



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Keys to Successful Training

Manual for Managing the Training
Process

2005

This publication was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development. It was prepared by RTI International.

Keys to Successful Training

Manual for Managing the Training Process

Local Government Assistance Initiative Services IQC, Task Order 802
Contract No. EEU-I-00-99-00014-00
2005

Prepared for
United States Agency for International Development Mission in Bulgaria

Prepared by

The Local Governance Initiative (LGI)
Svetla Yankova, Capacity Building Leader, LGI
Ed Comstock, Management Systems International, Consultant to LGI
RTI International
Local Government Initiative
56 Alabin Street
1000 Sofia
Bulgaria

Desktop publication: _____

Printing: _____

Disseminated free of charge.
Not for sale in commercial outlets.



The author's views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

Table of Contents

Exhibits	v
Acknowledgement	1
Introduction.....	2
Chapter 1: Basic Training Concepts.....	6
1.1 Adult Learning Principles.....	7
1.2 Learning Styles	8
1.3 The Experiential Approach to Training.....	10
Chapter 2: Assessing Training Needs	18
2.1 Why Assess Training Needs?	19
2.2 To Train or Not to Train—That Is the Question.....	21
2.2 Information for Assessment and Analysis.....	22
2.3 Four Methods of Collecting Information.....	27
2.4 Soliciting Information.....	29
Chapter 3: Designing a Training Program.....	33
3.1 Training Design Team	34
3.2 Developing Learning Objectives	34
3.3 Outlining the Training Content.....	38
3.4 Selecting Training Methods.....	42
3.5 Developing the Training Plan.....	63
Chapter 4: Techniques for Involving Learners	73
4.1 What Technique to Chose?.....	74
4.2 Techniques for Interactive Training	75
Chapter 5: Organization and Logistics.....	91
5.1 The Training Team	92
5.2 Co-training.....	94
5.3 Selecting Dates	96
5.4 Selecting a Venue	97
5.5 Contacting Potential Participants.....	98
5.6 The Training Environment	99
Chapter 6: Trainer Skills	103
6.1 Encouraging Positive Communication	104
6.2 Working with Groups	113
6.3 How to Overcome Stage Fright.....	119
Chapter 7: Evaluating Training	121
7.1 It Depends.....	122
Annex 1: Worksheet for Assessing Training Needs.....	132
Annex 2: Training Plan Worksheet.....	136
Annex 3: Workshop Checklist of Equipment and Supplies.....	138

Annex 4: Checklist for Selecting the Training Location	141
Annex 5: Daily Feedback Questionnaire	143
Annex 6: Workshop Evaluation	145
Bibliography	150

Exhibits

Exhibit 1: Training Process.....	4
Exhibit 2: Adult Learning Principles.....	8
Exhibit 3: Experiential Learning Cycle.....	10
Exhibit 4: Experiential Model with Theory.....	16
Exhibit 5: Sample Needs Assessment Questionnaire.....	30
Exhibit 6: Examples of Inappropriate and Appropriate Words for Writing Learning Objectives.....	37
Exhibit 7: Additional Tips for Using Transparencies During Training.....	61
Exhibit 8: Example Training Plan.....	67
Exhibit 9: Training Room Arrangements.....	100
Exhibit 10: Responding to Learners' Behaviors.....	106
Exhibit 11: Trainer-Participant Interaction.....	112
Exhibit 12: Sample Direct Observation Checklist.....	128

Acknowledgement

In the last 8 years, the U.S. Agency for International Development's Local Government Initiative (LGI) Program has been working in Bulgaria with the goal of promoting effective and accountable local governments. One of the main tasks of LGI has been to contribute to building the capacity of local organizations and experts to provide quality training services to local governments.

The "Keys to Successful Training" manual is a result of the work of many people. The professional contributions of several U.S. training consultants have made the publishing of this manual possible.

We are especially thankful to Hal Minis and Jerry Wood for their exceptional professional contribution and selfless work promoting the adult learning theory and practice in the training of local governments in Bulgaria and for the professional growth of many Bulgarian trainers.

We are thankful to Pam Plumb, Kitty Clark, and Donald Spears for their contributions to the training modules on specific aspects of the training process.

We also acknowledge all the Bulgarian trainers who have worked with LGI and contributed to the development of a sustainable training delivery system for local governments in Bulgaria.

Svetla Yankova

Ed Comstock

Introduction

For more than the past decade, USAID/Bulgaria has funded the Local Government Initiative to build more effective and accountable local governments. Through its four phases, LGI, in collaboration with a number of Bulgarian partner organizations, has conducted a broad range of policy-reform and capacity-build efforts to achieve this objective. Capacity-building efforts have included the following:

- Conducting national training needs assessments;
- Building the organizational capacity of municipal associations and other support organizations;
- Training trainers drawn from local governments and their support organizations;
- Developing training modules across a variety of technical and management areas; and
- Training municipal elected and administrative staff, personnel from nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and officials from central government ministries.

As LGI nears the end of its program life in 2007, and as USAID completes its assistance program in Bulgaria, the project seeks to consolidate its long experience in service of the Bulgarian local government system.

“Keys to Successful Training” is a collection of training resource materials developed by the LGI program. It was originally written in Bulgaria as a reference specifically for the project, but this English translation is intended to serve as a resource for trainers in other countries as well.

The manual is designed to serve as a practical guide for trainers who want to make the training process productive, creative, effective, and pleasant. In this sense, the manual is a how-to guide. The term “you,” used throughout the manual to address readers, is targeted toward trainers, but the manual is intended to be a useful resource not only for both novice and expert trainers, but also for organizations that design, organize, or deliver training and experts who routinely make presentations or facilitate group meetings. Human resource specialists in municipalities and other organizations and institutions will also find useful information to guide them in designing and implementing staff development plans and in requesting training services for their members and staff.

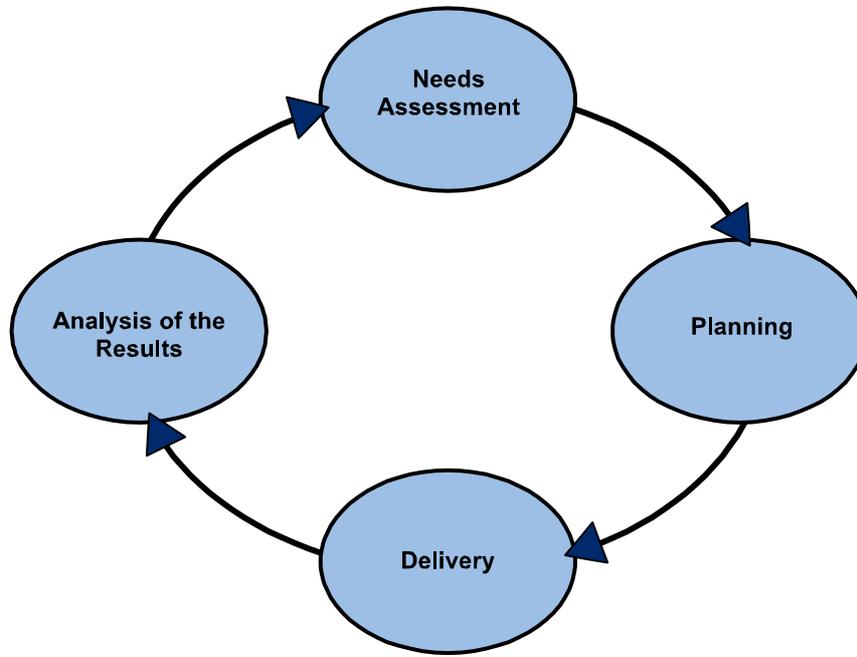
This manual does not exhaustively cover all topics related to the training process. This area is known for its abundance of theoretical and practical resource materials. The manual’s objective is to present the main elements of the training process and approaches applied to them in a systemized manner. The examples of approaches included in this manual—on needs assessment, training program design, interactive techniques, etc.—have been selected not because they are necessarily the best, but because experience has shown that they work well.

The manual may be used in several ways. It may be read from beginning to end. By doing so, readers will thus gain more knowledge about the stages and activities connected with adult learning. Or, it may be used as a reference book. For example, when developing training modules trainers may want to check something that they may have omitted during the development phase, or test something new. In this respect, the manual will be useful for

experienced trainers as well as beginners. Finally, if you are a trainer of trainers, you may use this manual as a training resource for your trainees.

The manual is based on the concept of a four-part training process that forms a continual cycle, as shown below.

Exhibit 1: Training Process



Manual Structure

“Keys to Successful Training” is structured in seven chapters that generally follow chronologically the phases of the training management process. Highlights of each chapter are given below:

Chapter 1: Basic Training Concepts discusses in brief the methodology that formed the foundation for development and compiling of the materials contained in the manual. It reviews the characteristics of adult learning and the ensuing specific principles to be applied in structuring and delivering training programs for adults. It also explores the different learning styles and the way they are reflected in the training program structure; the experiential learning cycle and the role of the trainer in it; and the balance between content and process in a training course.

Chapter 2: Assessing Training Needs focuses on the reasons that a training needs assessment is an important first step in the process of developing training programs. Then it tackles the means to be used in assessing these needs, and gives examples of different methods of data collection that could be used during the assessment.

Chapter 3: Designing a Training Program will lead you through the steps that should be followed in the design of a training program after you have assessed specific training needs and have identified in general terms the general and specific topics of the course. It contains guidelines on how to define training goals and objectives, choose the appropriate content, and decide what training methods and learning aids should be used in what circumstances to achieve the training objectives. Several methods and learning aids and their advantages and

disadvantages are described briefly. The components of a training plan are also discussed. Each stage is illustrated with an example.

Chapter 4: Techniques for Involving Learners illustrates interactive training approaches. It will guide you in estimating the factors that you need to consider select an appropriate technique. The chapter also describes several exemplary techniques, their advantages, things to watch out for, as well as procedures for using them.

Chapter 5: Organization and Logistics tackles the organizational issues related to training—choosing dates, equipment, and materials; choosing the venue; corresponding with participants; and other activities that are part of the preparation you have to complete before the course begins.

Chapter 6: Trainer Skills describes basic skills that trainers should master to deliver training that meets the needs of the trainees. It discusses skills for positive communication, knowledge about group dynamics and development, types of interventions, and approaches to problem situations.

Chapter 7: Evaluating Training provides guidance on the objectives and types of evaluation for a training event. It presents types of evaluations that could be made during a training course and evaluations of the effectiveness of training made after the course.

At the end of the manual are annexes containing model forms and worksheets.

This manual was prepared by Svetla Yankova of LGI, and Ed Comstock, LGI consultant.

Chapter 1:

Basic Training Concepts

Before detailing the training process, it is necessary to understand what training adults entails. Therefore, the first chapter of the manual will present the basic concepts behind the methodology used to develop and conduct training for adults.

First, it is important to note that there is a distinction between teaching and training. By “teaching” one usually refers to the instructional mode of learning that is typical of school experiences. The term “training,” as used here, defines a highly participatory, structured process aimed at transferring skills and improving capacity in the context of relevant, useful, and directly useable knowledge. In contrast to teaching, during training participants are responsible for their own learning.

1.1 Adult Learning Principles

Often when people are asked to assume the role of a trainer, they begin with an image of training based on the traditional didactic method of teaching. In most instances, the image in their minds is closely related to how they were taught as children in school. But there are significant differences between children and adults as learners. The training approach most successfully used with adults, therefore, is significantly different from the approach that would be appropriate for teaching children. This is because adult learners share several important characteristics:

- Adults enter a learning activity with an image of themselves as self-directing, responsible grown-ups, not as immature, dependent students. Therefore, they resist situations in which they are treated disrespectfully as passive learners. This implies that if adults help to plan and conduct their own learning experiences, they will learn more than if they are mere recipients of training. Trainers, when working with adults, must demonstrate that they value participants as human beings, that in your eyes they, and what they’ve experienced, count.
- Adults decide on their own what they want to learn. They learn best when they have a strong inner motivation to develop a new skill or acquire a particular type of knowledge.
- Adults enter a learning activity with more immediate intentions to apply learning to life problems than youth. Adults require practical results from learning. They will perceive learning experiences that are organized around life problems as being more relevant than those organized around subject topics.
- Adults enter a learning activity with more experience than youth. Therefore, they have more to contribute to the learning activity and have a broader basis of experience to relate to new learning. Methods that build on and make use of the experience of the adult learner are most effective.
- Unlike children, adults don’t accept information at face value; they need to validate it based on their beliefs and experiences.
- Adults learn best in an informal environment.

The following specific principles to be followed when training adults were derived from these characteristics of adult learners.

Exhibit 2: Adult Learning Principles

When training adults, structure your presentations to respond to adult learning principles:

1. Focus on “real world” problems.
2. Emphasize how the learning can be applied.
3. Relate the learning to the learners’ goals.
4. Relate the materials to the learners’ past experiences.
5. Allow debate and challenge of ideas.
6. Listen to and respect the opinions of learners.
7. Encourage learners to be resources to you and to each other.
8. Treat learners like adults.

By following these adult learning principles when you develop and conduct your training, you increase the likelihood that learning will occur. Training based on these principles activates learning and acknowledges the individual input of each participant. It requires that trainers have clear ideas about how learners will use the information they have learned, and how they can practice what they’ve learned before they apply it after the training.

1.2 Learning Styles

In addition to learning differently than children, adults have different learning preferences. These preferences are grouped generally in various learning styles.

Learning styles are characteristic cognitive, affective, and physiological behaviors that serve as relatively stable indicators of how learners perceive, interact with, and respond to the learning environment. Cognitive styles are information processing habits representing the learner’s typical mode of perceiving, thinking, problem solving and remembering. The term “affective styles” refers to motivational processes viewed as the learner’s typical mode of arousing, directing, and sustaining behavior. Physiological styles are biologically based modes of response and accustomed reactions to the physical environment.

Under each of the main categories of learning styles—cognitive, affective, and physiological—are a variety of dimensions. Fortunately, not all dimensions have equal implications for improving the learning process. The dimensions that are most important for the design of training efforts are as follows:

Perceptual modality preferences

This dimension measures a learner’s preferred reliance on one of the sensor modes of understanding experience. The modes are kinesthetic or psychomotor, visual or spatial, and auditory or verbal. A brief elaboration of each of the elements that make up this learning style dimension is provided below:

- **Auditory Preferences.** This perceptual area describes people who can learn best when initially listening to a verbal instruction such as a lecture, discussion, or recording.

- **Visual Preferences.** Learners whose primary perceptual preference is visual can recall what has been read or observed. When asked for information from printed or diagrammatic material, they often can close their eyes and visually recall what they read or saw earlier.
- **Tactile Preferences.** Learners with tactile perceptual preferences need to underline as they read, take notes when they listen, and keep their hands busy, particularly if they also have low auditory preferences.
- **Kinesthetic Preferences.** Learners with kinesthetic preferences require whole-body movement and/or real-life experiences to absorb and retain material. These people learn most easily when they are totally involved. Acting, puppetry, and drama are excellent examples of kinesthetic learning; others include designing, visiting, interviewing, and playing.

Field independence versus dependence

This dimension measures whether the learner uses an analytical as opposed to a global way of experiencing the (subject matter) environment.

- *Field dependent* (FD) or global learners rely on the environment of the learning situation for structure. FDs are sensitive to social cues without being alerted to them. They are interpersonally oriented and rely heavily on external stimuli. This motivates them to look toward others for reinforcement of opinions and attitudes. The field dependent or global learner has a short attention span, is easily distracted, and likes informal learning situations. People with this type of learning style view the trainer as just another individual and respond best to a learning environment that evokes their feelings and experiences. For them, learning is very much a social experience.
- The field independent (FI) or analytical learner does not rely on the learning environment for reference. FIs have an internal structure that enables them to analyze information and solve problems without outside assistance. In addition, FIs appear to be more active, autonomous, self-motivated, and task-oriented. These individuals can analyze information from the learning situation and solve problems independently. They tend to be more sedentary and prefer formal learning situations, viewing the trainer merely as a source of information. They are competitive, achievement-oriented, and impersonal.

Conceptual tempo

Another important aspect that has major importance for improving the learning process is *conceptual tempo*. Individuals differ in the speed and adequacy of hypothesis formulation and information processing on a continuum of reflection versus impulsivity.

- Impulsives tend to give the first answer they can think of even though it may be incorrect.
- Reflectives prefer to consider alternative solutions before deciding and to give more reasoned responses.

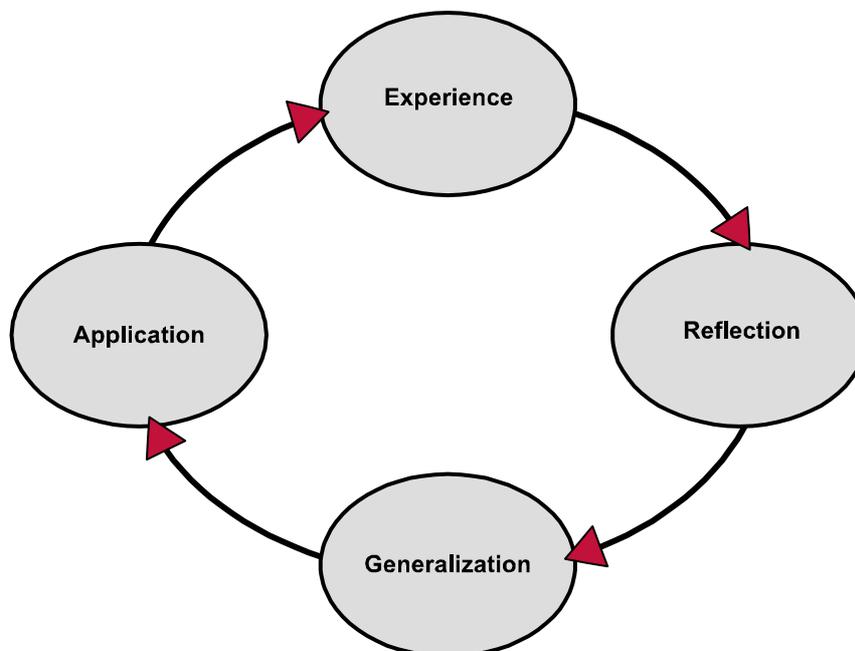
It is important to mention that learning styles are not personal characteristics and that adults all use different styles in different situations. Nevertheless, usually each learner prefers a specific style.

Understanding how a person learns is a major requisite for a successful training program. Studies have shown that identifying a participant's learning style and providing appropriate instruction in response to that style can contribute to more effective learning. Trainers should take into consideration the different preferences of learners and structure the training in a way to respond to these preferences. What does this mean in practice? Various tests exist to determine learners' preferred learning styles. Ideally, the trainer, at the early stage of training needs assessment, can ask potential participants to complete a test and will thus receive a general idea about the potential audience's learning preferences. In practice, this does not happen very often. Therefore, when designing a training program, trainers should include a variety of training activities, methods, and learning aids to ensure a comfortable learning environment for all participants. This issue will be discussed further in Chapter 3: Designing a Training Program.

1.3 The Experiential Approach to Training

Experiential learning is exactly what the name implies—learning from experience. The experiential approach is learner-centered and allows the individual trainees to manage and share responsibility for their own learning with their teachers. As such, it embodies the principles of adult learning. Effective training strategies that incorporate the experiential learning approach provide opportunities for a person to engage in an activity, review the activity critically, abstract some useful insight from the analysis, and apply the result in a practical situation. These consecutive activities form the experiential learning cycle.

Exhibit 3: Experiential Learning Cycle



The learning cycle requires the learner to progress through four different phases of the learning process. Effective learning requires the ability to (a) experience something in Phase 1; (b) form principles based on your analysis of that experience (Phases 2 [reflection] and 3

[generalization]); and (c) apply the things you learn in Phase 4 (application). This does not come easily for everyone, especially those who are used to learning from lectures. Adult learning requires the active participation of the learner in the learning process.

The role of the trainer, then, is to help the learner through this process of learning. A good trainer must have the competence to understand what goes on at each phase and to facilitate the learning process.

This chapter will explore each of the four phases and for each phase identify:

- Appropriate training activities;
- The role of the trainer; and
- The kinds of questions a trainer can ask the learner.

