

## Lesson 1: Course Introduction

### Introduction

This lesson is designed for the three-day course called **Action Learning: Solving Real Problems in Real Time**. Check **What's New** on the MHA website at [www.mhainstitute.ca](http://www.mhainstitute.ca) for any updates.



#### Note

In this lesson, the **Solving Real Problems in Real Time: Action Learning Guide Second Edition** is referred to as the **Action Learning Guide**.



#### Resource

Contact MHA Institute Inc. at [info@mhainstitute.ca](mailto:info@mhainstitute.ca) for any assistance you may require.

### Objectives

- To explain the purpose, outcomes and agenda of the course
- To identify participant expectations

### Participant Handouts

- Handout A: Participant Manual
- Handout B: PowerPoint Course Presentation
- Handout C: *InfoMine* newsletters on action learning

### Participant References

- **Solving Real Problems in Real Time: Action Learning Guide Second Edition**

**Materials**

- PowerPoint Projector
- Laptop computer or computer with the PowerPoint slide presentations loaded
  1. AL2-3-Day-LTL-PowerPoint-Course Presentation
- Name tents and/or name tags (if required)

**PowerPoint Slides**

Slide #1: Welcome  
Slide #2: LTL Program  
Slide #3: Outcomes  
Slides #4-6: Agenda  
Slide #7: Expectations





**Estimated Time for Entire Lesson**

1 hour



**Note**

The times suggested in this lesson for each activity are estimates, and may need to be adjusted based on the situation.



Activity	Time	Content
<p><b>Interactive Lecture</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcome participants</li> <li>• Introduce facilitators</li> <li>• Introduce participants</li> </ul>	<p>10 minutes</p>	<p><b>1. Welcome</b></p> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; margin-bottom: 10px;">  <div> <p><b>Handouts</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Handout A: Participant Manual</li> <li>• Handout B: PowerPoint Course Presentation</li> <li>• Handout C: <i>InfoMine</i> newsletters</li> </ul> </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; margin-bottom: 10px;">  <div> <p><b>Participant References</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Solving Real problems in Real Time: Action Learning Guide Second Edition</b></li> </ul> </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; margin-bottom: 10px;">  <div> <p><b>Materials</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Name tents/name tags</li> </ul> </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; margin-bottom: 10px;">  <div> <p><b>PowerPoint Slide</b></p> <p>Slide #1: Welcome</p> </div> </div> <p><b>Before the course begins, distribute</b> the handouts for each participant. <b>Welcome participants</b> to the class and introduce them to the course, and to systems thinking. Include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When you encountered action learning</li> <li>• How you have used action learning, and what the results of using it were</li> <li>• How action learning has affected how you approach problem solving</li> <li>• What you think about action learning's importance in helping leadership, accountability, and collaboration</li> <li>• A reflection of what you learned during other courses when teaching action learning to others</li> </ul>

Facilitator's Guide: **Lesson 1: Course Introduction**  
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Activity	Time	Content
		<p>1. Welcome continued ...</p> <p><b>Identify the location</b> of emergency exits, emergency exit procedure, washrooms, coffee, and smoking areas. Mention when breaks will occur and timing for the day (end times, lunch).</p> <p>If required, <b>ask participants to</b> introduce themselves and where they work.</p>

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Activity	Time	Content
<p><b>Interactive Lecture</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explain the course materials that have been handed out</li> </ul>	<p align="center">5 minutes</p>	<p><b>2. General Information</b></p> <p><b>Explain the course materials</b> that have been handed out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The <b>Solving Real problems in Real Time: Action Learning Guide Second Edition</b> is a reference that is used throughout the course</li> <li>The <i>Participant Manual</i> and <i>PowerPoint Course Presentation</i> handout are used throughout the course.</li> <li>The <i>InfoMine</i> newsletters that feature case studies of how action learning has been used. This may be referred to during the course.</li> </ul> <p><b>Explain the following</b> about action learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Action learning is a process of solving real problems in real time. It is not a case study approach or experiential learning activity. It is about doing real work.</li> <li>Later in the course, participants will be asked to select a complex and difficult problem they wish to solve, a complex and difficult opportunity they wish to take advantage of, or a complex and difficult situation they wish to understand better.</li> </ul>


