Playful team learning

SMARTER Battle:
Pitch, Debate, Vote

Convince the others that your approach has the biggest impact. You learn through play. Your colleagues' arguments stick better because of the discussion itself.

S M A R T E R

Overview

Who it's for	Goal	Time	Format
Teams who want a playful approach and already know the basics of the SMARTER principles.	Make a well-founded choice about which approach has the most impact in your context.	30–60 min	Teams of 4 to 28 people, in subteams of 2 to 4.

In short

A learning problem in a training rarely has just one cause, and so rarely just one solution. The team chooses a familiar challenge, for example: "By the end of the day, participants have already forgotten the key steps of the procedure." Each subteam is assigned a different principle and looks at the challenge through that lens: which HOW card tackles it best. Then comes the battle: who will convince the group?

The winning card is a nice bonus. The real gain is in the conversation: everyone has to justify their choice and look critically at the choices of others.

Good to know

The Battle works with every other activity in this series. You can also use it as a closing exercise to make a choice together.

What you need

- 1 SMARTER deck (see steps 2 and 3)
- A flipchart to write down the challenge and the scores (see steps 1 and 5)
- A timer (see step 4)

How it works

1 Choose the challenge

Together, choose a familiar problem or challenge from a training. You can also use a scenario card. Write the challenge in large letters on the flipchart, so everyone can see it during the battle.

2 Subteams and cards

Divide the group into subteams. Each subteam draws a letter card blind: that is their principle. From it, they choose the HOW card they think tackles the challenge best.

Tip

Drawing blind means every subteam also has to think beyond its favourite principle.

Fewer than seven subteams?

No problem. Not every principle needs to be covered: it's about the thinking.

3 Prepare your case

Why does your approach tackle the challenge best? Use the WHY card of your principle as ammunition. Also think about which counter-arguments you can expect.

4 The battle

Each subteam gets 90 seconds to make its case. In a next step one other subteam asks one critical question. Switch subteams each time. Keep strictly to time: the timer is the referee.

Keep it playful

Competition gives energy, as long as it's about ideas and not people. Critical questions are about the approach, never about the person proposing it.

5 Vote

Everyone votes for the approach that convinced them most, but not for their own card. Write the scores on the flipchart.

6 Debrief

Ask: "Which argument from another subteam will you take with you?" and "Can we combine the winner and the runner-up into one approach?" Agree who will try out the chosen approach, and in which training.

Don't skip this

Without a debrief, it stays a fun game. This moment turns it into a learning moment.

Variations

- **Quick version:** individually instead of in subteams, with 60-second pitches. Ideal as an energiser at the start of a team meeting.
- **After activity 03 (Traffic Light Scan):** let the subteams battle over which intervention you'll put into practice first.
- **After activity 05 (Training Detective):** let the subteams battle over the best solution for the scenario.

Follow-up and next steps

- Try out the winning approach in a real training and tell the team how it went.
- At the next team meeting, ask: "Which arguments from the battle do we still remember?" Only then look at the flipchart.

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