What happens in Phase 1: Experience

The experience phase is the initial activity and the data-producing part of the experiential learning cycle. This phase is structured to enable participants to become actively involved in “doing” something. Doing, in this instance, has a rather broad definition, and includes a range of *activities*, such as the following:

- Group problem solving
- Case studies
- Role plays
- Lecturette
- Field visits
- Skills practice
- Games
- Group tasks

This sample list indicates that the range of training techniques can vary from the more passive and trainer-centered (e.g., lecturette) to the more active and real (such as skills practice). Exactly which technique one chooses as an educational activity depends largely on the session goals.

The trainer’s primary role in Phase 1 is that of a structurer. You must present the objectives of the activity and clarify norms, rules, and time limits. For lectures, this implies that the trainer must present information in a way that is meaningful to participants. Effective methods of stimulating interest include referring to visual aids and asking questions that make the presentations more interactive.

For small group activities, such as those listed above, the trainer needs to be very clear about the task. It is helpful to have the task, including discussion questions, written on a flipchart or

a handout that the participants can refer to during the group work. In addition, small groups function better when the group members are assigned the roles of a secretary, a discussion leader, a timekeeper, and a reporter. Although most of the processing goes on during the reflecting phase, the trainer can ask some questions to each small group now in order to facilitate the group's progress. Questions might include the following:

- Are there any questions about the task?
- Is there anything else you need to know?
- How is everything going?
- Have you thought about...?
- Could you be more specific?
- Can you say more about that?
- Can you think of another alternative?
- Are you ready to record your work on a flipchart?
- How much more time do you need?

What happens in Phase 2: Reflecting on the experience

Once the experience stage is complete, the trainer or instructor guides the group into the processing part of the cycle. During this phase, participants reflect on the activity undertaken during the experience phase, and they share their reactions with the whole group in a structured manner. This may happen on an individual basis, in small work groups, or in a full training group. Individuals share both their cognitive (i.e., intellectual) and affective (i.e., emotional) reactions to the activities in which they have engaged. In addition, with trainer assistance, they try to link these thoughts and feelings together to derive some meaning from the experience.

Activities during this phase may include the following:

- Small group discussion
- Large group discussion
- Participant presentations
- Reporting from small groups

The trainer's role during Phase 2 is to help the learner reflect on what happened during Phase 1. This means the learner must focus her or his attention on what the experience meant in relation to the objectives of the session, and the trainer should be sure that important aspects of the experience are not ignored.

Phase 2 is when learners share their ideas and reactions with each other. An effective way to help the learner reflect is to ask questions about what happened and how the learner reacted. The following are examples of the kind of questions the trainer might ask:

- What happened?
- How did you feel when...?
- Did anyone feel differently?
- What did you notice about...?
- How do you feel about the experience?
- Did anyone else feel the same way about that?
- Do you agree or disagree with what they are saying? Why?
- Does anyone else have something to add...?
- Does this surprise you?
- Do you realize that...?
- Why didn't you...?

Notice that the trainer should use open-ended questions to stimulate discussion about the experience.

What happens in Phase 3: Generalizing about the experience

In Phase 3, the learners interpret what was discussed during Phase 2 to determine what lessons can be learned. This means that the learner looks at the information gathered thus far and decides what it all means; in other words, the learner draws principles or lessons learned from the experience and the discussion of it.

Appropriate activities to use include the following:

- Synthesis discussion in large group
- Lectures
- Demonstration
- Reading assignments

The trainer's role in Phase 3 is most like the conventional role of the educator—that of a guide to the learner. More than in any other phase, the trainer needs to be knowledgeable about the subject matter and have credibility in the eyes of the learner as a good information source. However, this does not mean that the trainer needs to provide all the answers during this phase. In fact, the learners will probably internalize the learning better if the group members have to find the answers for themselves.

As a guide, the trainer helps the learner focus on the implications of what happened during the experience and the reflection phases so that the learner can acknowledge having learned something new. There are two basic approaches to doing this: the trainer can provide a summary for the learners (as in a lecture or reading assignment), or the trainer can ask probing questions that enable the learners to reach their own conclusions (as in a consensus-seeking discussion). The latter approach requires strong facilitating skills as well as knowledge about the subject itself.

Some useful questions the trainer might ask include the following:

- What did you learn from this?
- What does all of this mean to you?
- Is there an operating principle here?
- How does everything we are talking about fit together?
- Have you gained any new insight about...?
- What are some of the major themes we've seen here?
- Are there any lessons to be learned?
- What do you associate with this?

What happens in Phase 4: Application

In order for the learner to feel that the lesson has had some significance, he or she must relate the new learning to his or her own life situation. During Phase 4, the learner makes the connection between the training setting and the real world—the two are rarely the same. This link can be strengthened through practice and through planning for application after training.

Activities used to facilitate the application stage include the following:

- Practicing new skills
- Action planning
- Field visits
- Discussion

The trainer's primary role in Phase 4 is that of a coach to the learner. As the learner tries doing things on his or her own, the trainer can provide advice and encourage the learner to try to improve new skills. The key question learners should ask here is, "How should I do this differently next time?" One of the ways the trainer assists during this phase is by helping participants be as specific as possible in developing their application plans.

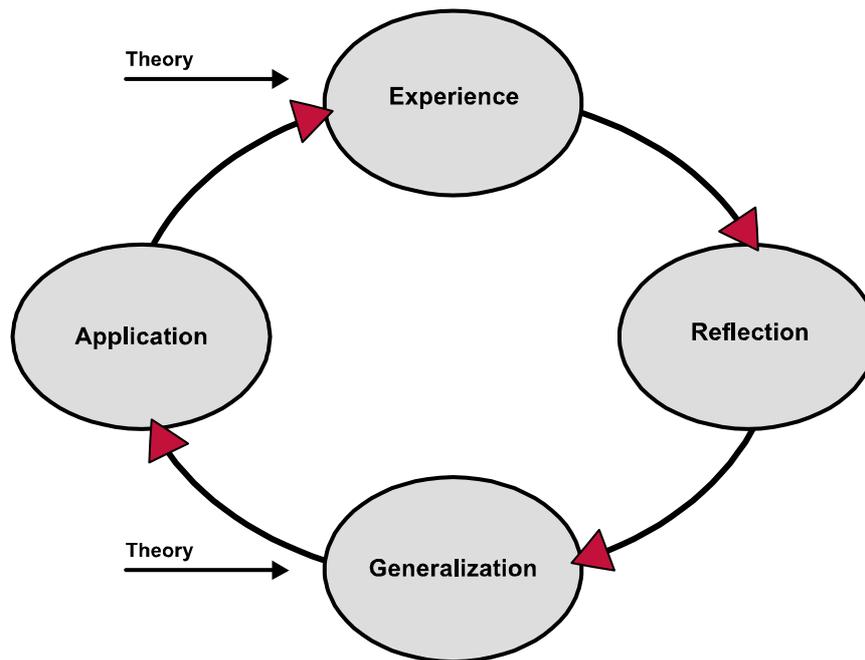
Some questions the trainer can ask include the following:

- What have you enjoyed most about this?

- What do you find most difficult?
- How can you apply this in your situation at home?
- Can you imagine yourself doing this in two weeks?
- What do you look forward to doing most after training?
- What do you think will be most difficult when you use this?
- If you were to do this in your own project, how would you do it differently?
- How could this exercise have been more meaningful to you?
- Do you anticipate any resistance when you return?
- What can you do to overcome resistance from others?
- Are there areas you would like to practice more?
- What are some of the questions you still have?
- How could you do this better?

Adding theory to the experiential model

It is important to stress two other points about the experiential model. First, the exact nature of each phase of the model is driven by the goals of the training session. Once the goals are defined, then the training can be designed using the model as the framework. Second, trainers can introduce theory in two different places. It could be part of the experience (e.g., in a lecturette), in which case a second part of experience becomes a way to test the theory or try out the skills implied by it, or it could come after the experience, when it is interwoven into the generalization phase as participants develop their conclusions and summary of the experience. When this is added to the diagram of the model, it looks like this:

Exhibit 4: Experiential Model with Theory

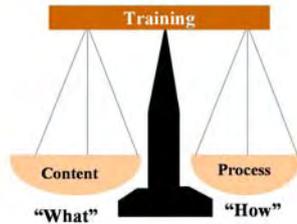
In order for this model to be effective, it needs to be rigorously applied, both in the design and delivery stages. “Experiential training or learning” is a phrase often heard in the education and training world, yet it is frequently misused in practice where it seems to mean letting people participate in a presentation, having a question and answer session after a lecture, or doing a role play or case study by itself without the subsequent steps in the model. Most frequently, the generalization and application stages are simply left out of the design or the program; as a result, the power of experiential learning is significantly diminished or is negated altogether.

Although the model looks very clear when correctly explained, the way it works out in practice is not always as clear. There are transitions between phases, and occasionally (especially if the trainer is going too fast), the group will return unwittingly to a phase until it is “finished.” Also, individuals in the group may not approach the learning process in such a linear fashion, and that is perfectly legitimate. The model is meant to serve as a guide for the trainer or instructor who is trying to design and carry out an educational experience for a group.

The balance in the experiential model

In any training event for adults, there are two primary considerations. One consideration is the task, or the content of the learning. The other is process, or how the learning is structured and managed. The role of the trainer is central to the effective balance of these two considerations. Specifically, in addition to the knowledge, skill, and expertise in the content of the training, trainers are also concerned about the range of training technology, including how adults learn, group development, choosing appropriate experiential learning techniques, and supporting the learning with questions, activities, or media to focus and enhance the learning.

When these two primary considerations (what is being taught and how it is being managed) are out of balance, training sessions are ineffective. If the content/technical information is the only consideration, presenters tend to lecture, which is one-way communication and has a very low level of involvement from the participants. This imbalance is characterized by a lot of talking by the presenter (the “Instructional” mode) and, while a lot is said, the participants learn and retain very little. If the process is imbalanced, sessions are characterized by a lot of activities which, when completed, have no meaning to the participants.



Experiential learning, as described above, “teaches” a way of using one’s everyday experiences for learning. This kind of active learning is probably the best way to achieve a sense of ownership of what is learned. It sets a learning environment that allows the learner to be creative, to make missteps, and to try out new ways of

behaving without fear of the usual painful consequences of failure.

The next chapters will discuss different components of the training management process based on the principles and methodology described in this chapter.

Chapter 2: **Assessing Training Needs**

Before developing a training program, trainers should determine the training needs of the target participants. A proper analysis of these needs is critical so that the training program will be useful to participants. For a training program to achieve its intended results, target participants must be committed to its purpose and objectives; it is hard to obtain that commitment unless their needs have been assessed accurately. A training program that repeats much of what participants already know, or one that is too advanced for them, will be frustrating for trainers and participants alike. It will also be a waste of financial and human resources.

This section of the manual begins with the reasons for doing a needs assessment and, in the light of these reasons, a critical question to consider before starting an in-depth needs assessment leading to the development and delivery of training. It then moves on to explore the kind of information a training needs assessment is meant to uncover, briefly explores four methods of collecting information, then presents a suggested approach for soliciting this information from target participants.

2.1 Why Assess Training Needs?

In general, a training needs assessment involves getting a broad picture of the nature of the need and the target audience so you can focus your training development and delivery energies in the right direction. More specifically, it involves finding out more about the following:

The origins of the need. Who is requesting the training? Why is it being requested (i.e., What are the goals for the training? What knowledge and/or skills gap is it meant to fill?)? The need for training can have its origins in any one, or more, type of “need.” The three most common types of need are

1. One type of need may relate to the *professional development* of an organization’s personnel, prompted either by its in-house staff development plan or by external certification requirements, such as International Organization for Standardization (ISO) standards. In most instances, training in response to these needs is already quite well defined, and training programs exist specifically to meet these needs. The trainers’ assessment responsibility in these situations leans toward where to place the emphasis on already existing content and what methods and learning aids are best for the targeted participants.
2. A second type of need is the necessity of learning *new methods* to take advantage of state-of-the-art developments in fields relevant to an organization. For example, LGI’s training on “Regulatory Drafting,” in which municipalities receive instructions on how to draft regulations and ordinances responsive to national fiscal decentralization policies and legislation, is a response to this type of need. Another example would be training select municipal personnel in the use and maintenance of computer local area networks (LANs). Although these two trainings are very different in character, they’re very similar in that, as above, the trainers’ assessment responsibility is where to place the emphasis on already existing content and what training methods and learning aids are best for the targeted participants.
3. *Problem solving* is the third major type of need encountered by trainers, and is the most demanding need to assess and solve. This type of need is often initially discernible by the nature of the client’s request for training, usually a somewhat vague

request for training to improve organizational performance generally or in a particular area (e.g., citizen participation) that gives little insight as to what specific aspects of performance require improvements. In these situations, trainers are challenged to identify why something is happening, or not happening, in an organization that is reducing the organization's effectiveness. You are looking into what is, at its base level, unknown. Here the trainer's responsibility is to identify what this "unknown" is, and develop and deliver a training program that will build organizational skills to solve the problem.

The following situation is an example of a problem solving need. This example will be used to illustrate training concepts throughout the manual because it demands a wide range of training management skills.

Case Study

For example, picture a medium-sized Bulgarian municipality that's been working to develop expertise in budgeting. As the Municipal Council and the Mayor prepare for the upcoming budget cycle, they are aware that

- *In the coming year, the municipal strategy calls for improvements in solid waste collection and street cleaning infrastructure and the repair and renovation of the municipality's six kindergarten buildings;*
- *Some creative budgeting (e.g., user fee rate increases) will be necessary to affect these improvements; and*
- *The last time the council proposed raising fees 2 years ago, to extend solid waste collection and street cleaning services to an underserved neighborhood on the east side of the municipality, an angry citizenry took to the streets to protest the rate increases, blocking their enactment.*

The Municipal Council and the Mayor feel caught between the proverbial rock and hard place—improvements have been promised, but they will increase the budget and the council and the Mayor don't know how to fund these improvements without raising the ire of their constituency. They have a problem, but aren't sure exactly what it is, nor what to do about it.

In general, the trainers' responsibility is to pinpoint the performance problem, and on that basis determine the following:

The training content. What does the training need to include to solve the performance problem? How it can be most effectively conveyed? How will it be developed?

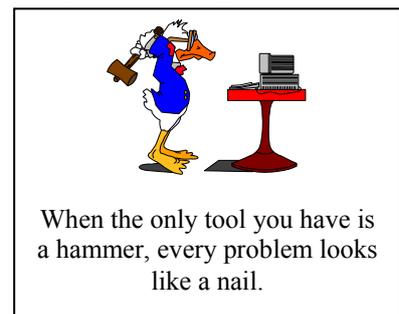
The target participants for the training (i.e., the learners). Who are they? What is their current knowledge and/or skills level? What reactions might they have toward training?

The data gathered while finding answers to these questions will be indispensable help as you develop and deliver the training program. First, it's information that, when analyzed, will define the objectives and the limitations of the training program. Second, the information will help identify the knowledge and skills that must be learned to fill the performance needs of the targeted participants. Third, the data will help you target training materials and learning activities to the appropriate level of the participants. Fourth, the data will be used to develop the training methods most appropriate to the target participants, such as role-plays and case studies. Finally, the information provides a performance "baseline" for evaluating the effectiveness of the training. These uses of the data are elaborated on in later sections of the manual on training design and training evaluation.

However, before you embark on the in-depth needs assessment leading to the development and delivery of the training, a critical question must be answered:

2.2 To Train or Not to Train—That Is the Question

As noted above, when trainers are asked to deliver a training program, an organization usually has a problem that someone believes can be fixed by training. More often than not, the source of this problem is perceived to be a deficiency in performance. At this point in the process, it's your responsibility to find out, as soon as possible, what the deficiency is, how critical it is to organizational performance, and what the solution to the problem might be. But be careful! An old maxim says, "When the only tool you have is a hammer, every problem looks like a nail." In other words, there is a danger that the solution to every organization's problem is training. This inadvertent orientation toward training is often further complicated when the person or organization requesting the training also has a bias toward training—perhaps for reasons of efficiency, cost, or a lack of awareness of alternatives.



Although training **is** often the best solution to performance problems in an organization, this **is not** always the case. Other solutions, such as peer-to-peer mentoring or technical assistance, may be more appropriate. The chief test for determining if training is needed is the question,

“Do the target participants already know how to meet the performance standards for their job tasks?”

If the answer is “Yes, they know how,” there is no need for training. There may still be a performance problem, but it is not a problem for training, since more training in what target participants already know how to do will not solve the problem. If the answer is “No, they don't know how,” there may be a training need.

In short, a training need exists when target participants lack the knowledge or skill to perform assigned tasks satisfactorily. You must therefore discriminate between performance problems that reflect training needs and those that do not. If you discover that training is not needed, alert the client that the organization's performance problems won't respond to training. (However, the client may insist on conducting the training program anyway. In that case, you can either withdraw from the activity or try to adjust the program so that it will be as useful to participants as possible.)

However, once you have determined that training will be an appropriate answer to the performance problem, move on to gathering the specific information necessary to develop and deliver training to fit the needs of the target participants.

2.2 Information for Assessment and Analysis

The purpose of assessing training needs is to help trainers plan for the major elements that will be involved in training—objectives, content, learning methods and aids, and evaluation. You should begin the in-depth assessment as soon as possible after you are aware that it is training that is needed, even if you feel that you don't have all the information you need to ask the "right" assessment questions. Early analysis will help you identify more specifically the areas requiring attention, including areas where you will have to gather more information to appropriately plan for the training.

Regardless of what methods or approaches trainers use to gather information, for that information to be useful they must always be alert to the sort of information most crucial for the purposes of training development and delivery. There are five categories of information required, as follows:¹

1. Why is training required?

Drawing on the information gathered both before and during the needs assessment, identify the person, group, or organization requesting training and what you or the training requester (i.e., the client) has identified as the training need. If there is variance between the stated training needs of the client and what you have concluded from the assessment data, this should be explained fully and discussed with the client. Agreement on the purpose of the training between the client and the trainer is essential.

In addition, the consequences of providing and not providing training should be spelled out. You should specify the positive outcomes that will occur as a result of the training (expected benefits), and the negative outcomes and lost opportunities that will result if training is not provided.

Finally, record the desired effects on the target participants' job performances. What are the specific job behaviors expected of the learners as a result of the training (new or changed behavior desired)?

2. Who are the target participants (learners)?

To aid in planning the training event, trainers should identify and record the job category (or categories) of those needing training, and the number of likely participants, by job category, if applicable (i.e., categories and size of target participant groups).

More important, you must note the learners' familiarity with the training content. Conclusions regarding this are drawn from your observations of the learners' current job performance, compared with what you and the client and learners agree is optimal job performance. This comparison allows you to set out recommended training content—knowledge and skills—for bridging the gap between the two performance levels (see No. 3, below), and making an assessment of learners' familiarity with that content. For example, if

¹ A worksheet to help you organize these data is attached to this manual as Annex 1.

participant familiarity with the content is relatively high, but in-practice application has been weak, this must be noted as it would probably lead you in the direction of a skill-based, as opposed to knowledge-based, training—with critical implications for the choice of training methods and aids. Conversely, if participant familiarity with the content is weak or nonexistent, you would have to design a training that first emphasizes knowledge gains before engaging in skills building.

Finally, note anticipated learner reactions to the training. In this section of the worksheet you should record your assessment of learners’ attitudes about the training. Believe it or not, not everyone is as enthusiastic about training as trainers would assume. On occasion, learners’ may feel that the training requested is unrelated to their real needs, or is being planned in response to management directives unsuitable to organizational capabilities.

3. What is the training content?

As mentioned above, the nature of the training content is determined primarily by comparing current job performance with desired job performance (desired job performance may be defined by the client’s or learners’ notion of optimal performance, or an absolute performance standard, where such is found). It’s not necessary for you to go into great detail on the content here—detail is added later during training design—but the general subject of the training should be stated, with the major topics of the training listed (related to the job tasks expected of the learners, if possible).

Believe it...

In one organization, the line staff was subject to teamwork training at the direction of senior management eager to please external stakeholders. However, the supervisors of the line staff received no such training and were largely resistant to the team concept being promulgated. As the first group of line staff to be trained returned to the workplace, their new skills received an indifferent or hostile reception from their supervisors. Naturally, line staff sent thereafter to the training resented the time and energy involved and were openly resistant to the training.