Activity	Time	Content
<p><b>Interactive Lecture</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review the LTL Program</li> <li>• Review the course outcomes</li> <li>• Review the agenda</li> </ul>	<p>10 minutes</p>	<p><b>3. Course Outcomes and Agenda</b></p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p><b>Handouts</b>            Handout A: Participant Manual</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outcomes, page 2</li> <li>• Agenda, pages 2-4</li> </ul> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p><b>PowerPoint Slides</b>            Slide #2: LTL Program            Slide #3: Outcomes            Slides #4-6: Agenda</p> <p><b>Review the following:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LTL Program</li> <li>• Course Outcomes</li> <li>• Agenda</li> </ul> <p><b>Review the LTL Program</b> by focusing on the action learning process, and how it underpins the entire program.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The action learning process is the problem solving/learning process that underpins the entire program. All courses are designed using the action learning design. The three courses that form the decision support system (systems thinking, reflexive practice, and strategic practice) enhance the action learning process.</li> <li>• <b>Slide #2: Define action learning</b> as the problem solving and learning process that occurs in this course, and the rest of the courses. The action learning process is also expected to occur in-between courses.</li> <li>• <b>Slide #2: Remind participants</b> that the final course integrates action learning, systems thinking, reflexive practice, and strategic practice into one process called <i>systemic storytelling</i> that participants can use in real time to be more effective.</li> </ul>




Activity	Time	Content
		<p><b>3. Course Outcomes and Agenda continued ...</b></p> <p><b>Slide #3: Review each course outcome</b> and add a brief explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gain an understanding of the language and concepts of action learning and implications for the workplace</li> </ul> <p><b>Explanation:</b> Action learning is a philosophy about how people learn. It is also a problem solving process, but it is different than other conventional forms of problem solving. It is highly effective in producing results, especially in developing leadership capacity and a desire for people involved to be engaged and accountable for their actions. It creates trust and respect very quickly, and can minimize the effect of power dynamics.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apply your understanding of the <i>Learning Cycle</i> and learning styles to the <i>Action Learning System</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Explanation:</b> The <i>Learning Cycle</i> has four learning orientations, each specific in its own form of learning and the behaviours that indicate the orientation itself. The action learning process is based on and follows the <i>Learning Cycle</i>. This means that if participants know their learning style profiles, they can tell when they are feeling comfortable in the process and when they are not feeling comfortable, and be okay with that.</p>

Activity	Time	Content
		<p><b>3. Course Outcomes and Agenda continued ...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gain an understanding of action learning in practice by using the <b>Action Learning Guide</b> to deal with a challenging situation or opportunity</li> </ul> <p><b>Explanation:</b> You will be asked to select a problem you wish to solve, an opportunity you wish to take advantage of, or a situation you wish to understand better.</p> <div style="display: flex; align-items: flex-start; margin-top: 20px;"> <div style="margin-right: 10px;">  </div> <div> <p><b>Note</b></p> <p>If the participants are coming to the course as a part of work, make sure that they select problems, opportunities, and situations that are work-related, and that these are <i>highly complex</i> and difficult for participants to take action on.</p> </div> </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop an action plan to deal with challenging problems, decisions, or opportunities</li> </ul> <p><b>Explanation:</b> Because action learning is about solving real problems in real time, participants will be asked to develop action plans so that they can take action on what they are learning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gain an understanding of how to apply action learning in a variety of situations</li> </ul> <p><b>Explanation:</b> Action learning can be used as a way of designing facilitation methods and ways of intervening in an organizational setting. These include using action learning to solve a team problem.</p> <p><b>Slides #4-6: Go through the agenda</b> for all three days.</p>



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<p><b>Interactive Lecture</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ask participants to review the <i>Learning Activity Reports</i> required for homework</li> </ul>	<p>5 minutes</p>	<p><b>4. Homework Activity:</b></p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p><b>Handouts</b></p> <p>Handout A: Participant Manual</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learning Activity Report, pages 5-7</li> </ul> <p><b>Review</b> the <i>Learning Activity Reports</i> required after each course from each participant.</p>

Activity	Time	Content
<p><b>Interactive Lecture</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask participants to identify their expectations</li> <li>• Review expectations of participants</li> </ul>	<p>30 minutes</p>	<p><b>5. Expectations Activity:</b></p> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; margin-bottom: 10px;">  <div> <p><b>Handouts</b></p> <p>Handout A: Participant Manual</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expectations Activity, page 8</li> </ul> </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; margin-bottom: 10px;">  <div> <p><b>PowerPoint Slide</b></p> <p>Slide #7: Expectations</p> </div> </div> <p><b>State the following</b> guidelines for the activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individually, record your responses on page 8 of the Handout A: Participant Manual. (5 minutes)</li> <li>• In small groups of 4-5 participants, introduce yourselves to each other if you do not know each other. Share your responses to the questions. Focus on listening to each other and understanding perspectives, not on solving any problems or issues. (10 minutes)</li> <li>• At the end of the activity, each group is asked to record one comment, insight, or question on a flip chart. (5 minutes)</li> </ul> <p><b>In a large group, ask each group</b> to state one or two group comments, insights, or questions. When all groups have finished, go through each of the comments, insights, and questions and mention whether or not they will be covered in the course (10 minutes).</p> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; margin-top: 20px;">  <div> <p><b>Note</b></p> <p>You can also ask participants to record their comments, insights, or questions on a flip chart. If you choose to do this, ask for 1-2 comments from each group. The more comments you ask for, the longer this activity takes, so decide the number of comments based on your time availability.</p> </div> </div>