



Build a bug

When a tester finds a bug it will be documented. Like an entomologist the tester will document what the bug looks like and where the bug was found. More importantly, the tester will document how the bug can be reproduced. This enables team members to learn about its cause and ultimately solve it. The reproduction process should be documented in great detail. Often a specific series of steps is required to reproduce the bug. Participants of this activity will experience how important it is to describe the process to reproduce a bug in great detail. Instead of reproducing an actual bug, participants will build a Lego object from a series of steps.

Activity in one sentence

Build a Lego object from provided instructions, similar to reproducing a bug.

Goal

To experience the importance of describing the steps to reproduce a bug in great detail.

Target group

Team members who will report bugs or already report bugs, but do not provide a clear description of the steps to reproduce a bug.

Necessities and prerequisites

- 2 to 6 participants, preferably an even number, preferably team members
- A room with a projector, blackboard or equivalent, enough tables to accommodate two participants at one table
- Pre-build Lego objects, at least one object for every participant
- Loose Lego bricks
- Camera to record the session, if desired

Steps

1. Instruct the participants to team up with another participant. Ideally teams of two participants result
2. Instruct the teams to take place at a table
3. Instruct one member of each team to pick a pre-build Lego object. As the activity instructor, you will hand these out



4. Instruct the team members who picked an object to not show this to the participant they teamed up with. The member who picked the object can hold this underneath the table, from the view of the other member
5. Provide each team with enough loose Lego bricks on their table. Make sure that the bricks required to rebuild the pre-build Lego object are present, and extra loose bricks
6. Instruct the team member who is holding the Lego object to describe to the other member how this should be build. No corrections or additional clarifications are allowed. If it helps, give an example of a clear and unclear description yourself
7. Instruct the team member who is building the Lego object to 'sabotage' in case a provided description is unclear
8. Instruct the team member who is holding the pre-build Lego object to show their object when he or she is finished describing the steps to reproduce. At this point, the other team member can show their build object to
9. Instruct the teams to discuss the difference between their objects and their causes. Reflect on the description of steps to build the object
10. Instruct the team members to switch roles and repeat the step above for another object

Outcomes

Participants of this activity experienced the importance of clearly describing steps to reproduce a bug, by building a Lego object. They experienced the effect of unclear steps and the improved result of clearer steps.

Notes

- As an instructor you make sure the pre-build Lego objects are available. Build them beforehand
- Make sure the pre-build Lego objects are not too complicated (no unseen bricks on the inside). The team member describing the pre-build Lego object should be able to see how it was build, without taking it apart
- Make sure there are enough loose Lego bricks to build from. Make sure there are more bricks than necessary to build the object and that the required bricks are available
- Make sure the team members holding the pre-build Lego object have a way to hide this from their other team member
- Make sure you have time to clean up the room afterwards as Lego tends to spread all over the room

Variations

- Instead of working with Lego, have participants reproduce a drawing
- Instruct team members who would hold the pre-build Lego object, to create a pre-build Lego object themselves and then have the other team member reproduce it. This way, more difficult objects could be used
- Instead of building a Lego object, participants could be instructed to write down the steps to reproduce the object