For example, if you were to conclude from your assessment’s findings of the “rock and hard place” dilemma of the Municipal Council and Mayor described above that the lack of citizens’ understanding of the need to increase the budget and their corresponding lack of input into the budget process creates citizen opposition and resentment, you might state “Increasing Citizens’ Participation in the Municipal Budget Process” as the subject of proposed training for Municipal Councilors, the Mayor and their staffs. Supporting that subject, you might see the possible topics and job tasks of the training as follows:

Increasing Citizens’ Participation in the Municipal Budget Process	
Topics	Job Tasks
Taking a citizens’ participation approach in budgeting and identifying participation stakeholders	Organize the participation process
Good practices and effective techniques for enabling citizens to participate in local budgeting	Use methods and tools to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide information to the citizens • Consult with the citizens • Advance the active participation of the citizens

With this general idea of what the training content will be, you should give thought to the resources that are available to help in the design and delivery of the proposed subject and its topics—resources such as explanatory documentation related to the subject, experts in the field who may be available for consultation, your own expertise, and the existence of off-the-shelf training packages. Noting these resources is useful as it provides the first real glimpse of the magnitude of the training design and delivery task you have ahead.

Considering the subject and its topics together, and the wealth or paucity of resources available for designing and delivering the training, you can begin to anticipate difficulties you might confront in further formulating the content when developing a training plan. Anticipating these difficulties at this point is important for several reasons. First, the client and learners should be informed as to what the anticipated difficulties are, as they may be able to provide guidance and direction in overcoming the difficulties. Second, the expectations of all stakeholders are tempered by the anticipated difficulties (or, more often, the root causes of those difficulties). Finally, you can begin to plan overcoming the difficulties and not be (unpleasantly) surprised by them during course design.

Case Study

For example, looking back to the model municipality case, exploration would likely show that most of the subject's two topics are well documented, with time-tested rules to guide the application of the topic's knowledge to the related job tasks in all but the last aspect, "advance the active participation of the citizens." For this aspect, very little about general instruction is available. This is not surprising, as the essentials of active citizen participation in municipal budgeting varies according to the nature of the decisions being made and the type of input to be solicited from the citizens. For example, are citizens brainstorming solutions or helping the council determine a course of action through a force field analysis? Knowing from the outset that there is no active participation "answer" for a municipality, you will know not to ask the question! Rather, you can work with your client and learners to identify "best practice" cases that might be used during the training to illustrate the circumstances that lead to active citizens' participation, develop hypothetical cases (based on real examples) for learners to practice tools for advancing participation, and/or be clear with clients and learners that advancing the active participation of the citizens is situational—that no right answers exist, and the clients shouldn't expect the training to provide them.

4. What are the time issues?

As you plan and talk with the client and the learners about No. 1–3 above, a general "picture" of the training begins to develop. Using this picture, you can note preliminary recommendations related to the training's time issues.

Knowing the subject and topics of the proposed training, along with the size of the gap between target participants' current job performance of the subject and desired performance, you can estimate the length of training. Remember, though, and remind your client, that this is just an estimate and that the actual length of training will not be reliably known until the

training design is completed. There aren't any real guidelines for coming up with this estimate, except to say that a reasonable length-of-training estimate is best derived by quick approximations of the amount of time you think will be necessary for training participants to learn and practice the skills related to each topic and job task proposed, and totaling these times. With the basic timing framework of the training set, and keeping in mind that the optimal contact time (i.e., time actually spent on coursework) with learners is 6 hours per day, you should then add estimates of timing for training opening, breaks, lunches, and training closure to come to an approximate total training time in both number of hours and number of days. It's useful to keep in mind that in estimating the amount of time it will take to cover **each** training topic or job task, you should use the experiential learning cycle as a guide. That is, think carefully about the amount of time it will take for learners to

- Have a constructive direct experience with the topic (e.g., interactive presentation, case study, role play);
- Reflect on the experience (e.g., discussion, presentation, report);
- Draw conclusions from the experience (e.g., synthesis discussion, pointed reading, interactive presentation); and
- Relate what's been learned to on-the-job experience (e.g., action planning, group discussion on application).

It's also useful to keep in mind that in most cases even experienced trainers underestimate length of training by a third.

You can also make an educated guess about the frequency of training events. This is often simply a matter of dividing the total number of targeted participants by the optimal training class size. The optimal training size is 20–25 participants, but may be a smaller number if intensive and individual in-class instruction and/or working on real job tasks is anticipated.

With these data available, you and your client can discuss and come to agreement on the starting date of the training (or trainings) and any other known timing issues. These are not casual decisions, as there are a number of considerations that, if ignored, only cause grief for the trainers, clients, and learners later on. General rules include the following:

- Confirm with the client that targeted participants can attend the solid block of time necessary to treat the subject and its topics fully. If this is not possible, do not abbreviate the length of training—this short-changes the client and learners. Instead, split the training into two or more parts that would be convenient to the client and learners. For example, if 5 days of training might be necessary for a topic, but the client may not be able to afford the absence of staff for such a long period, you may suggest two 2½-day trainings or ten ½-day trainings, which might be equally appropriate (however, these models have implications for the training location, see below).
- If learners are traveling individually to a training location some distance from their homes, will they be expected to arrive the night before the training starts, or will they arrive the morning of the day the training starts? If it's the latter, schedule the start of training for mid-morning to allow for late-comers.

Believe it...

There will be late-comers and early departers.

- If learners are traveling individually from the training location, will they be expected to stay for a full last day of training, or will they depart before the end of the day on which training concludes? If the latter, schedule the end of training for mid-afternoon to allow for early departures.
- Keep in mind the amount of time it will take to develop the training and allow ample time for this before the training is set to begin. Experienced trainers plan on 3 days of preparation for each anticipated day of training.
- Finally, consult your own schedule so you do not schedule the training during time that has been committed to another client (this is what is called “double-booking” and happens more frequently than busy trainers would like to admit).

5. Where will the training be conducted?

As in No. 4 above, this is another seemingly casual recommendation to the client that, when made inattentively, can lead to a difficult situation. For example, trainers occasionally accede—in their wish to be responsive—to client requests (usually made because of slim resources) that the training be held in a conference room or some other similar space in or near the building where the learners work. In almost all cases when this occurs, the training event turns into a constant and unpleasant struggle to keep the learners’ attention on the course, and not on the day-to-day demands of their jobs. Even in a first-rate training, participants will often arrive late to sessions (“Oh, I had this e-mail that I really had to answer!”), leave for extended periods during the day (“I’m sorry, but my supervisor called me to a meeting that I absolutely had to attend.”), leave before the training day’s agenda is complete (“Gosh, I would have liked to have stayed for the small group work, but I have a report due next week that I have to focus on.”), or stay for the whole day of training, and then put in nearly a full work day’s worth of work at night (“I’m really having trouble concentrating today. I was up until one o’clock in the morning in my office working on the financial reports due at the end of the month.”)

These recurrent absences usually result in an insufficient understanding of the subject and its topics on the part of the “missing” participants, and always result in resentment among participants who attend the whole course, because they feel abandoned by their colleagues and/or frequently have to spend valuable learning and skills building time during the course catching up their “missing” colleagues on what they missed. Given these risks, it is almost always appropriate to recommend to the client that the training take place off-site, far enough away from the work place that participants can’t physically “commute” back and forth, and far enough removed from their day-to-day work that they don’t think about it very much. Be as firm about this as circumstances allow, bearing in mind (but not mentioning it—clients could get upset if they believe their organization’s relevance is questioned) that there are really very few workplaces that can’t get along without large numbers of staff present for a week or two—hospital emergency rooms, maybe, or police or firefighter services.

However, there are occasions when off-site training is not possible, and you must be prepared to recognize this and recommend on-site training. This usually occurs in one of four situations:

1. Client resources may not be sufficient for off-site training.

2. The appropriate schedule for the training (e.g., a series of ½-day sessions) may make off-site training inconvenient—although even in this case you should shoot for a training venue separate, but not far, from the work place.
3. You anticipate that the best training for learners should focus on solving real problems at the work place (e.g., installing and learning how to work with new financial management software).
4. Off-site training may impose a hardship on learners. For example, if you learn during the needs assessment that many or most of the targeted participants are single heads of household, or may have equally important eldercare responsibilities, it may be especially difficult or impossible for these people to make alternative care arrangements for while they are away at training.

Assessing, analyzing, and organizing training needs information as proposed above allows you to confirm your analysis with your client and learners before engaging in training design. Coming to agreement on training purpose, targeted participants, general content, timing, and location at this point in training development forestalls the sorts of misunderstandings or unmet expectations that can so easily derail a training program (as discussed above).

To gain agreement on your conclusions and recommendations, provide the assessment and analysis information to the client and learners (either singly or in a group) to ask for their feedback, revising the analysis as necessary (and as many times as is necessary, although, if the assessment process has been inclusive and comprehensive, many revisions shouldn't be necessary) until all training stakeholders are comfortable with what now amounts to the training proposal.

2.3 Four Methods of Collecting Information

Now that you know how the information you gather is going to be used, try to make sure the following methods of collecting this information are included when conducting the assessment. These methods should generally be used in the order described below.

1. Review job descriptions, task analyses, and testimonials.

Whether or not the client has already defined the purpose and subject of the training, an important first step in collecting information is to find out what target participants are supposed to do in their jobs. In many instances, this information will be readily available in their job descriptions or results from performance evaluations. During periodic testimonials of job performance, a review is performed of the knowledge and skills necessary for quality job performance. Or, if job descriptions or results from testimonials do not exist, you may have to do a more time-consuming task analysis, which is really just a fancy name for asking stakeholders (including the client and supervisors) what the target participants are supposed to do on the job. In either case, you are establishing a baseline of what is seen as optimal job performance regarding the function or functions of the organization that the client would like to see improved.

Comparative analysis is a variation on this method that trainers often find useful in situations where task analysis does not adequately uncover optimal performance. This usually comes about in circumstances where the job task is so completely unfamiliar to the client and target participants that they have no basis for describing optimal performance. For example, in the case introduced above, the Municipal Councilors and Mayor don't have any experience

involving citizens in the municipal budget process and are unable to say—because they don't know!—how effective citizen participation should be accomplished. In instances like this, you might explore how this is accomplished in other municipalities with more experience or expertise in the subject to judge the directions your client organization needs. This also helps to identify potentially useful resources for the proposed training, e.g., peer-to-peer training. However, care must be taken that in observing “others” doing the task you don't set too high a performance benchmark for your target participants. In other words, the knowledge and skills of the comparative organization(s) regarding a task may so exceed the capacity building capability of training that learners will be frustrated in trying to accomplish the unaccomplishable. Simply speaking, set your training objectives relative to the desired state of performance, but keep the beginning state of performance in mind.

2. Have the target participants (and other critical stakeholders) fill out a questionnaire.

After you get a handle on what target participants are supposed to be able to do at work, it is essential to begin to understand the actual current situation and the desired future situation *from the perspective of key stakeholders*, such as managers and supervisors, as well as the staff. A questionnaire, together with interviews (described below), is an efficient means of starting this process. In addition to logistics questions related to the location and timing of the proposed training, you should seek information related to the most important **tasks** that target participants must know how to do to perform their jobs effectively, what **skills** they use to accomplish their tasks (to be good at their jobs), **tough situations** encountered by the target participants and how they handled them, and the aspects of their tasks and skills that **need improvement** or have caused trouble. In this manner, you continue to clarify the aforementioned gap between current job performance and optimal job performance.

3. Conduct interviews (individual and focus group).

Whenever possible (and trainers should do all that they can to ensure this) you should speak individually to key stakeholders and conduct focus groups to examine the “lessons” that you are learning during the assessment. It is only through this method that you can gain critical data regarding target participants' attitudes, understanding, behavior, and expectations that will complete your insight into the “bridge” that must be built by training to span the gap between current and optimal job performance. You will want information on the following:

- Target participants' **feelings** about their jobs and their workplace. What are the motivations of the learners related to the proposed training?
- What concepts and information do the target participants use effectively, and what do they **desire** to know more about?

Confidentiality

It cannot be stated too strongly that throughout the assessment process you must maintain strict confidentiality. For example, you should keep survey and interview data with you at all times (e.g., don't leave notes or completed questionnaires lying about for others to see). Being extreme in your vigilance is important. Many trainers take all raw (unprocessed, unaggregated) data home, and shred it to preserve the confidentiality of the informants. If strict confidentiality is not possible, you should tell your client and learners what level of confidentiality **will** be honored. For example, you might share learner questionnaire results with the client to support your analysis, but “clean” the data first so that no single individual can be identified with any single comment, or aggregate the data to de-personalize it. If you plan to do this, inform the learners so they are not surprised when cleaned or aggregated data are shared, and so that they can be confident that their anonymity has been preserved.

- What do the target participants feel competent to do? What **experiences** have they had?
- What are the **hopes** of the learners for themselves and for their organization's future?

4. Observe performance and behaviors.

By this time in the assessment, you have heard a lot about current and desired job performance from the key stakeholders, both individually and collectively. Whenever possible, go to see the target participants at work and observe their real-life job performance. Unfortunately, this is an assessment method that is often not undertaken because of lack of time or money or simply not remembering to do so. Observations of the target participants at work serve principally as a validation, letting you judge whether or not your findings and conclusions regarding job performance are correct. In addition, direct observation might also reveal additional behaviors to be attended to in the proposed training or, most importantly, may uncover root causes for behaviors about which previously applied assessment methods only identified symptoms.

For example, during application of the questionnaire and interview methods, key stakeholders might point out that an impediment to increasing citizens' participation in the budget process is their lack of awareness of methods and techniques that encourage participation. However, during on-the-job observation, you note that even when Municipal Councilors and Mayors are aware of this, they are reluctant to apply the methods and techniques—something not all that uncommon among risk-averse managers—and that that is the core impediment to citizens' participation. If such a situation is the case, training your targeted participants is not likely to improve citizens' participation in the budget process. Instead, technical assistance aimed to change management behaviors might be a more appropriate intervention.

2.4 Soliciting Information

Although job descriptions, task analyses, testimonial results, and performance observation are important methods for gathering needs information, the questionnaire and follow-up interview are at the heart of the assessment. When reviewing literature about needs assessments, trainers will find a wide variety of questionnaire and interview types from which to choose. You should make your choice based on which approaches best get at the information you will need to develop and deliver the training and the approaches with which you are most comfortable. One such approach to questionnaires and interviews is provided here. It may not be the best for you, but it is an approach that has worked well for many trainers.

The questionnaire

A simple tool that directly and unambiguously sounds out targeted participants and other key stakeholders on important job performance issues will work well. Learner attitudes toward their jobs and work place, which are vital to understanding their mindset, will be explored during the interview. A questionnaire comprised of open-ended questions is recommended because it encourages learners and other key stakeholders to think over their responses more thoroughly than they might otherwise, if closed-ended questions (or other assessment devices, such as a Likert scale) were used. Responding thoughtfully to open-ended questions

takes time, so you should allow a week for learners and key stakeholders to complete the questionnaire. Such a questionnaire might resemble the following:

Exhibit 5: Sample Needs Assessment Questionnaire

Name: _____
Position: _____
Date: _____

Statement of the Job Performance Need

You should enter the specific job performance need as defined by the client, if available, or a more general job performance description if the client has asked you to identify the specific need within the organization or a particular job performance category.

An example of the former might be:

“Good practices and effective techniques for enabling citizens to participate in local budgeting.”

An example of the latter might be:

“Increasing citizens’ participation in the municipal budget process.”

Directions for Completing the Questionnaire:

[Your name(s)] has been asked by *[name of the client]* to examine institutional and individual job performance in the area mentioned above. Our purpose is to see if a targeted technical assistance or training intervention would significantly improve performance in this area. You can help us meet our purpose by answering the following questions as fully and honestly as possible (use additional sheets of paper, if necessary). Your identity will be kept completely confidential by the trainers, although the information you provide will contribute to our assessment report.

1. What are the five most important **tasks** that a *[enter the relevant job title of the performance area under examination, e.g., Municipal Councilor, Public Relations Officer]* must know how to do in order to perform his or her job effectively?
[Allow about 15cm of space after each question for respondents to answer.]
2. To be good at their jobs, *[enter the relevant job title of the performance area under examination, as above]* must have certain **skills** that they use to accomplish their tasks. What are the five most important of these skills?
3. What are the most important *[enter the relevant job title of the performance area under examination, as above]* tasks and skills that **need improvement** or have caused trouble in performing the job?
4. What **tough situations** have been encountered by *[enter the relevant job title of the performance area under examination, as above]* and how have they handled them?
5. Do you have any **additional comments** to help us understand this job performance area—e.g., things that help in performing the job, or things that get in the way?

The interview

Following the review of the job descriptions or task analysis, and completion and analysis of the questionnaires, you will have a pretty good understanding of generalized learner and key

stakeholder perceptions of job performance—its current state, and whether and how it might be improved. As mentioned above, another element that must be investigated before drawing conclusions about the appropriate change intervention is the specific learner attitudes toward their jobs and work place. These data are vital to understanding a learner’s outlook and are best uncovered during an individual interview (although, with large numbers of learners to accommodate or a limited period of time, focus groups might suffice).

During the interviews, you should look for answers to the following questions:

- Specific insights into each learner’s desire for change—what **enthusiasm** is found for
 - A deeper understanding of his or her job and workplace?
 - Shifts in attitudes related to job performance?
 - Changes in job performance and workplace behavior?
- How do these desires correspond with the client’s and other key stakeholders’ desired future for the organization? What skills will be necessary for the learner to accomplish his or her desired change?

From these data, you can draw a composite picture of learner outlook:

- Are there examples or situations that you may want to use in the training? (These may contribute to case studies or exercises.)
- Which of the stories that you have heard exemplify the overall desire and potential for change that have emerged during the assessment process?

As with the questionnaire, a simple set of questions that directly and unambiguously sounds out learners and other key stakeholders on the vital issues of attitude and mindset will work best. Also, as above, an interview comprised of open-ended questions is recommended. Using an appreciative inquiry interview approach satisfies these preferences and provides the data trainers need to “see” the relationships between the learners and their jobs and workplaces. An appreciative inquiry interview explores what’s working and why instead of what’s broken and how to fix it, which is known as a problem identification approach. An example of an open-ended question is the following:

There are times in our lives when we are aware that what we have to offer in the way of job performance to our organization and its constituents is exactly what is needed, and everything comes together for you to perform your job as best as you can. Think for a moment about a time when this has happened for you and then tell me your story about that experience. Tell me a bit about who else was involved and how things turned out. I’m especially interested in knowing how this experience influenced your own professional growth.

Trainers may also take a more direct approach to uncovering the same information by using the following questions. Which method you use depends on the comfort level of the trainers and interviewees with using stories to describe working life.

What would you say are some of the critical factors that must be present, or are certainly desirable, in order for you to be completely comfortable in performing your job? And

What are the particular job performance skills and capabilities of which you are especially proud? This question is about an honest self-appraisal and therefore does not need to be qualified with terms of modesty or humility.

What characteristics do you value most about yourself?

What do you consider to be the core factor that gives “life” to your organization?

What three “wishes” would you make to increase the effectiveness of... (e.g., local government in Bulgaria)?

Imagine that today, after this interview, you go home and take a nap. During that nap, you have a dream about yourself 3 years from now. You see yourself fully functioning in your work and several exciting opportunities lie before you. Tell me what you see yourself doing and a little about how you think you brought it about.

Organizing the interview data

Following each interview, you should think about and note answers to the following questions (allow time for this quick analysis before the next interview is scheduled to begin):

- What was the most quotable statement that came out of this interview?
- What was the most compelling story that came out of this interview?
- What were the three most profound themes that stood out for you during the interview?
- What were the interviewee’s essential features about his or her visions for the future?

Answers to these questions help to frame the data in a way that is useful for drawing conclusions about learners’ attitudes and outlook, and making recommendations on these bases.

Completing a needs assessment will give you the information necessary to design a training program that will be useful to clients and learners. By discussing the purpose, target participants, content, timing, and location of the training with both clients and learners you will have let them know what to expect from the training process and hopefully will have their agreement that the training program is on target.

Tips for Conducting Interviews

Use the questionnaire data from the interviewee as your general background for the interview, but don’t refer to it specifically.

Give the interviewee the option of thinking about his answers for a moment before beginning the conversation.

