinth walking experience, and to provide an opportunity for reflection on that experience.

Essential questions

- what is a labyrinth?
- how is a labyrinth used?
- how is a labyrinth constructed?
- what is a labyrinth's potential?

Preparation

- handouts for each participant
- selection of a temporary labyrinth construction site, eg auditorium or oval, paved area, natural environment,...
- materials for labyrinth construction, eg chalk, rope, sand, line-marking spray paint, sticks,...

Activity sequence

PREPARING TO CONSTRUCT A LABYRINTH

3 Words (3 mins)

Provide each participant with a post-it note.

Invite them individually to write 3 words that come to mind when they hear the word "labyrinth".

In groups of 3 or 4 share words, gathering a collective sense of perceptions and knowledge.

What is a labyrinth? (5 mins)

Distribute a copy of the Handout: The Classic Labyrinth to each participant.

Allow a few moments for observations. Then invite brainstorming of observed characteristics.

Review the listed characteristics against the checklist (see Resources)

How is a labyrinth used? (5 mins)

The classic labyrinth handout can be used to take a "finger" walk.

Take a few moments to quieten the group: eyes gently closed, focus on breathing.

Open eyes, and mindfully walk, using a non-dominant finger to travel the path into the centre

Resources needed

Post-it notes and textas

Handout: The Classic Labyrinth
Checklist: a single path, circuitous, one way in and same way out. It is NOT a maze.(a labyrinth is to find your way, a maze is to lose your way)

and out again.

How is a labyrinth constructed?

Part 1 (10 mins)

Provide a copy of the Handout: Seed Pattern for each participant.
Allow time for participants to practice drawing a classic labyrinth. Encourage them to try different sizes and to take note of where to position the starting point in relation to the size of paper.

Part 2 (15 mins)

Move outdoors or to an auditorium.
Work in groups of 2-4.
Each group follows the seed pattern to create a labyrinth using the materials provided and ensuring that their completed labyrinth will be large enough to walk by foot.

PREPARING TO WALK A LABYRINTH

(20 mins)

Gather participants into one group and distribute the Handout: How to Walk a Labyrinth, and Guidelines for Walking a Labyrinth.
Allow time for reading and check for questions.
Invite participants to walk, leaving 10-15 seconds between walkers. Ask them to stand somewhere quietly outside the perimeter of the labyrinth until the last walker is finished.
When each group is ready, speak a few words of closure

What did we notice? (15 mins)

Gather in a circle, sitting or standing.
Invite a brief sharing of thoughts, feelings, awarenesses, noticings, insights (be aware that some may not wish to share, that's OK)
Do a quick brainstorm of ways the labyrinth could be used within the life of the school, classes, groups and individually.

Thank everyone for their participation!

Handout: Seed Pattern
Chart paper, or recycled paper

Materials to mark out labyrinths, eg
chalk, rope, sand, sticks, line-
marking spray paint, masking tape,
bird seed, scarfs,...

Handout:
How to walk a Labyrinth
Guidelines for walking a Labyrinth

Words of closure: eg “may this path
continue to bring insights and
awarenesses as you travel life’s
journey” or words of your choice