



A Staff Learning Tool by Michael Brandwein

TEO (pronounced “TEE-oh”) is a technique to enhance our learning during staff development. I use the letters to stand for, “Teaching Each Other.” TEO helps us learn great skills to do our best possible work at camp. This is because of the TEO truth:

We’ve never really learned something until we’ve taught it to someone else.

So from time to time during our sessions, we will ask you to do a TEO. During TEO time, you will take what you’ve just heard and briefly explain it in your own words to a partner. To help you be as clear as possible, your partner is going to pretend that she or he has never heard this before and doesn’t “get it.”

Sometimes the TEO challenge may be more specific—for example, you may be asked to persuade your partner that an important concept is true, or actually demonstrate how to do a particular skill.

The most important role we have at camp is as a teacher and the most important set of skills we use involve communication. We teach campers life skills to help them become better people. And we do this while teaching them camp activity skills as well. So when we take time for TEO we are practicing teaching and communication skills that will help us do our very best as camp leaders.

TIPS FOR TERRIFIC TEO’s

1. **TEO Teammates:** Sometimes when we work with people we know, we can take shortcuts that interfere with our getting the full benefit of the experience. So, to maximize the learning, we’ll be asking you to select a partner who you don’t know or don’t know as well as others. We may also ask you to switch TEO partners from time to time to get experience teaching different people.
2. **Make it tougher for T:** When you are the person being taught, *please listen carefully and be eager to learn*. But—make your partner (“T”) really *work* as a teacher. Pretend you don’t know anything about this subject and that you don’t “get” what T is saying. This will cause T to explain it more deeply. Help T have success by asking good questions that will encourage T to explain things clearly. But if T tells you, for example, that something is important, don’t just accept this. Be respectful but skeptical. Don’t be persuaded until T really convinces you.
3. **The TEO face and script:** When you are the listener, please make your face look like it’s saying, “Huh?” and say things like the following to your teacher, T:
 - a) “Sorry, but I don’t get it. What do you mean?”
 - b) “So why is that important?”
 - c) “No offense, but what difference would that make?”
 - d) “Could you give me an example?”
 - e) “Why?”
 - f) “What makes you think that’s true?”
 - g) “I’m not convinced. I need to hear more.”

From *Training Terrific Staff Volume Two* (Brandwein, 2008) Chapter 4

© 2006, '07-'08 by Michael Brandwein / All Rights Reserved / 847-940-9820 / mail@michaelbrandwein.com

Individual camps may copy and distribute this handout to their staff for educational purposes if this entire five line notice is included on the copy. Any other use, reproduction, storage, distribution, or transmission, in any form, or by any means (electronic, mechanical, photocopying, Internet, or otherwise) is prohibited by law without the prior written permission of the copyright owner. Thank you!