If the response to a question begins to flag or lose direction, use the following questions to probe further:

- Tell me more.
- How did that affect you?
- What was your contribution?
- What are the reasons for the results?
- How has it changed you?

Let the interviewee tell his or her story without imposing your own opinion about his experiences.

Take good notes and listen for great quotes and stories.

If the interviewee doesn’t want to answer, or can’t answer, any of the interview questions, that’s OK. Let it go.

Chapter 3: **Designing a Training Program**

Upon the completion of the needs assessment, trainers should have gained client and learner consensus that training is a necessary intervention, as well as general agreement on the purpose, learners, content, timing, and location of the training. All the necessary information about the learners is in place to design the training program. The purpose of this chapter is to guide you through the major steps of designing a training program—setting the general and specific objectives for training; undertaking the development of a session-by-session outline of the training contents; determining the methods for conveying the knowledge and skills required to achieve training objectives; choosing the learning aids that best support the acquisition of knowledge and skills; and preparing the final agenda for the training.

3.1 Training Design Team

The first step in designing a training program is to assemble a training design team. The ideal team would be comprised of two experienced trainers (presumably the same trainers who conducted the needs assessment) with expertise in developing training. Unless an extensive training-of-trainers is planned, these trainers should also deliver the training course. Therefore, the trainers should demonstrate strong interpersonal skills and be competent group facilitators. They should also be positive trainer models. In addition to the trainers, one or two technical experts with an understanding of both the subject matter *and* the specific local environment should be on the design team. Experts with strong opinions are welcome, but they must be open to challenge, debate, and consensus decision making. Only under rare circumstances—such as a need for exceedingly broad and varied technical input—should the design team exceed five persons.

3.2 Developing Learning Objectives

Learning objectives are the foundation of effective training. Adults expect their training to be useful. By developing good learning objectives, you are taking the first step in ensuring that your training meets your adult learners' needs. Learning objectives focus both you and your learners on the achievement of specific results:

- They help you develop and conduct training that provides the learners with the skills and knowledge they need; and
- They provide the learners with a clear understanding of what they will be expected to do as a result of the training.

Levels of objectives

A training course is comprised of several separate training sessions or topics. Learning objectives should be developed on both of these levels—the course level and the session level. Course objectives are developed first and state the broad behavior expected of learners at the end of the course. Session objectives state the specific behaviors expected of learners following each of a training course's individual sessions. They are developed after the course objective is set and when taken together should state all of the specific behaviors required to achieve the course objective.

Course objectives

The model municipality case study can help illustrate course and section objectives. As you will recall, the needs assessment revealed that citizens' lack of understanding of the need to increase the budget and their lack of input into the budget process resulted in their opposition to and resentment of budget changes. Based on this finding, the overall topic of training would be "Increasing Citizens' Participation in the Municipal Budget Process." This general training need can be reworded as the course objective, also called the general objective:

"At the end of this workshop, you will be able to confidently use proven citizen participation methods and tools for increasing citizens' participation in the municipal budget process."

You will note that the objective is not "Citizens' Participation in the Municipal Budget Process Increased." This is because trainers should only hold the training accountable for what is in their manageable interest to change. Trainers can comfortably state that learners will be able to use the methods and tools after the training, but there are too many possible intervening variables to confidently predict changes in citizens' behavior. For example, the citizenry might be so skeptical of the municipality's motives in trying to get them to participate that they resist.

Session objectives

Similarly, the needs assessment data on training content can help identify more specific training objectives that you and your trainees must achieve in order to accomplish the course objective or objectives. In the case study, the assessment concluded that the Municipal Council, the Mayor, and their staffs needed to develop skills for providing information to citizens, consulting with citizens, and advancing citizens' active participation in the budget process. A strong specific objective for the training might be

"At the end of this session, you will be able to employ citizen advisory groups, focus groups, a citizens' mailbox, and a municipal hotline to consult with citizens."

A specific objective like this is often called a session objective. This is because the knowledge and skills transferred in meeting such an objective fit neatly under a session heading. In this case, the heading would be "Consulting with Citizens," and would differentiate the session from others that aim to provide information to the citizens and advance their active participation.

This part of the "Designing a Training Program" chapter will focus on session objectives. However, the steps you will learn in developing session objectives also apply to developing course objectives.

Steps in developing learning objectives

There are two steps trainers should follow to develop adequate learning objectives. They are

1. Clarify the job tasks to be performed after training.
2. Develop appropriately stated objectives based on those tasks.

Clarifying post-training tasks

To clarify post-training tasks, start with the information you developed when you assessed the training needs of targeted participants and key stakeholders. First review the “Worksheet for Assessing Training Needs” (*Annex I*), paying particular attention to Item 1d where you identified the new or changed behavior expected of the learners, and Item 3a where the general subject of the training was noted, with the major topics of the training listed in relation to the job tasks expected of target participants. Then re-evaluate your list of the major “new” tasks the learners will be doing as a result of the training, revising the list as necessary. (However, with a good needs assessment, little or no revision will be necessary.)

Developing Appropriately Stated Objectives

Once you have clarified the post-training tasks, write objectives that describe the task behavior you want the learners to demonstrate during training.

Example 1

Post-Training Task:

Use methods and tools to provide budget information to the citizens.

Learning Objective:

“At the end of this session, learners will be able to write a simple press release informing citizens about the budget calendar and how they may provide input into the budget process.”

It is important that the learning objectives come as close as possible to the actual behavior the learner will be expected to perform on the job.

When describing desired behavior, use words that describe observable behavior. This will come easily when writing learning objectives for easily observable behavioral changes, such as that above.

However, when the behavior relates to the learners’ knowledge or attitudes, trainers are tempted to use words like “know,” “understand,” or “appreciate.” These words describe something that is happening inside the learners, and is not observable. In these cases, write learning objectives that use words that describe the observable behavior that the learners will demonstrate during training to show that they got the point.

Example 2
Post-Training Task:
 The learners will cooperate with media on budget issues more frequently.
Learning Objective:
 “At the end of the training, learners will...”

Inappropriate	Appropriate
... know the importance of cooperating with the media.”	...be able to list five ways their municipality can more effectively involve the media to publicize municipal budget issues.”

Example 3
Post-Training Task:
 The learners will advise their Municipal Council on methods and tools for consulting with citizens.
Learning Objective:S
 “At the end of the training, learners will be able to...”

Inappropriate	Appropriate
... appreciate the usefulness of using focus groups to consult with citizens on budget issues.”	... describe four specific benefits of using focus groups to consult with citizens on budget issues.”

In the examples above, the appropriate learning objective included a word that described observable behavior that could be demonstrated in training, creating confidence in both the trainers and the learners that the hoped-for skill has been successfully transferred. The figure below offers examples of appropriate and inappropriate words for writing learning objectives based on whether or not they describe observable behavior.

Exhibit 6: Examples of Inappropriate and Appropriate Words for Writing Learning Objectives

Inappropriate Words (Unobservable Behavior)		Appropriate Words (Observable Behavior)	
accept	appreciate	write	explain
be aware of	believe	classify	list
remember	comprehend	calculate	select
recall	know	prepare	apply
be familiar with	understand	operate	choose
consider	discern	define	construct
grasp	ascertain	describe	complete
value		demonstrate	

The above lists are samples to consider when writing objectives. Whatever word you choose, remember that the critical issue is to clearly communicate the behavior that must be shown by the learner, so that both you and the learner know that learning has taken place.

Learning objectives should always be expressed from the learner's point of view. Trainers need to define what they want the learner to be able to do as a result of the training, not what they want to accomplish during the training. Starting all of your objectives with the phrase, "At the end of the training the learners will be able to..." will help keep this focus in mind.

Finally, learning objectives at the course and session levels reflect the linkage between the "new" job tasks expected from the training and the overall improvement in job performance anticipated. In other words, when a learner reads an objective and asks why it's included in the training, the answer should be an obvious improvement in their job performance. This linkage between course objectives and improved job performance should always be direct and clear.

3.3 Outlining the Training Content

The training content for a course or session learning objective is everything the learner will have to learn in order to achieve the learning objective. When developing the training content, first identify the actions the learner must take to reach the learning objective—e.g., the skills needed—and then identify the knowledge the learner must have to complete those actions.

Outlining the training content serves three purposes:

- It enables you to sort through all of the possible training content to identify what is really necessary for the learners to learn.
- It allows you to organize and sequence the training content for presenting it during the training.
- It serves as a process for checking to make sure your training includes everything that your learners will need to know and do to achieve the learning objective.

Outlining content is probably not a new concept for you. You use the same type of skills to outline training content as you do to outline a presentation, but with one big difference: you must view the training content from the learner's perspective, i.e., what the learner needs in order to achieve the training's objectives, not from your own perspective, i.e., what you as a trainer want to tell the learner.

Steps in outlining the training content

There are four steps involved in outlining training content. They are

1. List the actions the learners must take to accomplish each session objective.
2. Identify the knowledge required so that the learner can take those actions.

3. Sequence the training content (knowledge requirements and actions) according to the order in which they should occur in training to most effectively achieve the session objective.
4. Review the sequence to ensure that the content as a whole “adds up” to the achievement of the training’s course objective or objectives.

Step 1: Listing actions

Learning is most effective when the training content is broken down into small steps. The smaller the steps, the more easily they can be learned. Breaking the training content down into small steps will also help trainers make sure that no steps are left out.

To develop a list of actions, it can help to visualize someone performing the post-training tasks, including when the tasks involve mental actions, e.g., conducting a citizens’ focus group on the municipal budget. Close your eyes and imagine a person doing the mental or physical actions necessary for achieving the learning objective. Imagine that the last action the person takes is the one stated in the learning objective, e.g., “At the end of this session, learners will be able to...(action).” Then list the actions that must be performed to reach this point in the order in which they should be performed.

If you’re unsure of the specific actions, clarify them at this point. Refer to the “available supportive resources” identified earlier in Chapter 2: Assessing Training Needs—contact an expert or do document research.

Don’t worry about oversimplifying the actions at this point. Right now they will only be used to outline the training content, not to plan for conducting the training. If you decide later that the actions are too simplistic, you can easily combine them when you develop the training plan.

Case Study

Learning Objective:

At the end of this session, learners will be able to conduct a citizens’ focus group to get input on the municipal budget.

Actions:

- Determine the objectives of the focus group and prepare the discussion guide. Select a team and deciding on roles and responsibilities.
- Determine the size and composition of the focus group. Determine location of the focus group and room set-up. Establish the timing and duration of focus group sessions.
- Open the focus group. Phrase questions so they are open-ended and use probing techniques. Set the pace and control the discussion, minimizing group peer pressure.
- Record discussions, and analyze and communicate results to budget managers.

Step 2: Identifying knowledge requirements

Outlining the training content includes both what the learners must do (actions) and the information that the learners must know and be able to manipulate correctly in order to take action (knowledge).

As you list each action, consider what information will be required to perform it. What facts or rules would a person need to know? These are the knowledge requirements.

As with the actions, if you are unsure of any knowledge requirements, refer to resources that can confirm them.

Case Study

Learning Objective:

At the end of this session, learners will be able to conduct a citizens' focus group to get input on the municipal budget.

Actions:

Determine the objectives of the focus group and prepare the discussion guide.

Determine the size and composition of the focus group. Determine location of the focus group and room set-up. Establish the timing and duration of focus group sessions.

Knowledge Requirements:

- Facts associated with the uses of focus groups and determining the focus or scope of the discussion
- Process for determining what information is needed
- Facts associated with optimal focus group size
- Criteria for deciding whether the focus group should be homogenous (e.g., by gender, age, or location) or heterogeneous.
- Facts associating focus group size to room set-up—e.g., fewer than 9 people in a circle, 9 to 15 people in a U-shape.
- Facts associated with the best times for specific focus groups to meet—e.g., single heads of households in the morning before the workday begins

Continue to break down knowledge requirements for each action necessary to achieve the learning objective.

Step 3: Sequencing training content

After you have identified all of the actions and knowledge requirements needed to achieve the objective, you're ready to sequence them in the order in which they should be presented during training.

In everyday life, as people go about performing tasks, they think about the information they need before doing something. Similarly, in sequencing training content, the general rule is that knowledge requirements precede the actions to which they relate.

Case Study

Learning Objective:

At the end of this session, learners will be able to conduct a citizens' focus group to get input on the municipal budget.

Training Content Sequence:

1. Facts associated with the uses of focus groups and how to determine the focus or scope of the discussion. (Knowledge)
2. Determine the objectives of the focus group. (Action)
3. Processes for determining what information is needed. (Knowledge)
4. Prepare the discussion guide. (Action)
5. Facts associated with optimal focus group size. (Knowledge)
6. Criteria for deciding whether the focus group should be homogenous (e.g., by gender, age, or location) or heterogeneous. (Knowledge)
7. Determine the size and composition of the focus group. (Action)
8. Facts associating focus group size with room set-up—e.g., fewer than 9 people in a circle, 9 to 15 people in a U-shape. (Knowledge)
9. Determine location of the focus group and room set-up. (Action)
10. Facts associated with the best times for specific focus groups to meet. (Knowledge)
11. Establish the timing and duration of focus group sessions. (Action)

Continue to list the actions and knowledge requirements until all of the content necessary for achieving the learning objective is included.

Step 4: Achieving general objectives

If trainers have made logical linkages between a training's course and session objectives the training content developed for each session objective should meet the anticipated course objective or objectives. When all of the training content has been outlined, you should read it carefully to see if the course objective or objectives of the training are met by the content.

For example, the training content illustrated above related to focus groups would be one set of knowledge and actions contributing to the course objective of “Consulting with Citizens.” Other training content emphasizing the session objectives relating to citizen advisory groups, a citizens’ mailbox, and a municipal hotline should also contribute to achieving the course objective. Together, the sets of knowledge and actions for each session objective should ensure that learners’ use of proven citizens’ participation methods and tools for increasing citizen participation in the municipal budget process will have been improved by the training.

In this part of the manual, you received guidance on how to develop a training content outline for a learning objective. You also learned how to identify all of the actions and knowledge requirements learners must learn in order for them to achieve an objective, and to sequence this content based on how it should be presented in training. When you develop your training plan later in this chapter you will refine the training content outline you created here. However, first this chapter will explore training methods and aids, two vital accompaniments to content that are necessary to achieve training objectives.

3.4 Selecting Training Methods

When you develop your training plan, you will need to specify the training methods and training aids to use to teach the training content. This part of the “Designing a Training Program” chapter will cover selecting training methods for your training plan. The following part of this chapter will cover using training aids.

This section will explore seven training methods: reading, interactive presentation, demonstration, structured exercise, role play, case study, and simulation. These seven methods have been selected because they tend to be the ones most helpful to trainers. For each method, you will be given guidance to help you decide when to use each method, and examples of training methods to use to teach the training content outlined earlier.

The need for variety in training methods

Training methods serve two important purposes: they provide an effective means for the learner to learn the specific training content you have outlined and they keep the learner interested and involved in the training so that learning is improved. A favorite saying of trainers is that people “remember 25 percent of what they hear, 45 percent of what they hear and see, and 75 percent of what they hear, see, and do!” In varying training methods, you will ensure as many opportunities as possible for their learners to hear, see, *and* do.

Selecting training methods to suit the learners

Remember experiential learning

When selecting and developing learning methods, trainers should always keep the experiential learning cycle in mind. The cycle’s approach to adult learning involves providing learners with constructive direct experiences with training content, opportunities to reflect on the experience and draw conclusions from it, and then opportunities to relate what’s been learned about the training content to on-the-job experience. This approach also maintains that trainers use different learning methods. For example, in certain situations an interactive presentation may give trainees direct exposure to training content. However, in other circumstances, reading a case study, completing a structured exercise, or participating in a role-play may be a more effective means of engaging learners.

Remember your needs assessment and learning styles inventory

Variety in methods is also crucial to ensure that you “reach” the learner. Not everyone’s learning preferences are the same. There is considerable diversity among individuals, as discussed in Chapter 1. Different styles require you to provide variety in your training to respond to the various style preferences of your learners. One way to provide this variety is to use different training methods.

Training methods

Below are descriptions of seven training methods; for each method the table provides essential information on its advantages, things to be aware of before deciding to use the method (including drawbacks), and a brief explanation of the process involved in using the method during your training.

Reading

Description

Written material is used to present new information (or information the trainer would like learners to review) to learners.



Advantages

- Saves time (learners can read faster than trainers can talk)
- Material can be retained for later use
- Insures consistency of information

Things of which to be aware

- Can be counterproductive if the material is too long
- Learners read at different paces, which makes session timing difficult
- Difficult to gauge if people are learning

Presentation

Description



A presentation is an activity conducted by a resource specialist to convey information, theories, or principles in which the specialist/trainer orally presents new information to learners. Forms of presentations can range from straight lecture to involvement of the learner through questions and discussion. Presentations depend more on the trainer for content than any other training method.

Advantages

- Covers a lot of material in a short time
- Can be adapted to any kind of learner
- Can precede hands-on training methods
- Keeps group together and on the same point
- Useful for large groups (25+ learners)
- Keeps learners interested and involved
- Learner resources can be discovered and shared during discussion
- Learning can be inferred from learner responses to the material
- The trainer has more control than with other methods

Things of which to be aware

- Emphasizes one-way communication, the learner's role is generally passive
- Inappropriate for changing behavior or for learning new skills
- Learner retention is not as great unless it is followed up with a hands-on method
- Learning points can be confusing or lost
- A few learners may dominate the discussion
- Time control is difficult
- Can be dull if the presentation goes too long without learner participation
- Without vigorous discussion, it is difficult to gauge if people are learning
- Retention is limited
- Trainer needs special skills to be an effective presenter

Process

1. Introduce the topic—tell the learners what you're going to tell them
2. Tell them what you want to tell them—present the material using visual aids
3. Summarize the key points you've made—tell the learners what you've told them
4. Invite the learners to ask questions

Demonstration

Description

A demonstration is a presentation of a method for doing something—learners are shown the correct steps for completing a task, or are shown an example of a correctly completed task. This is particularly useful for teaching a specific skill or technique.



Advantages

- Stimulates learners' interest
- Easy to focus learners' attention and aids understanding and retention
- Shows practical applications of a method and involves learners when they try the method themselves
- Can give learners a step-by-step model to follow

Things of which to be aware

- Must be accurate and relevant to learners
- Requires planning and practice ahead of time. Written examples can require lengthy preparation time
- Demonstrator needs to have enough materials for everyone to try the method
- Requires giving feedback to learners when they try themselves
- Trainer demonstrations may be difficult for all learners to see well. Often not useful in large groups

Process

1. Introduce the demonstration—what is the purpose?
2. Present the material you're going to use
3. Demonstrate
4. Demonstrate again, explaining each step
5. Invite the learners to ask questions
6. Have the learners practice themselves
7. Discuss how easy/difficult it was for them—summarize

Structured Exercise

Description



A structured exercise is an activity that allows learners to share their experiences and ideas or to solve a problem. Learners take part in an exercise that enables them to practice new skills, allowing for knowledge reinforcement and clarification of session objectives through discussion. Structured exercises enable participants to present their ideas and practice new skills in a controlled environment.

