

4b7

Taster Sessions

Do

Offer brief sessions of the activity for people to try before becoming more involved.

Story

Janice tried a 'French for Beginners' class but the teacher was very strict and unwelcoming, so Janice left. An 'Introduction to Computers' course at the same school was relaxed and friendly, and Janice completed this taster.

One college tutor provided the learning materials a term early, so the student had the opportunity to start the course with a high level of confidence and familiarity with the syllabus.

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Hints & Hazards

Tasters should form part of the person's person centred plan; they are a stepping stone not an end result. The danger is that some people may spend their lives having tasters without ever having real and ongoing opportunities.

Tasters do not teach people what to do in the inclusive setting – they provide an opportunity to learn about the environment in order to make a choice about whether to engage in it on a more long-term basis. This strategy might follow on from Visiting Places (see 2a3). Not everyone needs a taster.

If taster sessions are targeted at a particular group (they don't have to be), they may inadvertently train people in the host community that people using services need special, segregated provision. The taster session might need to be smaller than the usual activity, but it needs to taste the same, otherwise people enjoy the taster and then turn up to the main event and find it too different. It might be possible to attend a regular session for a short time. Check it is OK to arrive late or leave early. Is there a natural point when it is convenient to slip away? If the journey is hard it may not feel worth it to go for just a few minutes.