Advantages

- Improves problem-solving skills
- Helps participants learn from each other and promotes teamwork
- Gives participants a greater sense of responsibility in and control of the learning process
- Aids retention
- Participation is encouraged and learners are actively involved

Things of which to be aware

- Requires preparation time
- The task given to the group needs to be very clear, with questions to help guide the discussion
- Needs sufficient class time for exercise completion and feedback. The group should be aware of time limits for the discussion
- Participants should be able to listen to each other, even if they don't agree with what others say; no one or two people should dominate group discussion
- Group size should be four to seven people
- Everyone should be encouraged to participate
- May be difficult to tailor to all learners' preferences

Process

1. Arrange the learners in small groups
2. Introduce the task that describes what should be discussed in the small group
3. Ask each group to designate a discussion facilitator, a recorder, and a person to present the group's finding to the larger group

4. Check to make sure that each group understands the task
5. Give groups time to discuss—this should not require the trainer’s involvement unless the learners have questions for the trainer
6. Have one person from each group report the group’s findings (this could be a solution to a problem, answers to a question, or a summary of the ideas that came out during the discussion)*
7. Identify common themes that were apparent in the groups’ presentations
8. Ask the learners what they learned from the exercise
9. Ask them how they might use what they have learned

*Step 6, group reporting, is often omitted because of insufficient time. This stage of the work allows learners to reflect and provides the most important opportunity for participants to think about what they have learned. Always allow time to discuss an activity after its completion. The choice of the reporting format depends on the specific task and situation. For example, you may choose to proceed in one of the following ways:

- Rotate among groups asking for key data. This is used when all groups work on the same task. This way, each group will have equal opportunity to share results instead of one group reporting on the whole task and putting the other groups in a position to not have much to add. An example of a question in this case may be: “Tell us one characteristic of your list of identified characteristics.”
- Ask each group for a report on the work it did and ask for additions from the other groups. This format may be used when each group works on an individual task. In this case, Group 1 reports, then Group 2, etc. This way, participants learn not only from the work in their group, but also from the other groups’ work.
- When all groups work on a complex problem or a case, you may ask each group to report on a specific portion of the task. Here again, participants learn from both the work of their group and the work of the others.
- Survey the groups. This format ensures a quick response (question/decision) to a specific question. The trainer asks a question related to the task and groups give their solutions.
- Stage a gallery walk. This is a refreshing alternative to group reports. Each working group posts its work in an area designated for them in the general session room. Once each working group’s chart is posted, the trainer instructs the working groups to choose a couple of members to stand by their group’s work to answer questions. The other group members should walk around the “gallery” looking at other groups’ work. Half way through the gallery walk, a couple of other working group members should replace the original “explainers,” giving them some time to see others’ work. As the trainer, you should also walk around the room and ask questions to clarify work and make helpful suggestions. (This approach requires plenty of room space.).

Formation of groups

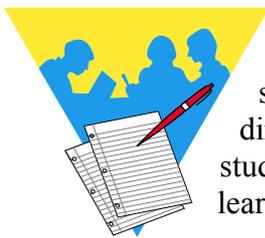
When forming working groups, think about what qualities small groups should possess to achieve learning objectives in the most efficient way, and divide participants accordingly. Participants may be grouped to achieve balance or diversity, or to allow people with common interests to work together.

If you use small groups more than once, try to alternate participants among groups (except when there is a reason for group members to work together during the whole training). The change of small group members will introduce energy in the group by presenting new viewpoints, ideas, and experiences.

Examples of how to form small groups include the following:

- Let participants count themselves—1, 2, 3, etc.—then “1s” form one group, the “2s” a second group, etc.
- Ask participants to join the person next to them
- Participants at one table form one small group
- Divide participants into groups according to certain common characteristics or to achieve balance. For example, you may divide them according to job position, place of residence, more/less experience, members/not members, or women/men.

Case Study Description



A case study is a written description of a hypothetical situation that is used for analysis and discussion. Learners are given information about a situation (usually related to an aspect of their working environment) and directed to make decisions or solve a problem concerning the situation. Case studies can be brief (often called “case vignettes”) or lengthy. They allow learners to discuss problems common to a typical situation.

Advantages

- Provides a safe opportunity to develop problem-solving skills. Learners can relate to the hypothetical situation, but it does not involve personal risks
- Promotes group discussion and group problem solving
- Requires active learner involvement
- Can simulate performance required after training
- Learning can be observed

Things of which to be aware

- Requires a lot of planning time if you need to write the case study yourself

- The case must be closely related to the learners' experience. Information must be precise and up-to-date
- Problems are often complex and multi-faceted
- There is not always just one right solution
- Discussion questions need to be carefully designed
- Needs sufficient class time for learners to complete the case
- Learners can become too interested in the case's content

Process

1. Introduce the case
2. Give learners time to familiarize themselves with the case
3. Present questions for discussion or the problem to be solved
4. Give learners time to solve the problem(s)
5. Have some of the learners present their solutions or answers
6. Discuss all possible solutions or answers
7. Ask the learners what they learned from the exercise
8. Ask them how the case might be relevant to their own work environments
9. Summarize

The case study scenario should meet the following criteria:

- The issue is realistic, i.e. it reflects a real situation, problem, or event
- Facts are presented consecutively in a clear and concise manner
- The characters' personalities are interesting—avoid extreme personalities
- It includes conflicts
- It avoids unnecessary details
- It is short enough to be read and understood quickly
- It provokes animated discussions and debates
- Decisions are not provided or suggested

Note that not all of these criteria are always applicable to a specific case study.

Suggested structure in writing a case study

A case study is a narrative account of a series of events or situations related to a specific problem or set of problems. A wide variety of problems could be part of a case study, e.g., relationship difficulties between people, loss or lack of funds, unclear roles between people who work together, or bureaucratic system inadequacies. One way to organize your thoughts as you write your narrative is, quite simply, beginning, middle, and end. Below, listed under each category are questions that should be addressed or answered in each section of the narrative.

Beginning

- Where is the situation occurring and in what context? (This sets up the framework for the problem(s) the case study will address.)
- Who are the major characters and what is their relationship to each other?
- What is the situation of these characters at the beginning of the case, what issues do they face, and what are their thoughts and feelings about these issues?

Middle

- What problem situation(s) are developing?
- What events and factors are contributing to the problem(s)?
- Where are the major characters and what are they doing?
- Are there minor characters who are now entering the picture? Who are they and what connection do they have with the situation(s)?
- What is happening to the relationships between the characters?
- What systematic problems are being addressed, and how are they being developed?

End

- What is the status of the problem(s) now?
- What are the major and minor characters doing and what are their thoughts and feelings?
- What has happened to the relationships between the major characters?
- How can the ending occur in such a way as to allow for differing interpretations?

Simulation

Description

A simulation is an enactment of a real-life situation and is usually lengthy. Learners are given information about a situation that attempts to recreate the aspects of the entire working environment of the learners pertinent to training objectives. As in case studies, learners are directed to make decisions or solve problems concerning the situation.

Simulations allow learners to experience decision making in “real” situations without worrying about the consequences of their decisions. They are a way to apply knowledge, develop skills, and examine attitudes in the context of an everyday situation.

Advantages

- Is realistic
- Learners are able to discover and react on their own
- Requires high involvement of the learner
- Provides immediate feedback
- Can simulate performance required after training
- Learning can be observed

Things of which to be aware

- Requires extensive preparation time
- The facilitator must be well prepared, especially with logistics
- A simulation is often a simplistic view of reality
- Information must be precise and up-to-date
- Needs sufficient class time for learners to complete the case
- Learners can become too interested in the simulation’s content or, perhaps worse (because a simulation usually spans many sessions), are uninterested in the case

Process

1. Prepare the learners to take on specific roles during the simulation
2. Introduce the goals, rules, and time frame for the simulation
3. Facilitate the simulation
4. Ask learners about their reactions to the simulation
5. Ask learners what they have learned from the simulation and develop principles
6. Ask learners how the simulation relates to their own lives
7. Summarize

Role-Play

Description



In a role-play, two or more individuals enact parts in a scenario related to a training topic. Learners take part in a scripted “skit” and are instructed to make decisions or solve a problem concerning the situation, either while the play is ongoing or during reflection after the play has ended. Role-plays can be brief (usually) or lengthy. They can be revisited during a training session, with the play resumed to tackle new problems.

A role-play helps to change people’s attitudes, enables people to see the consequences of their action on others, and provides an opportunity for learners to see how others might feel or behave in a given situation.

Advantages

- Provides a safe environment in which participants can explore problems they may feel uncomfortable discussing in real life
- Enables learners to explore alternative approaches to dealing with situations
- Requires active learner involvement—is stimulating and fun, engages the group’s attention
- Can simulate performance required after training
- Learning can be observed

Things of which to be aware

- Requires extensive preparation time
- Following the scripted portion, a role-play is spontaneous—there is no script to follow (learners might get carried away with their roles or make conclusions different than those expected by the trainer)
- Learners must have a good understanding of their role for the role-play to succeed. Learners can become confused (if the roles aren’t clear), passive (if they’re not interested in their roles), or contentious (if the roles are too combative)
- Needs sufficient class time for learners to complete the role-play

Process

1. Prepare the actors so they understand their roles and the situation
2. Set the climate so the observers know what the situation involves
3. Observe the role play

4. Thank the actors and ask them how they feel about the role play—be sure that they get out of their roles and back to their real selves
5. Share the reactions and observations of the observers
6. Discuss different reactions to what happened
7. Ask the learners what they have learned and develop principles
8. Ask the learners how the situation relates to their own lives
9. Summarize

Criteria for selecting methods

There are three general criteria to take into consideration when selecting methods for your training. They are

1. The learning objective

Will the method most effectively lead the learner toward accomplishment of the learning objective? For example, if the end result of a training or session is a skill, a method that includes practice (i.e., structured exercise, role-play, case study, or simulation) is probably best.

2. The learners

Does the method take into account not only learner preferences, but also group size, experience levels, and other special characteristics of the group? For example, if your learners are brand new to the topic, a method meant to convey knowledge (i.e., reading, interactive presentation) is probably best. If your training group is large (30+), a demonstration is usually inappropriate (because inevitably some people will not be able to see).

3. The practical requirements

Is the method feasible given the physical environment, time (both preparation and classroom time), materials, and any cost limitations you have? For example, if your training comprises six topics, and you have a day's length for the training, a role-play to cover a single topic may be too time-consuming (because participants have to learn the situation and their parts well for it to be effective).

It is important to note that each training situation is unique and will present different variables that influence the choice of training methods. Learner preferences also change during the course of a training—not only from the beginning of the event to the end, but also session by session and frequently within sessions. Therefore, a training method that is “probably best,” “usually inappropriate,” or “may be too time-consuming” in one situation may or may not work in another. In other words, there is usually “more than one way to skin a cat.”

Case Study

This “it depends” concept can be clarified by applying it to the training content discussed earlier. The suggested training content sequence for the learning objective “learners will be able to **conduct** a citizens’ focus group to get input on the municipal budget” was

- Facts associated with determining the focus or scope of the discussion (Knowledge)
- Determine the objectives of the focus group (Action)
- Processes for determining what information is needed (Knowledge)
- Prepare the discussion guide (Action)
- Facts associated with optimal focus group size (Knowledge)
- Criteria for deciding whether the focus group should be homogenous (e.g., by gender, age, or location) or heterogeneous (Knowledge)
- Determine the size and composition of the focus group (Action)
- Facts associating focus group size to room set-up—e.g., fewer than 9 people in a circle, 9 to 15 people in a U-shape (Knowledge)
- Determine location of the focus group and room set-up (Action)
- Facts associated with the best times for specific focus groups to meet. (Knowledge)
- Establish the timing and duration of focus group sessions. (Action)

(Continue the training content sequence until all of the content necessary for achieving the learning objective is included.)

A couple of reasonable assumptions about our learners can be drawn from the case study described earlier. First, the learners—the Municipal Councilors, Mayor, and budget and finance staff—know little or nothing about focus groups. Second, because the workshop focuses on citizens’ participation in the budget process, the learners have already been familiarized earlier in the training with the importance of citizen participation and have had an overview of participation processes and approaches.

Following is a list of possible training methods to use to teach the training content.

Illustrative Selection of Training Methods

Content

1. Facts associated with the uses of focus groups and determining the

Illustrative Methods

The concepts underlying the uses of focus groups are not difficult, but it’s not likely that learners will know what they are. Therefore, a 10-minute **interactive presentation** and discussion would be called for here.

The presentation would emphasize that focus

Content	Illustrative Methods
focus or scope of the discussion	groups are facilitated, interactive meetings or group interviews with small groups of citizens, and that, among other uses, they can be used to solicit attitudes and reactions on a certain issue, problem, project, or initiative from a specific group of people.
2. Determine the objectives of the focus group	<p>A short case study (less than one page) describing a situation similar to the model municipality example would be ideal. Participants, divided into working groups of about six, read the case, discuss it, and in a brief structured exercise come to consensus on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the problem the municipal government faces, • and how a focus group would contribute to solving the problem
3. Processes for determining what information is needed	<p>The working groups would report their conclusions in general session. The trainer would then lead a group discussion organizing the information from the reports into the scope of the focus groups (i.e., solving the problem the municipal government faces), and its objectives (i.e., how a focus group would contribute to solving the problem).</p> <p>Continuing the general session discussion, the trainer points out that the group has now set the scope of the discussion and its objectives, and that the next step is determining what information is needed from the focus groups.</p> <p>Through a brief interactive presentation the trainer identifies the principal questions to ask in determining what information is needed from the focus groups—e.g., Why is the information needed? What will it be used for? What can be learned from it?—and solicits answers to these questions from the learners based on the case study.</p> <p>The trainer completes the presentation by saying that the answers to these questions are used by focus group facilitators to prepare a discussion guide, sometimes called the questioning route, for the focus groups.</p>

Content	Illustrative Methods
4. Prepare the discussion guide	<p>Highlighting the main uses and features of a discussion guide, the trainer provides structured exercise instructions directing the learners to return to their working groups and develop five open-ended questions (that cannot be answered “yes” or “no”) that could be asked during the focus groups to get the information needed to inform the focus group objectives.</p> <p>Following completion of the exercise, working groups might participate in a gallery walk, as an alternative to oral reports. The gallery walk allows a working group to look at and ask clarifying questions about the results posted by the other working groups.</p>

You would continue this sequence until all of the training content and methods necessary for achieving the learning objective are included.

This part of the manual reviewed seven common training methods and some criteria to use in selecting them for a training. The next section will focus on the second vital accompaniment to content for achieving training objectives, training aids.

Developing and using training aids

Training methods are the approaches you use to instruct the training content of a session. Training aids are materials—visual, written, or both—that support the training methods you are using.

Training aids serve a variety of purposes. Some of the general purposes they serve during training are to

- Focus attention on what is being discussed by having the learners visually review the material;
- Increase interest in the topic being covered by presenting content that is visually appealing; and
- Improve learner retention by engaging more than one sense (e.g., hearing and seeing) in the presentation of content.

Types and uses of training aids

This section of the manual will review four training aids to consider using in your training:

- Handouts

- Flipcharts
- Overhead transparencies or digital projection
- DVD, videotape, or film

Handouts

Handouts are written materials you prepare in advance and distribute to learners during the training. The information covered in a handout can be used during the training and/or retained for use after the training.



Handouts are important training aids to consider, particularly if you want to

- Have learners use the information at a later time (during the training or after the training);
- Allow learners to absorb information at their own pace; or
- Eliminate the need for learners to memorize content or take notes.

The first step in developing a handout is to decide on the format you will use for presenting the information. One of the choices you have is to present the information in paragraph form. (The information you are reading right now is an example of information in paragraph form.) This choice can be useful in handouts, but it also has its drawbacks.

A major drawback of information in paragraph form is that it is less visually appealing to the reader than other formats. This is particularly true if you are presenting a lot of information. You can use other formats that are more interesting to readers and do a better job in communicating your information under certain conditions.

Three handout formats that are particularly helpful as training aids are

- Decision charts
- Checklists
- Worksheets

When you select a format, your decision should be based on what you are trying to accomplish with your handout. The table below shows some guidelines to follow in deciding among the three formats shown above.

If you wish to...	Then consider using...	For example...
Guide learners in making decisions	A decision chart	This chart is a decision chart
Provide memory joggers to help learners carry out a task	A checklist	The general guidelines for developing handouts, below, is an example of a checklist

If you wish to...	Then consider using...	For example...
Provide a means to record information	A worksheet	The Worksheet for Assessing Training Needs (<i>Annex I</i>) is an example of a worksheet

Regardless of the handout format you choose, there are certain general guidelines to follow in developing handouts. The table below provides those guidelines in checklist form.

Check when completed	Guidelines
<input type="checkbox"/>	Title the handout and date it.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Identify the purpose of the handout.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Specify when and how the handout is to be used.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Reference any additional materials that are needed to use it.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Use bold print, underlining, or capitalization to emphasize information.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Space information so it is easy to read.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Use short, active sentences.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Avoid unnecessary information.

Flipcharts

Flipcharts consist of an easel with a pad of blank paper you can write on with a felt-tip marker. A flipchart is an important training tool, not only for making presentations, but also for recording relevant information as it is generated. The most important advantage that flipcharts have over chalkboards and overhead projectors is that flipcharts facilitate *group memory*. The concept of group memory involves two elements:



- **Retention and Reference.** When participants are able to see a presentation's key points listed on a flipchart, and then have visual access to these flipcharts throughout the training and discussion, the repeated exposure ensures greater retention of the information. Taping flipcharts to the walls allows participants to refer back to key points—reinforcing these points with their own examples, and building on them with new ideas. Participants become more engaged, and there is greater group synergy and interaction.
- **Visual Record of Outcomes.** When the trainer records ideas and suggestions on a flipchart as they are generated, participants have a visual “memory” of key points as the session progresses. Communication is clearer because of the visual record that the flipcharts provide. And, at the training's conclusion, participants have a collective memory of agreements and outcomes, whether they are decisions, next steps, or new ideas.

Depending on the specific purpose, the information can be prepared ahead of the training or recorded during it. Pre-recording information saves training time and ensures neatness. Recording during training allows you to respond to the immediate learning situation.

Regardless of whether you choose to pre-record or record during training, there are certain general guidelines to follow to ensure that your flipcharts are readable and appealing to learners.

Tips for working with flipcharts

- Make letters at least 4 cm high.
- Leave 5 cm or more between lines.
- Use the top two-thirds of the pad.
- Use as few words as possible.
- Write your text with cool colors (dark blue, purple, dark green, brown, black), otherwise words are very difficult for learners to read.
- Highlight key points by using warm colors (red, orange), shapes, graphics, borders, underlining, and pictures.
- Check readability by looking at the flipchart from various parts of the room.
- Leave a blank page between each pre-recorded page so that the writing on the next chart does not show through and distract learners.

The table below provides additional tips for working with flipcharts. It is also an example of a decision chart.

If...	Then...
You are recording learners' inputs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Record key words quickly. • Check with learners to be sure you are reflecting their ideas accurately. • Alternate colors when listing the group's ideas.
You wish to have learners compare and contrast data.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use two flipcharts.
You want to display information for a period of time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hang pages on the wall.
You want to look especially professional in front of the group.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lightly write memory joggers in pencil in the margin of the flipchart page, and use as presentation notes. • Practice tearing pages cleanly before trying it in front of the group.

If...	Then...
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tab pre-recorded charts to eliminate searching for them when needed. • Cover pre-recording errors with paste-on labels or correction tape, then write correct information on the labels. • Cover flipchart information when not in use.

Overhead Transparencies/Digital Projection



Overhead transparencies can be professionally produced or made from sheets of acetate (sold in office supply stores) and are used with an overhead projector. Similarly, a computer-based presentation can be developed, using conventional software (e.g., PowerPoint), and a computer connected to a digital projector. In both cases, the image is shown on a screen or blank wall. Unless otherwise mentioned, we'll use the word "slides" to include both overhead transparencies and digital projection in the discussion to follow.

As training aids, slides have special advantages, but they also have significant drawbacks if not used properly. The table below highlights those advantages and drawbacks.

Advantages	Drawbacks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adds professional touch • Easily transported • Can be used with large audiences (more than 25), as well as small 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Light (glare from the screen) can be tiring if overused • Requires special equipment not always readily available • Complex charts can overwhelm viewers • Digital projection, often just called PowerPoint (after a popular slide-making software), is quite popular today. However, audiences of learners not accustomed to the technology may pay more attention to the technology than the content.

If you decide to develop slides in advance of the training, there are two ways to do so—professionally or by yourself. With the first, graphic artists can produce your slides in the media you choose, based on the directions you provide. Most likely, though, you'll personally prepare your slides.

For digital projection, use a computer to put the information into a file using readily available commercial software. It can be helpful to use the application's default settings for making your slide, as these are preset to meet the most important of the guidelines for making slides readable and appealing (see below). As you become more adept at the application, you can add a background, graphics, or color in varying schemes.

For transparencies, you can use a computer to put the information into a file and have it printed onto a transparency. You can also print information onto paper and have it photocopied onto a transparency. (If you're wondering whether your duplicating machine can make transparencies, check the machine manual.)

You can also make a low-tech transparency yourself by using a transparency marker and writing on a transparency film made for that purpose.

Regardless of whether you are developing the slide yourself, or developing the information for a professional to use in making your slide, there are guidelines to ensure that your slides are readable and appealing to learners.

Tips for working with transparencies

- Use as few words as possible to communicate your ideas.
- Keep information to six lines or less, with no more than six words per line.
- Cover one major idea, with up to three sub-points, on one slide.
- Illustrate ideas with pictures, shapes, graphs, and color (but no more than three colors on one slide).
- Use the same color rule for slides as you do for flipcharts—i.e., text in cool colors, highlights in warm colors.

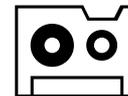
Exhibit 7: Additional Tips for Using Transparencies During Training

If...	Then...
You are using more than one slide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turn the projector on, show a slide, then turn it off—unless you are showing a series of slides in rapid succession. • Don't keep a single slide on too long. The image becomes tiring for viewers.
You want the group to focus on a specific area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For digitally produced slides, try dimming (i.e., making a lighter color) all of the slide except the focus area. • For transparencies, use a pencil to point to the area. Lay the pencil on the plastic to steady the pointer. • Or, reveal one area of the slide at a time by using a paper to "hide" the area you don't want showing. Place the paper between the transparency and the glass for extra control and to enable you to read the hidden information.

If...	Then...
You are using the same transparencies in subsequent sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use permanent marking pens when making the transparencies. • Mount transparencies in plastic frames to keep them from curling. • Store the transparencies between papers in a dust-free location.
You wish to re-use the transparency plastic or change the information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use water-soluble marking pens when making the transparencies. Run water or a damp cloth over the area to remove the ink.
You want to look more professional in front of the group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write memory joggers in black ink on the transparency frames and use them as your presentation notes. • Place masking tape around the edges of the projector glass to keep out the projection light and to keep the framed transparencies from slipping.

DVD, Videotape, and Film

DVD, videotape, and film are media used to store motion pictures with sound, recorded either on digital video disk (DVD), cassette tape, or film. DVD and videotape playback requires that you have a DVD player, or tape player (VCR), and a TV monitor. A film presentation requires a projector and screen.



DVD, videotape, and film have particular advantages in training, and you might consider using these training aids to

- Stimulate learners' interest
- Motivate learners to try new things
- Illustrate behaviors, including depicting subtle expressions
- Add professionalism to your training

Normally, you would not develop a new DVD, videotape, or film for your training because of the production costs involved. However, you may decide to use a previously developed DVD, videotape, or film if you can find one that meets your training need. There are four steps to follow in using these media most effectively in training. They are (1) prepare for showing the DVD/videotape/film, (2) provide instructions to learners, (3) play the DVD/videotape/film, and (4) present or solicit the learning points. The table below describes the four steps in more detail.

Steps for Using DVD, Videotape, or Film Effectively	
1. Prepare for showing the media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check that the tape or film is the correct size for the available equipment. With tape, be sure that the video, VCR, and monitor are all of the same standard (e.g., PAL, NTSC). • Preview the media and identify the important points you want learners to get from viewing it. • Try out the equipment and check lighting levels. If you will be asking the learners to take notes, adjust lighting plans accordingly.
2. Provide instructions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give learners a general overview of what they will see and why. • Instruct learners on what to do while watching the media (e.g., take notes, watch for certain items). • Tell learners what they will do after viewing the media (e.g., discuss what they saw, complete an exercise).
3. Play the DVD/videotape/film	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adjust lighting. • Start the DVD/videotape/film and adjust picture and volume if necessary. • Monitor learners and their reactions to the DVD/tape/film.
4. Present the learning points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the end of the DVD/videotape/film, have learners complete the learning activity (e.g., finish taking notes, complete an exercise). • Present the key points you want learners to retain from the DVD/videotape/film or, better still, have the learners articulate these key points.

This part of the manual examined the basics on developing and using training aids. This information will be used to review the last skill in the process of developing training—developing the training plan.

3.5 Developing the Training Plan

This is the point at which you pull together the training content, training methods, and training aids into a plan you will use to conduct the training. It's also the point at which you assign timing to your training (i.e., how long each session will take). Finally, this is when you

should apportion the training sessions out over the days allotted for the training, inserting daily greetings, morning and afternoon breaks, lunch, daily reflections and closure, as well as other one-time sessions, such as welcome remarks from a dignitary, learner and trainer introductions, training objectives and materials, housekeeping (e.g., where the bathrooms are), ice breakers, and energizers.

The purpose of the training plan

A training plan is the step-by-step written record of how you plan to conduct the training. It serves different purposes at different points in time. During session development prior to the training, it is a planning tool to help you plan the details of the session; just before conducting the training, it is a guide for preparing for and rehearsing the sessions; during training, it's a road map for you to follow in conducting the sessions; and after the training, it is a document that you (or others) can revise or use again to conduct the training.

Regardless of how many times you intend to give the training session, and how experienced you are in training, you must develop a training plan. It ensures that you have provided what the learners need in order to learn, and it enables you to conduct your training in a productive and professional manner.

The format of the training plan

A standard format will help you organize your training plan so that it includes all of the steps that help your learners meet their learning objectives. This format includes, not surprisingly, the following five categories:

- Session objective
- Training content
- Methods to be used
- Learning aids
- Timing

Assigning learning aids to the content and methods and setting the timing for a session and its parts are the only truly “new” skills applied here, the other categories (i.e., session objective, training content, and methods) have already been detailed in previous sections of the manual.

Learning aids

To a large degree, the learning aids you will choose to use will follow naturally from the methods on which you have already decided. For example, if you're starting a session on focus groups with an interactive presentation on facts associated with the uses of focus groups and determining the focus or scope of the discussion, you would want to have the main points of the presentation on **slides or a flipchart** to which you would refer learners during the course of the presentation. It's also recommended that you provide the learners with a printed **handout of the slides or main points** prior to the presentation for them to follow during your talk (and on which they can take notes). Alternatively, you might provide learners with a **reading handout** on focus groups that covers the main points of the session

on focus groups as “homework” when closing training the day before the session on focus groups is to begin. You may choose to use all three methods, as each reinforces the others and all three add force to your presentation.

Before moving on to session timing, several other learning aids that correspond to an entire training should be considered.

First, training objectives and norms of behavior should be written on a flipchart and posted where all the learners can see them.

Second, it’s always a good idea to keep a “parking lot” flip chart posted on which you, or more desirably the learners, can note questions or issues that cannot be addressed during class. Use this aid only if you are prepared to try to find the answer or locate a resource that can address the matter for the learners.

Third, posting an acronyms chart on the wall, and asking learners to speak up when they hear an acronym they do not know so it can be posted on the chart, is helpful to learners, particularly if your training uses a lot of specialized jargon.

Finally, on occasion you’ll come across a DVD, videotape, or film that has relevance to the general objective of the training that could be used as a kickoff to the event. For example, LGI has a video on citizen participation called “The municipality—that’s the people” that would be an excellent introduction to and overview of citizens’ participation methods and tools for increasing citizens’ participation, and from which you could solicit learners’ perspectives on the general use and usefulness of citizen participation in the municipal budget process—perspectives corresponding to the general objective of our illustrative training in this manual.

Timing

Time is a very important consideration in training. Usually you have a limited amount of training time. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the time available for a session makes a difference in the training methods you select. While there are no hard rules for allocating training time, a realistic approach is to start with the total time you can allot to the session, then apportion the time across the planning steps. A rule of thumb is to allocate more training time to structured exercises—letting the learners practice—than to any other single step. Also, be aware that should a training activity, such as a structured exercise, call for small group work followed by reports, you must allot time for learners to get into their groups and for the reports: more small groups = more reports = more time required!

Don’t forget to add time for ...

- Welcome
- Introductions and expectations
- Purpose, objectives, and agenda
- Working norms
- Daily announcements

- Icebreakers and energizers
- Daily evaluation and evaluation of the course
- Coffee break and lunch

After you have completed your training plan, check your timing. Try

- Envisioning the activities that will occur in each step and mentally judging the approximate time they will take
- Practicing your presentations and timing your practices
- Asking others to assume the role of your learners and timing them as they perform the learner activities (Allow extra time for the questions and discussions your “real” learners will generate.)

Make your estimates as accurate as possible, and modify your training plan if your estimates are significantly different than your original allotments.

Organizing the training plan

There are only two rules to follow in organizing your training plan.

1. First, it should be constructed to be **useful to you!** Developing a training plan that you won't follow isn't a good idea. Feel free to add categories (and columns) as necessary or desirable. For example, many skilled trainers like to have an area in the format for making special notes, such as “be sure the working groups have time to finish this exercise, even if it means going a little over time.” A notes column can also be employed when co-training to indicate who on the training team is in charge of preparing for and delivering a session's particular segment.
2. Second, be sure to keep the experiential learning cycle in mind. As you work on sequencing your training plan, think about the cycle's approach to adult learning, which provides learners with constructive, direct experiences with the training content, opportunities to reflect on the experience and draws conclusions from it, and then relates what has been learned about the training content to on-the-job experience—and make sure the learning approach is reflected in your plan.

Because these training plan development rules are dependent on specific circumstances and other variables associated with each training, it's difficult, if not impossible, to describe how a training plan should evolve. The following example uses the case study to begin to articulate a training plan for a training meant to develop learner skills in using proven citizens' participation methods and tools for increasing citizens' participation in the municipal budget process. A model training plan worksheet is provided in *Annex 2*.

Exhibit 8: Example Training Plan

Specific Objective	Content	Method	Aid	Timing
Learners will be able to conduct a citizens' focus group to get input on the municipal budget	Facts associated with the uses of focus groups and determining the focus or scope of the discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce the session topic • Have the learners share their knowledge of, or past experiences with, the topic • Recognize the potential resources in the group • Overview the activities that will occur in the session • Cover the learning objective • Establish why it is important for the learners to learn the training content • Interactive presentation on the concepts underlying the uses of focus groups • Transition to next topic—"Now that we have an idea of why and how focus groups are used, let's take a look at a fictitious municipality and see if we can sort out what we might be looking for when conducting focus groups in a particular situation." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework assignment reading from the day before • Slides emphasizing that focus groups are facilitated, interactive meetings or group interviews with small groups of citizens; and that—among other uses—they can be used to solicit attitudes and reactions on a certain issue, problem, project, or initiative, from a specific group of people • Handout of printed slides 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 minutes (10 for the presentation, 5 for discussion)

Specific Objective	Content	Method	Aid	Timing
	Determine the objectives of the focus group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hand out and introduce the case study • Give learners 10 minutes to read the case study • Handout exercise instructions, go over them, and start the exercise • The working groups report their conclusions in general session followed by a group discussion organized the information from the reports into the scope of the focus groups (i.e., solving the problem the Municipal government faces), and its objectives (i.e., how a focus group would contribute to solving the problem). • Transition to next topic—“We’ve now set the scope of the focus group discussion and its objectives, our next step is determining what information is needed from the focus groups.” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handout describing a situation in the model municipality • Exercise instructions handout (i.e., learners, divided into working groups of 6 or so, discuss the case, and come to consensus on the problem the municipal government faces, and how a focus group would contribute to solving the problem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 95 minutes (5 for case introduction, 10 for reading the case, 5 for exercise instructions, 5 for getting into working groups, 30 for exercise, 5 for getting back together, 5 minutes for each group report x 4 groups = 20 minutes, 15 minutes for group discussion)
	Processes for determining what information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interactive presentation • Pose principal questions to the learners and solicit answers based on the case 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slides identifying the principal questions to ask to determine what information is 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 minutes (5 for presentation, 15 for discussion)

Specific Objective	Content	Method	Aid	Timing
	is needed	study <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transition to next topic—“The answers to these questions are used by focus group facilitators to prepare a discussion guide, sometimes called the questioning route, for the focus groups. Following break, we’ll explore this for our focus groups.” 	needed from the focus groups—i.e., Why is the information needed? What will it be used for? What can be learned from it? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handout of printed slides. 	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coffee/tea break 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two hours have now gone by in the session, and it’s time for a 15-minute break! Try not to exceed keeping your learners on task for more than two hours.
	Prepare the discussion guide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orally highlight the main uses and features of a discussion guide. • Handout exercise instructions, go over them and get exercise underway. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case study handout, as above • Exercise instructions (direct the learners to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 75 minutes (5 for oral highlight, 5 for exercise instructions, 5 for getting into groups and underway, 30

Specific Objective	Content	Method	Aid	Timing
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gallery walk instructions (given orally): working groups post work in designated area in the general session room (be sure there's ample available wall space), working groups have a couple of members standing by their group's work to answer questions that members of the other working groups might have (half way through the gallery walk, a couple of other working group members should replace the original "explainers," giving them some time to see others' work); walk about and view the work of the other working groups asking for clarity when something is not clear and/or making helpful suggestions the working group might consider. • Transition to next topic (well, you're getting the idea!) 	<p>return to their working groups and develop five open-ended questions that could be asked during the focus groups to get at the information needed to inform the focus group objectives; gallery walk).</p>	<p>for exercise, 5 for organizing gallery walk, 25 for gallery walk)</p>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time passes and as the session is coming to its end... • Summarize the session, stressing important points and asking learners how they would apply the skills they have learned when back on the job 		<p>10 minutes</p>

Specific Objective	Content	Method	Aid	Timing
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="705 284 1104 316">• Answer learners' questions<li data-bbox="705 355 1223 387">• Make a transition to the next session		

The level of detail of your training plan will be based on your needs. Some trainers feel more comfortable using a detailed training plan; others prefer an abbreviated outline. As a rule, it is best to start out with a detailed plan, and as you establish more confidence, you can simplify your training plan. Some very experienced trainers continue to develop a very detailed plan, because it frees them from wondering what comes next during the training so they can focus on the learners' needs. Not a bad idea at all.

This chapter reviewed how to design a training program. Following is a summary of the main steps:

SELECT THE TEAM TO DESIGN THE TRAINING PROGRAM

- Include both technical experts with knowledge of the training subject and topics and experienced trainers with adult training skills.

DEFINE TRAINING OBJECTIVES

- Specify required post-training actions.
- Formulate clear, measurable and achievable objectives.

OUTLINE THE TRAINING CONTENT

- List the actions the learners must take to accomplish specific learning objectives.
- Identify the knowledge required for the learner to take those actions.
- Sequence the training content to most effectively achieve the specific objective.

CHOOSE APPROPRIATE TRAINING METHODS

- Use diverse training methods to ensure maximum number of opportunities for learners to listen, see, and do.
- Choose methods that correspond to training objectives, audience, and physical environment.

PREPARE LEARNING AIDS

- Don't forget that learning aids are visual, printed, or combined aids that support the selected training methods.
- Well prepared handouts, flipcharts, transparencies, and films attract attention, increase interest, and improve learner retention.

DEVELOP A TRAINING PLAN

- Develop a plan in a format that is useful to you.
- Check whether the experiential model is reflected in your training plan.

Chapter 4: **Techniques for Involving Learners**

Each group of learners possesses a potential for creative work and good performance. One of the objectives of a good trainer should be to stimulate the group to use its potential and to participate actively in the training. To achieve this, trainers use various tools that facilitate the training process, increase participants' involvement, and encourage the whole group potential and creative thinking.

There are a variety of techniques that the trainer may use to help the group learn. However, each technique is good only if appropriately selected, presented, and applied. It takes time and practice to learn to use techniques effectively. You may want to adapt a specific technique to your individual training style, or to design your own techniques. Remember, there is always more than one approach to a specific training task—it is important to possess a large range of tools, and to decide which tool is the most appropriate for the moment. The preliminarily selected tool may not work with the specific group, therefore, it is important to have one or two reserve options for the same training objective.

This chapter presents some basic techniques that may help you deliver more creative training. Of course, you have used or observed many more techniques than those found here. This collection represents only a small portion of the enormous number of available tools. Those included here, however, are widely used and have proved their effectiveness, if appropriately chosen. Most of them are used not only in training, but also in other cases when groups hold meetings and discussions for solving problems or making decisions.

Each technique includes a brief description, an indication of when it is useful, and how to use it. Advantages and things to be aware of are also mentioned when appropriate.

4.1 What Technique to Choose?

Here again, “It depends.” The answer to this question depends on a range of factors that should be assessed before choosing a specific tool. By first assessing such factors, it will be easier to identify the appropriate technique from the abundant range of tools. Some of the questions you should use in your assessment include the following:

- *What do you want to achieve and how do you want to achieve it?* The carrying out of activities as an end in itself leads to confusion and misunderstanding among learners. Therefore, your first task when choosing techniques is to define clearly the technique's purpose and desired result.
- *Where is the group now regarding the process?* You should choose a tool that will allow the group to move ahead. If the training has just started, an appropriately chosen technique will establish a positive environment for communication, discussion, and creative working. Or, if the group has to solve a problem, you may use different techniques during the different stages of problem solving—one for identification of the problem, and another to solve it.
- *What is the size of the group?* Think carefully about what technique to use during the training—some tools are intended for small groups and are not appropriate for large audiences.
- *How would participants react?* The characteristics of the learners are factors that influence the choice of a tool. Using their observation skills, trainers may decide to substitute a preliminarily planned technique with another one that is more appropriate

for the specific group of participants. For example, you might have planned to use free-for-all brainstorming during a training session. However, when you observe the group, you find out that the majority of the learners are introverts. In this case you can choose one of the variations of brainstorming that takes into account this group characteristic, such as sticky note brainstorming.

- *How much time do you have?* Some activities are much longer than others, and sometimes involve more resources.

Once you have considered the above factors, you can choose from the available techniques. It is always a good idea to have two or three reserve options in case the tool you have chosen doesn't work well in the specific group or situation.

Tip

It is always a good idea to have two or three reserve options in case the tool you have chosen doesn't work well in the specific group or situation.

4.2 Techniques for Interactive Training

Below is a sample list of techniques from which to choose, depending on the factors discussed above.

Generating ideas

- Brainstorming
- Variations of brainstorming

Assessing and prioritizing alternatives

- Loop and group
- Multiple voting
- Nominal group technique

Defining and analyzing problems

- Brainstorming
- Force field analysis
- SWOT analysis
- Visualization
- Levels of consensus

Encouraging discussions

- Discussion by category of participants
- Silent time before discussion
- Silent dialogue

Warm-up exercises, icebreakers, and energizers

- Introductory interview
- Coat of arms
- Enigma in an envelope
- Choose a picture
- Personal characteristics
- Something in common
- Gallery walk
- Two truths and a lie
- Group by date of birth
- Blind walk

Brainstorming

Brainstorming is a process for generating a list of ideas about a topic. It is sometimes called popcorn brainstorming because anyone can speak up at anytime until all the ideas have been shared.

When it is useful

Brainstorming is appropriate any time a group needs to come up with a list of ideas. Coming up with lists can be part of any step of the problem-solving process. For example, brainstorming could be used to generate

- A list of problems or potential problems
- A list of causes of problems
- Topics for data collection
- A list of suggestions for what the ideal would look like
- A list of potential solutions
- A list of next steps

How to use it

1. Have enough space to accommodate lots of ideas. You can use a flipchart, butcher paper, a chalkboard, a whiteboard, or self-stick sheets.
2. Review the rules of brainstorming (below) with the group. If the concept is unfamiliar

to the group, post the rules on a sheet of paper.

3. Record all ideas that participants offer, being careful to follow the rules.
4. After you have finished brainstorming, ask the group to review each item for clarity and completeness.
5. Record all ideas that participants offer, being careful to follow the rules.

Rules for Brainstorming

- Express whatever comes to your mind. Don't monitor, censor, or hold back responses. The more ideas, the better. No idea is too far out.
- Do not evaluate your ideas or anybody else's ideas. Do not make positive evaluations, negative comments or nonverbal agreement or disagreement. It is especially important for the facilitator and recorder to refrain from giving any indication of evaluation.
- Do not discuss the ideas as they come up. Discussion will interfere with the generation of creative possibilities. Ask only clarifying questions about brainstorming items.
- Repetition of ideas is OK. Write down each idea, even if it sounds repetitious. There is no value in a narrowed-down list at this point and people can feel rejected if their ideas are not written down.
- Piggy-backing on someone else's ideas is OK. This is often the building block of workable solutions.

Trainer hints for brainstorming

- Review the rules for brainstorming every time you use this method.
- Set a time limit for brainstorming and stick to it.
- Get people away from the table: have them sit in a circle around an easel.
- Affirm humor, laughter, and anything creative.
- Summarize an idea and then check with the person to make sure you have understood correctly what he was saying.
- Be assertive in stopping any judgmental comments. Remind the evaluating person gently that right now the group is generating ideas, not evaluating them.
- Silence is normal in brainstorming. When it seems as though people have run out of ideas, restate the topic of brainstorming and then ask, "Anything else?" Wait 10 seconds or so; often after a period of silence there is a burst of creativity.

One-at-a-time Brainstorming

One-at-a-time brainstorming is a variation on brainstorming that provides individual thinking time. It encourages participation by getting everyone involved.

When it is useful

One-at-a-time brainstorming is a valuable method for groups with introverted members who are usually more comfortable developing ideas internally prior to speaking, or for groups with members who tend to dominate discussions.

How to use it

1. Each person, working individually, makes a list of ideas.
2. Ask each person in the group to read one item on her list.

3. After one or two rounds of collecting ideas from individuals, open it up to regular brainstorming until all ideas have been shared. Opening it up keeps the process from becoming too tedious.
4. After all ideas have been shared, invite the group to add anything else it has thought of as the list was being created.

Sticky-note Brainstorming

In this brainstorming variation, group members write their brainstormed ideas on sticky notes and then place the notes on a wall for everyone to see. The ideas are then grouped by topic or theme, providing a visual picture of which ideas are most often mentioned by the group.

When it is useful

This is good method for energizing the group. It is particularly useful as a way to brainstorm with a large group or a group whose members are hesitant to speak up.

How to use it

1. Give each person a marker and several large sticky notes or cards (the larger the better). Ask participants to put one idea on each card. If you are seeking contrasting ideas, such as what works and what doesn't, provide different colored cards or sticky notes. Remind the group to write clearly and boldly so the ideas can be read from a distance
2. Ask participants to stick their cards on the wall. You can ask participants to read one another's cards and group them according to similar ideas, or you can group them yourself. The former provides for more involvement; however, it requires that people are clear about what they are supposed to be grouping.

Subgroup Brainstorming

Subgroup brainstorming divides the whole group into smaller groups. The task of each small group is to generate a list of ideas to be shared with the whole group. Working in smaller groups gives participants more opportunity to participate and can be more comfortable for some.

When it is useful

Subgroup brainstorming gives everyone air time in a short amount of time. It's also a valuable way to get input from those who don't speak easily in a large group, or from those who don't wish to be personally associated with certain ideas.

How to use it

1. Divide a large group into subgroups of 2–4 participants. Give a time limit and ask each subgroup to choose a recorder/reporter.
2. Each group generates a list of ideas.
3. Ask each reporter to read one idea.

4. After one or two rounds of collecting ideas from reporters, open it up to a regular brainstorming session until all ideas have been shared.
5. After all ideas have been shared, invite the group to add anything else it has thought of as the list was being created.

Subset Brainstorming

In subset brainstorming the facilitator invites brainstorming ideas from different perspectives: frivolous, serious, boring, funny, etc. This kind of “thinking outside the box” helps groups get their creative juices flowing.

When it is useful

Subset brainstorming is useful when a group needs to be creative, when it’s stuck on very serious solutions or is just bored with regular brainstorming. Sometimes unusual ideas can turn out to be more practical than they might seem at first.

How to use it

1. Encourage the group to generate ideas “outside the box” of sensible ideas. Remind them that putting out an idea is different from thinking it is necessarily good or workable.
2. As the group is brainstorming, challenge them with subsets for brainstorming (e.g. practical solutions, boring solutions, improbable solutions, illegal solutions, funny solutions, etc.). You might say something like, “Those were great practical solutions, now how about all the illegal solutions you can think of?”
3. Record all ideas that participants offer, being careful to following the brainstorming rules.
4. After you have finished brainstorming, ask the group to review each item for clarity and completeness.

Warm-up Brainstorming

Warm-up brainstorming uses a topic that is not task-related to warm up the group.

When it is useful

This tool helps a group loosen up and demonstrates the creative solutions possible in brainstorming. It can be especially useful when a group is taking itself too seriously.

How to use it

1. Show any object (soda bottle, lint brush, comb, etc.) and ask the group to brainstorm all possible uses. Or give the group an imaginary situation and ask them to brainstorm all possible solutions. For example, “You’re in Mexico on vacation and your wallet and airplane ticket have been stolen. How are you going to get home?”
2. Record all ideas that participants offer, being careful to following the brainstorming rules.

3. After you have finished brainstorming, ask the group to review each item for clarity and completeness.

Loop and Group

This is a technique for helping a group consolidate ideas after a brainstorming session by grouping similar items. By circling in a common color items that are similar or belong to a common theme, you can visually link common ideas and reduce the number of items under consideration.

When it is useful

- Helps to bring order to a random collection of ideas
- Can start the narrowing process

How to use it

1. Use questions to the group to solicit their opinions on what belongs together, or, if it would help the group, reflect what you see as similarities. Some questions that you might ask are: Are some of these items really the same issue? Are some of these items part of a single larger issue? What would you call that broader topic? What is the title? Are there any items that do not belong on the list of this topic?
2. Circle or underline the ideas belonging to one group using the same color marker.
3. Using a different color, circle the ideas that belong to another group.
4. If the original list, with its multi-colored circles, is getting hard to read, you may want to create a new list of the titles of the new, broader topic areas.

Example

Your group has generated twenty different ideas on how to improve the parking situation at your work place. You ask if any of the ideas are similar or belong in the same category. The group decides that four of the ideas have to do with ways to reorganize the parking spaces in the parking lot. You circle those four ideas with a purple pen. Next, someone suggests that several of the ideas are really alternatives to driving your own car to work. The group agrees and you circle those ideas in green. You continue in this manner until the list is organized into a number of manageable areas. If the original sheets with the twenty ideas is now hard to read, or the titles of the new groupings are not clear, make a new sheet with the titles of the topic areas and identify the color of the topic's "loops."

Multi-voting

Multi-voting is a process for narrowing down a larger list of items and indicating a group's interest or priority in each item.

When it is useful

Multi-voting is appropriate when a list needs to be narrowed down, as long as it is acceptable that some items may drop off completely. It is especially useful when a group wants to get a "quick read" on its priorities. Multi-voting is not appropriate when the group needs to

consider carefully each item on a list or when it needs to incorporate each idea into a final recommendation. Multi-voting should not be used as a way to avoid conflict or circumvent an important, but perhaps difficult, discussion.

How to use it

1. Make sure there is clarity about the meaning of each item on the list. Where there is agreement to do so, combine like ideas.
2. Everyone gets the same number of votes. Members can cast votes by making marks on the flipchart, by a show of hands, or secret ballot. A benefit of marking the flipchart is that people can get up and move around, which often raises the energy level in the group.
3. Clearly describe the method for vote distribution. There are two common ways for individuals to distribute their votes. One way is to agree that no item on the list can get more than one vote from one person. For example, if group members each have five votes, they would vote on five different items. The second way is to agree that an individual can distribute his votes however he chooses, putting all votes on one item, or distributing them in any other way among multiple items. If each group member had five votes, he could put all five votes on one item, or one vote on five different items; or three votes on one item and two on a different item, etc.
4. Once the votes are tallied, be clear about what happens to all the items on the list. Don't assume that those items that received fewer votes should be cast aside. Sometimes the group will want to save them, or include them in a report.

The $N/3$ (N over 3) method is a good way to determine how many votes group members should get. N equals the number of items on the list; divide that number by three.

Nominal Group Technique

The nominal group technique is a narrowing-down and decision-making method that allows for input by all group members while minimizing group debate.

When it is useful

This tool is particularly useful when the group wants to avoid getting into debates or power struggles or when the decision involves strong differences in values.

How to use it

1. Each person individually decides his order of preference for the options given. Each option is ranked (first choice is 1, second choice is 2, etc.)
2. For each option, the facilitator asks for comments on why that was or was not a choice. There is no discussion; everyone has chance to speak.
3. Group members have a chance to reconsider their order of preference based on the comments given.
4. The facilitator records each person's order of preference on a prepared flipchart.
5. Scores are tallied for each option.

6. Whichever option gets the least number of points is chosen.
7. As with any decision-making method, the group should look at the results and check that they make sense and are in line with the group's goals, resources, etc.

Example

Participant	Option A	Option B	Option C
A	2	1	3
B	2	3	1
C	1	3	2
D	1	2	3
Total	6	9	9

Force Field Analysis

What is it?

Force field analysis is an analytical tool that clarifies opposing aspects of a desired change. This tool is generally used during the defining and analyzing problems phase of problem solving.

When it is useful

- Any time a change is expected to be difficult
- When learners are working together and need to make a yes/no decision
- When the team is planning implementation of a solution
- When the team is identifying causes of a problem
- When the team is identifying problems in a process

How to use it

1. Define the desired change or action.
2. Brainstorm the driving forces.
3. Brainstorm the restraining forces.
4. Prioritize the driving forces.
5. Prioritize the restraining forces.
6. List actions to be taken.

Process

1. Introduce the tool. Let the group know why you are doing this and explain the value of this process.
2. Explain the concept of driving forces and restraining forces:
 - Driving Forces: Forces that move you toward your goal
 - Restraining Forces: Forces that keep you from your goal
3. Prepare a Force Field Chart:
 - Write the purpose, desired outcomes, and process on the flipchart.
 - Draw a line down the center of the chart.
 - Write “Driving Forces” on the left side beneath the topic heading and “Restraining Forces” on the right side.
4. Post for the group to see.

SWOT Analysis

SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis is a tool for analyzing the current situation both internally (strengths and weaknesses) and externally (opportunities and threats). It provides helpful baseline information for a group that wants to envision the future or analyze a problem.

When it is useful

This tool is used as part of a planning process to help a group determine where it stands and what it might need to work on in order to get to where it wants to go.

How to use it

1. For strengths, ask the group to consider the activities that it does very well, the skills of the group or of individuals within the group, valuable experiences, and the depth of its work force or the quality of its leadership. List the group’s ideas on the flipchart. It is important that enough safety and openness has been created in the process so that responses are candid.
2. For weaknesses, ask the group to consider and list the activities it does not do well, the relevant skills it does not possess, experience it lacks, and areas in which the depth of its work force or quality of leadership could be improved. Again, candor is important. Some agreement on the items raised is helpful, but this is usually a step in a longer planning process, not an end in itself.
3. Ask the group to identify opportunities—the external factors that could be used to the benefit of the group. They could be in the form of funding sources, marketing possibilities, disarray in the competition, a favorable political climate, or public awareness. These are events or circumstances over which the group has no control, but which help the group go where it wants to go.

4. Ask the group to identify and list threats—negative possibilities that may hurt the group or cause it to shift plans or develop a new approach to solving a problem.

Note: You can use any form of generating ideas (see Brainstorming, page 76) and identifying group agreement (see Levels of Consensus, page 85) to accomplish these tasks.

Visualization

Visualization is a technique in which the participants paint a picture in their minds.

When it is useful

This tool is particularly useful to get people to identify what they would like to see in the future. It gives participants a chance to “see” the details, which then help them articulate their vision of the way they want things to be.

Pros and cons

- Very open way to collect ideas
- Helps people focus on the future or the intangible
- Generates quite varied ideas which can make summarizing a challenge
- For some the “close of your eyes and imagine” approach may feel uncomfortable

How to use it

1. Create a scene for the group (often of an ideal or changed scenario) by leading the group through a visualization exercise in which they have the ability to see from the vantage point of a hot air balloon or some imaginary point. If it is important to consider particular facets of the organization’s future, ask participants to do so.
2. Ask people to notice what they see, hear, and feel.
3. Give participants a moment to make notes about what they see.
4. Gather the ideas. Look for areas of agreement and areas of differences that need to be worked out.

Note: If the group is large (more than 8), break up into small groups. This will give individuals a chance to talk and generate more ideas in less time. Then pull the whole group together to gather the ideas.

Example

Ask participants to close their eyes and imagine with you. “It is now the year 2010 and your organization is functioning beautifully, just the way you would like it to be. You have special powers to view your organization. You can fly to any height and can see the town or the whole state in a glance. You also have x-ray vision and enhanced hearing. What do you see, hear, and feel? Whom is the organization serving? What is the structure of the organization? What kind of facilities is it operating in? What is the tenor of the conversation around the water cooler?” You can highlight whatever is important for the group to focus on.

Levels of Consensus

Levels of consensus is a decision-making method that streamlines the consensus-building process.

When it is useful

Groups often “talk an issue to death” as they struggle to build consensus. This tool provides a format for checking the level of consensus without the long speeches and discussions that give consensus building a bad name. This method shortens the time reaching consensus can take and gives everyone a voice, without compromising the careful listening, reflection, respect, and trust that must accompany consensus building.

How to use it

1. After the group has had sufficient time for discussion about a particular topic, ask all group members to hold up fingers indicating where they are on the consensus scale (see the levels of consensus, below). If a quick scan of the room indicates all ones and twos, then the group can quickly see that consensus has been reached. If there are several people indicating threes and fours, or if there is even one five or six, further discussion will be needed to reach unity.
2. No matter what the poll indicates, it is a good idea to ask if there is need for further comments or discussion.
3. It is extremely important to remember that when even one person is not in unity with the decision, the group needs to take the time to hear and consider what the person has to say. If that person is still not in consensus with the group, then the group needs to decide whether the decision making will be carried over to a later time to give more time for reflection, research, etc.; whether they will continue discussion until they are able to find an acceptable solution; or whether they will use their fall back decision-making method.

The levels of consensus:

1. I can say an unqualified “yes” to the decision. I am satisfied that the decision is an expression of the wisdom of the group.
2. I find the decision perfectly acceptable.
3. I can live with the decision; I am not especially enthusiastic about it.
4. I do not fully agree with the decision and need to register my view about why. However, I do not choose to block the decision. I am willing to support the decision because I trust the wisdom of the group.
5. I do not agree with the decision and feel the need to stand in the way of the decision being accepted.
6. I feel that we have no clear sense of unity in the group. We need to do more work before consensus can be reached.

Thumbs Up

Thumbs up is a pared-down version of the six-finger levels of consensus method. It is simpler; however, the disadvantage is that you lose the gradations that levels of consensus offers.

When it is useful

Thumbs up is useful as a quick check on the group's level of consensus.

How to use it

1. Ask group members to indicate with their thumbs how they feel about the proposed decision:



A thumb up means agreement with the decision



A thumb held straight across means some hesitation or caution about the decision, or it can be defined as "I can live with it."



A thumb down means disagreement with the decision or "no go."

2. As with levels of consensus, indication of hesitation or disagreement calls for further discussion.

Stoplight Cards

Stoplight cards is a variation of the levels of consensus method that uses red, yellow, and green cards, rather than fingers, to indicate agreement, hesitation, or disagreement with the decision being proposed.



When it is useful

Stoplight cards is useful as a quick check on the group's level of consensus.

How to use it

1. Distribute red, green, and yellow index cards or sheets of paper to each participant.
2. When a decision is being proposed, ask group members to indicate with the appropriate card how they feel about the decision:
 - Green means agreement with the decision
 - Yellow means some hesitation or caution about the decision, or it can be defined as "I can live with it."
 - Red means disagreement with the decision or "no go."
3. As with levels of consensus, indication of hesitation or disagreement calls for further discussion.

Discussion by Categories of Participants

How it is used

If there is a reason to do so, call on people by categories, e.g. employees with more/less than 5 years with the company; supervisors or team leaders; union/nonunion; men/women. Sometimes it helps these categories of participants to meet first to think through their perspective.

Pros and cons

- It may draw out particular perspectives that otherwise would not have emerged
- If there are different “power” levels present, it may encourage those who perceive themselves to have less power to speak out
- It can create or reinforce divisions
- People can feel put on the spot

Pre-discussion Quiet Time/ Silent Time Before Discussion

How it is used

Give participants a few minutes to write down some thoughts about the topic, and then ask for their contributions.

Pros and cons

- It gives each person thinking time, which is especially appreciated by introverts
- It can make for a more thoughtful discussion
- Some people—including the facilitator—may be uncomfortable with silence
- It may quiet the energy of the group in a way that jumping right into the discussion wouldn't have

Quaker Dialogue

Quaker dialogue is a discussion method that promotes equal participation and careful listening.

When it is useful

This method of discussion is useful when equality of participation is important or when group members need to listen to one another more attentively.

How it is used

1. Explain the process and rules for Quaker dialogue: Anyone is free to pass; no one comments on another's contribution until everyone has had a chance to speak. It might be a good idea to put a time limit on each person's speaking if you think long-windedness could be a problem.
2. Go around the room offering each person the opportunity to give her thoughts on a subject without being interrupted or questioned.
3. Before opening the floor to questions and discussion, check with the people who passed during the first round to see if they want to speak.

Pros and cons

- Each person is given an equal voice
- When the members of the group don't seem to be listening to one another, this method encourages better listening
- When individuals aren't participating, this gives them a way to get involved
- A sense of the group often evolves from the collective comments of individuals
- The process can get bogged down, especially with a large group, and thus drain energy
- Some people are uncomfortable being in the spotlight

Personal Attribute

Personal attribute is a technique used to create an open, participatory climate in group work.

When it is useful

- To help a group get to know one another better
- As an energizer
- Any size group

How to use it

1. You will need index cards or similar paper and a basket to collect the cards.
2. Ask everyone to write something about themselves that people are unlikely to know on a card. For example: I'm certified underwater diver. I grew up in East Africa. I write poetry, etc.
3. Collect the cards in a basket.
4. Each participant draws a card from the basket and has to locate the person who wrote the card.

5. Participants sit down when they have found their person and have also been found.
6. After everyone is sitting, go around and read the information from the cards.

Something in Common

When it is useful

- Early in group forming
- In groups where people know each other superficially
- In groups with conflicts

How to use it

1. Ask the group to break into pairs. Give the pairs 1–2 minutes to find something that they have in common that is not obvious. That they both wear glasses, have black hair, or are women doesn't count; it must be something that requires discussion to find out. At the end of the time, sample a few of the results.
2. Then ask the pairs to join with another pair to make a group of four. Give the groups 2–4 minutes to find something that all four have in common. Again, sample a few of the results.
3. If your group is large enough and you have time, try again in groups of eight.

Note: In this activity, as in all introduction exercises, it is important to structure the exercise so that you respect the individual's right to control what and how much is disclosed.

Gallery Walk

When it is useful

- In group forming
- In groups of 8–20

How to use it

1. You will need a piece of flipchart paper for each participant and colored markers.
2. Ask the participants to draw an image or series of images that creates a picture of who they are and what is most important to them. Reinforce that this is not an exercise about artistic talent, just an effort to use images to introduce themselves to one another. Do one of yourself quickly as an example. You could draw trees and mountains for your interest of hiking, stick figures for the members of your family, books for your pleasure in reading novels, and so on.
3. Give the group 5–10 minutes to work on their drawings. If you have the wall space to hang them up, ask the group to do so. Then walk around the gallery asking each person to introduce herself through her picture.

Note: In this activity, as in all introduction exercises, it is important to structure the exercise so that you respect the individual's right to control what and how much is disclosed.

Three Truths and a Lie

When it is useful

- In group forming when group members are ready to learn a little more about one another
- As an energizer
- In a group of 8–20

How to use it

1. You will need index cards or similar paper and pins.
2. Give each participant an index card or 3x5 piece of paper and pins or tape. Ask each person to write four things about themselves on the card in print large enough for others to read easily. Three of the things should be true, one should be false. Ask them to pin the card on like a name tag.
3. Now ask the group to circulate, pairing up with people to try to guess which item on the other person's list is not true. Ask them to continue circulating until they have seen every member of the group. Remember that with an uneven number of people there will always be a trio.

Note: It is important to structure the exercise so that you respect participants' right to control what and how much they disclose.

Organize by Birthdays

When it is useful

- As an energizer after lunch
- To help groups who are working on leadership or problem solving questions
- In groups of any size

How to use it

1. Explain to the group that their assignment is to organize themselves by their birthdays. Give them no further instructions. You are intentionally giving them an ambiguous assignment. Birthday could be interpreted to mean year of birth, month or day of birth, or other variations. What you are actually asking them to do is to figure out how they want to define it and then implement that order.
2. Your job is to observe their process, looking for how leadership emerges, what roles different members of the group play, what processes they use, and so on. Debrief by asking them to reflect on their own process, and, when helpful, sharing your observations.

Chapter 5: Organization and Logistics

The preparation of a training program should start immediately after it is decided that training is necessary. Each training program is characterized by its specifics; the scope of the organizational tasks will depend on the nature and complexity of the training, its objectives and duration, the background, the number of participants, etc.

The previous chapter discussed the first group of activities related to the preparation of the training—design of the training program and content. This chapter will give a short overview of organizational activities to undertake before, during, and after the completion of the training course.

5.1 The Training Team

Who will design the training program? Who will send invitations for the training? Who will be responsible for purchasing supplies? Who will copy participants' course books? Who will provide assistance during the course? Establishing a training team will help you answer such questions.

As discussed in Chapter 3, one of the first tasks involved in every training program is to form a team for its planning and delivery. Even if often the organization of the training can be handled by one person, practice shows that the team approach is preferable to ensure diverse experience and expertise. Usually, the team includes a training manager/coordinator, experts who will design and/or deliver the training program (some times they are different), and technical assistants. Depending on the type of the course and the work involved, the team may include more people.

It is always useful if the team holds a first planning meeting at the very early stage to develop a detailed plan of activities, assign tasks and responsibilities, and establish a schedule. This plan will serve during the entire process of preparing, delivering, and evaluating the training. It should be reviewed periodically to check progress and revised if necessary. It is very important to agree on the level and manner of communication expected from various training team members. Sometimes people from different organizations are responsible for different aspects of the training—they should communicate regularly.

The trainers

Trainers play a main role in every training program—good trainers are a guarantee for the success of the training. Therefore they should be selected carefully. Good trainers are not only knowledgeable experts on the subject and topics of the training; they also understand the needs of adult learners and are willing to spend time to communicate with learners. They not only lecture on the subject, but have the skills to apply the theory to the trainees' specific situations and can adapt the training to the needs of the audience. Good trainers understand their role and responsibility and are able to teach the knowledge and skills in a way that participants achieve the learning objectives.

How do you find good trainers to be part of your team? First, you should be clear about what criteria the trainer should respond to for each specific program. There will be different requirements for different programs. The following are common suggestions for the selection of trainers. Obviously, first, they should have extensive knowledge on the course topics. Other important skills include willingness to share their knowledge with others and to work on designing a customized training program. Try to attract trainers who

- Have deep knowledge of the subject and topics of the course;
- Understand and apply the adult learning principles and are well aware of the role and responsibilities of a trainer;
- Are willing to learn and test new approaches;
- Engage with the aims and objectives of the training program;
- Demonstrate good trainer skills;
- Are able to cooperate with others;
- Have communication and motivation skills;
- Have skills to manage difficult situations in a constructive way;
- Are willing to spend their time to understand the local context and special interests of the target audience for each specific course;
- Have a good writing style (especially if they will be designing the training program and materials); and
- Have a satisfactory level of computer skills (for preparation and use of learning aids).

Many organizations provide training services and often directly contract trainers for their training programs. There are a range of options to find trainers:

- Use an expert from your organization who has the knowledge and skills to deliver the training.
- Ask for recommendations from other organizations that have already delivered similar training.
- Approach an organization that provides trainers.
- Contact an organization well known for its high quality training services.
- Use trainers with whom you have worked successfully on other training programs.

After trainers are identified, it is useful to write a contract detailing the terms of their assignment. These may include needs assessment, design of the training program and the materials for the course, delivery and evaluation of the training, as well as any combination of those and other tasks. The contract should describe what the trainer is expected to produce, at what standard, at what price and in what deadlines. Early clarification of the details of the assignment aids both parties and increases the quality of the service. Trainers should be involved in the training team for the preparation of the training and should participate in the planning meetings.

After the delivery of the training, collect information about the results—has the course achieved the objectives? Talk to participants and to the client to solicit their opinions. Also,

you can include in the final training evaluation form questions regarding the trainers' presentations. All this will help you to decide whether you will use the same trainers again.

5.2 Co-training

Co-training is a specific strategy to enhance the learning potential in a training session. It involves the division of responsibility for an effective training session between two (or more) equally responsible persons. A wide variation of roles and specific tasks is possible, but the central issue in co-training is that both (or all) parties are concerned about the effectiveness of the entire learning experience, not just "their part."

As mentioned earlier, there are two considerations in each training program—the content and the process. The role of the trainer is central for the effective balance of each of these considerations. The job of balancing process and content is difficult and can be greatly facilitated by the use of two (or more) trainers. The difficult nature of the work is the primary reason for using co-training to promote effective participant learning.

Another important reason for working with a colleague as a co-trainer is to complement each other's presentation styles and content expertise, thereby heightening the learning experience. In addition, one way participants learn in groups is by studying trainers as behavioral models. This is especially true with regard to content areas such as project team building, or where the likelihood of strongly differing opinions, approaches, and technology is high. Co-training provides not only two or more models of individual styles, but also offers the opportunity for the development of different perspectives on the same content areas.

Because of the reinforcement inherent in co-training and the opportunity to approach the topic in a variety of manners, the likelihood that the learning will transfer to the participants' back-home, every-day situations is increased. A co-training team that has both content expertise and facilitation expertise enables the trainers to frame the training session in ways that are seen as credible by the respective audience.

There are some potential disadvantages to co-training, such as different orientations, timing and intervention strategies, and threatening and competitive behaviors between trainers. In spite of these potential obstacles, co-training, when set up and managed appropriately, is a far superior strategy to using a single trainer for increasing the positive impact of the training.

Roles and relationships in co-training

When co-training will be applied, the roles and responsibilities of individual trainers should be planned well in advance of the training event. The relationship between co-trainers must demonstrate mutual responsibility, as well as respect for individual differences. This is a difficult relationship to build, particularly when large differences exist between co-trainers or time is very limited, but it is critical to effective co-training. If roles are divided in such a manner so that one person is "working" and the other is not even present in the room, essentially the behavioral message is inconsistent with the purpose of co-training. Another example demonstrating the need for a solid, mutual relationship is when a conflict arises based on differing points of view. The co-trainers need to behave in a manner that shows that, although differences may exist, they genuinely appreciate each others' points of view. If the co-trainers do not behave in this manner, participants are led to choose between trainers or, worse yet, negate any credibility for both trainers.

While it is critical to demonstrate mutual responsibility, this does not mean that the co-trainers have exactly the same role or tasks to perform during the session. One trainer may assume the “facilitation specialist” role, having a group-dynamics, adult-learner focus, while the other may assume the “content specialist” role, having the subject-matter focus. Furthermore, the training process and content roles may be alternating roles depending on the individual strengths and weaknesses of the training team members. Together, the trainers are better able to monitor and facilitate individual and group development as well as the presentation of the subject matter.

Planning the co-training

To facilitate learning and to provide the proper support for participant learning, the trainers should do some team building before actual training begins. This team building combines planning, rehearsing, developing interpersonal relationships, and specifying certain details of the activity itself.

Before the training begins, in addition to assigning tasks, practicing exercises, and rehearsing lectures, the trainers should spend some time thinking and talking about their experiences as trainers and as technical experts. Trainers should discuss and agree on how they can be supportive of each other. This is necessary because the facilitation specialist and content specialist bring to the training their personal experiences, beliefs, reactions, and feelings about themselves and their roles. They need to share their expectations and personal limitations, compare reactions to the material, and discuss how they will handle delicate issues if and when they arise. Each should explore with the other specialist(s) the areas in which they feel confident and those in which they feel vulnerable. Before the training, trainers should review modules, the needs assessment, content areas, and resource materials, and develop strategies for the design/re-design of the session relative to methods, i.e., linking appropriate techniques such as role-play, lecture, and demonstration with content areas. Trainers should decide on who will do what. They should discuss whether and how they are going to make inputs when the other co-trainer is leading. They should plan signals for “I need help,” and “You need help.”

During the training, the joint responsibility is to assist one another to get the content across in the most effective manner; keep participants involved and focused on their learning; and maintain the collaborative atmosphere of co-training. Present and maintain the trainers’ relationship as a model for the group. Take a supportive role whenever the other trainer is leading an activity by attending to group dynamics and intervening when it seems appropriate. However, avoid interrupting the other trainer except to clarify some point that seems confusing to the group. During breaks, you and the other trainer should discuss how things are going in the session, soliciting mutual feedback and renegotiating the training plan if necessary.

After the training event, the trainers should constructively assess the training—what worked and didn’t work, and what changes would be made if the session were to be presented again. Review the co-training relationship, i.e., if we were to do this again, what changes to our co-training relationship would we make?

When two (or more) trainers work together collaboratively, a synergistic effect develops—the outcome of the back-and-forth between the two exceeds the sum of their contributions as individual trainers. Co-training, as described here, generates synergistic outcomes through the

personal and professional exchange of content and process expertise resulting from this collaboration.

5.3 Selecting Dates

Choosing a date for your event can be critical to its success, as potential contributors and participants will be unable to attend if it is scheduled to coincide with a predictable peak in their working year, or if it conflicts with other events of interest to them. When you performed the training needs assessment you and your client agreed on potential dates for the delivery of the training. If not, you should set a date on your own. Whatever approach you choose, it is useful to follow some basic guidelines to minimize the risk of selecting inappropriate dates. The following suggestions may help you to plan an optimum time for your particular event.

- When organizing an event, check your own organization's calendar first. This will ensure that the event is held at a time when the majority of the colleagues you wish to attract will be available.
- Coordinate dates you have selected with a handful of potential participants. Sometimes an organizational calendar will not show activities that will keep your client group away.
- Avoid dates of national and religious events or traditions, municipal days, school vacations, etc.
- Check for possible conflicts with similar events. For instance, regional and professional associations, staff development providers, or other organizations may also be holding an event on the same or a similar date to yours. Your participants are unlikely to have the time, resources, or stamina to attend back-to-back events, and yours may be the loser.
- Continue to check dates with potential participants from your client group. Otherwise it is only when your event has been organized and the publicity has gone out that some kind person will let you know of a conflict that could significantly reduce attendance.
- Decide the appropriate time of the week for events for which participants must stay away from home overnight. Would a mid-week event be the most suitable for your particular purposes? Or would a residential weekend event be attractive to participants? If your workshop location is also an attractive tourist venue, would it pay to start the workshop on Monday or finish on Friday, so that participants could choose to add on a holiday weekend to the training event?
- Try to find a date that suits the majority of your participants, but be aware that whatever date you choose will not suit everyone—as you will be informed many times.
- Are there ways of satisfying those who can't attend? It can be worthwhile to find a way for those unable to attend in person to engage in the content of your event, perhaps through your Web site, or proving them with papers and mailings that include

advance information of the date of the next event you or another organization are planning. This year's nonattender could be next year's fee-paying participant.

Of course, you know that whatever date you choose will not suit everyone. But try to find a date that suits the majority of your participants.

5.4 Selecting a Venue

Chapter 2, "Assessing Training Needs," discussed selecting a training location based on how close you want to be to the participants' day-to-day work environment. It explored the advantages and disadvantages of holding training both at participants' usual office and off-site. This chapter will discuss the selection of venue based on the organizational and content requirements of the training.

Fully consider what your needs are before you choose a location for your training. Review the information from the design of the training program—it will serve as a guide for the requirements regarding equipment, materials, and learning aids to use, what space you'll need for small group work, etc.

- Start planning early. Most good locations are booked well in advance and you may find it difficult to secure the one you desire if you leave the booking for a later planning stage.
- Decide what type of venue you are looking for. The most commonly used are training centers and hotels.
- Consider carefully which would be the best location for the participants. Is the venue close enough to public transport facilities for individuals to reach it easily and at a reasonable cost? For example, it may turn out to be easier and cheaper for participants to travel from Varna or Bourgas to Sofia than to another closer region.
- If you are thinking of a location you haven't used before, do some research. Ask partners and colleagues in the region where you plan to organize the training event for advice. Find someone who has organized an event there to receive first-hand information.
- Analyze what size of venue you need. How many participants do you anticipate? How large a room will you require? How many breakout rooms will you need for small group work—and what size will they need to be? If there is an exhibition associated with the event, can this be arranged effectively? Also, it is always preferable to have naturally lit rooms.
- If you plan to use computers and other audiovisual equipment, check whether the room is suitable for data projection.
- What catering facilities do you require?
- Where will coffee and tea be served? Is the place suitable for the time allocated to coffee breaks? You will not want participants to run through a large hotel to reach the café during a 15-minute coffee break. Check whether there are alternative places for serving coffee and tea.

- Consider what room arrangement you want. Usually, you would want to create an informal environment for work and discussions. If so, check whether the room can be arranged according to your requirements. In some cases, you may find that chairs and tables are static; in other cases the venue's management doesn't allow rearrangement. Whatever the reason, ensure early that you can arrange the training room at your convenience. Otherwise, you may find yourself needing to resolve the problem immediately before the opening session.
- If there is an associated social program, investigate what is at or near this location that you could usefully include. Are there local landmarks or sights to visit? Are there venues that could host a special dinner?

Location isn't everything. In the final analysis, don't forget that whatever venue you choose, it is people who make the place work for the event. There is little point selecting the best venue facilities in a perfect geographical location if the personnel is intransigent and unhelpful. Observe the venue staff when you are researching your choice of location because this can be an indicator of how they will respond to you and your participants.

Annex 4 includes a sample checklist to consider when selecting a training venue.

5.5 Contacting Potential Participants

You already have a general idea (from the training needs assessment) about the participants, their profile, and level of knowledge. Now you or your client should inform them about the upcoming training and to invite them to attend.

When writing information materials and invitation letters, put yourself in the shoes of the potential participants. First, be aware that they receive a huge range of invitations for all types of events. Second, even if the course is free or not expensive, the cost to them will include time away from the workplace, travel time, and expenses. Why should they choose to attend your course? You should provide them with information that will make their choice easy. Anticipate what people need to know. Based on this analysis, write the promotional material and invitations. The following are suggestions of what to include:

- Why the training has been organized and its subject (title and purpose).
(Here, you may include information about the results of the training needs assessment, surveys among target groups, and the importance of the topics; you can stress the seriousness of the problem and how the proposed training will contribute to its solution.)
- For whom the training would be useful (target audience)
(Here, you can list more specific requirements regarding the participants' profile).
- What specific benefits participants will gain (training objectives and results)
- How the training will be organized (approach, program and agenda)
- Who will deliver the training (short information about organizers and trainers)
- Where and when it will be held

- How much it costs
- Contacts for additional information

Don't promise too much because the danger is raising people's expectations too high. It is better if their expectations are reasonable and realistic, and that they are pleasantly surprised by the quality of the training, instead of the other way round.

Decide how you are going to inform people about the training—e-mail or post mail. A quick analysis of the target audience will help. An increasing tendency is to use electronic communications and e-mails—this is understandable, they provide a quick and cheap way of providing a large amount of information. However, many people prefer to receive information on paper. Therefore, you may choose to use a combined approach—send short information materials (brochure, information sheet, invitation letter) by mail to attract attention, and send further information via e-mail or Web site, or by request.

Shortage of time is one of the main reasons for people not to attend a training, therefore, be sure to send information and invitations early so that people can arrange their schedules. Make the registration process as easy as possible. A registration form is a good option to help both potential participants and organizers. Information included in the registration form will depend on the specific course, but usually one part concerns participants' profile (name, position, contact information, fee). In addition, you may include questions to collect information about participants' expectations, individual needs (smoker/nonsmoker, vegetarian, etc.), as well as any information you consider useful for organizers to respond to the specific needs of participants.

One problem that training managers face is when potential participants register for the course, but later withdraw or just don't appear without even informing the organizers. This happens more often when the training course is provided free of charge. A possible solution may be to remind to participants about the course by e-mail or phone a few days before it starts. This will give you an estimate of the number of participants and allows you some time for last minute adjustments of accommodations and meals. Some organizations provide free training but charge a fine for participants who register but don't appear. When the training is not free, organizers guarantee financial sustainability by charging a fee, including a penalty for those who withdraw at a late stage when it is impossible to substitute them with other participants. Organizers also often offer a lower fee for those who register early.

5.6 The Training Environment

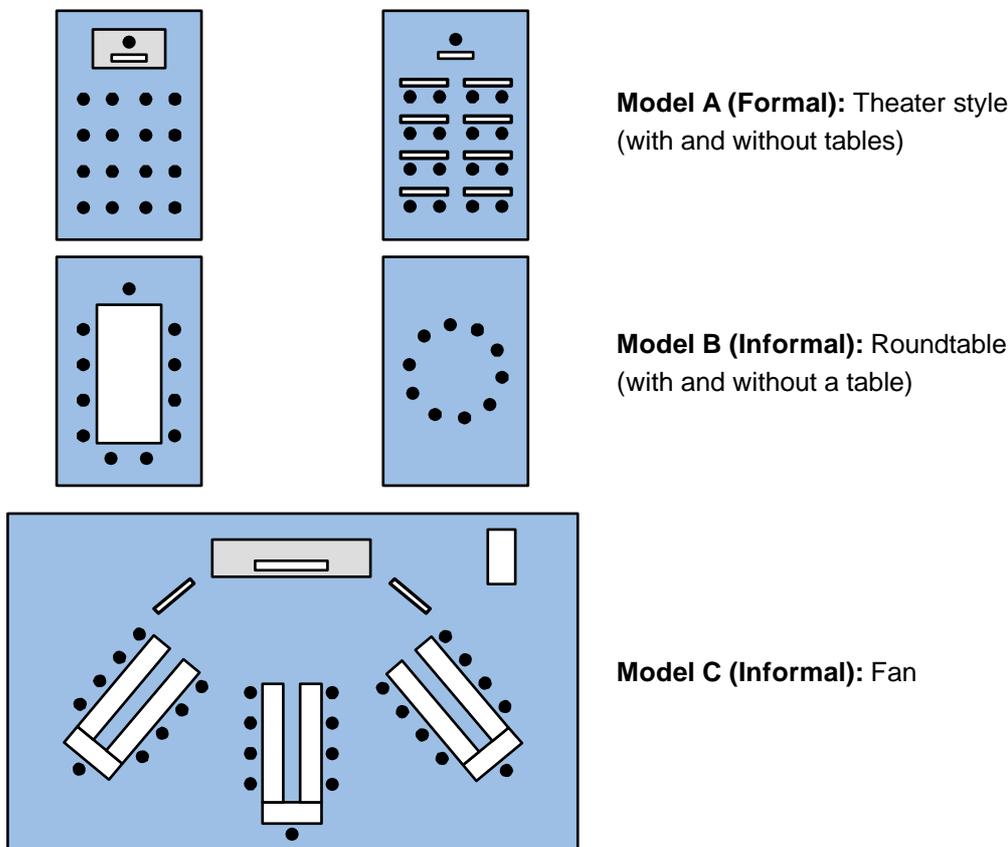
The training environment may have considerable impact on the effectiveness of the training course. It has an impact on the way people learn and on their attitude about the course. The level of learning may be impeded by an environment that doesn't correspond with the requirements of the specific training or if participants don't feel comfortable.

Arranging the training rooms

Training room arrangement defines, to a certain degree, the level of formality and gives initial signals to participants about the type of communication they can expect during the training. As mentioned in other places in this manual, an informal and comfortable room arrangement that facilitates communication and discussion is most appropriate for training

adults. A few examples of room arrangement are given below, showing different levels of formality.

Exhibit 9: Training Room Arrangements



When you organize the arrangement of the room and define the optimal use of the space, think about the equipment and flipcharts you will use. Arrange them in such a way that your movement in the room will not make it difficult for learners to see them. Check in advance that each participant can see from his or her seat by sitting at different seats in the room.

Organizing the catering

Everybody has different expectations and preferences for food. You cannot accommodate every participant's likes and dislikes, but you should aim for consistent quality. Try to provide food that most participants will like. Most people will complain more about interesting food done badly than boring food done well. Usually this is not a problem when you provide a buffet and participants have the chance to select from several options. In this case, make sure that the restaurant provides quick and easy access to the food (don't set up a buffet along a wall to avoid lunchtime queues).

It is absolutely necessary to satisfy vegetarian and other special dietary needs. A good approach is to ask participants about dietary restrictions in advance—when they first apply for the event, then when they register for the course, when they register at the venue, and during the announcements at the beginning of the course. If you have done everything you can to find out about special food needs, and they have not responded, it is then not your

responsibility if the provision is not satisfactory to them. But of course, still try to do what you can to meet needs that materialize at short notice.

Sometimes the speed of catering is a problem. Usually a 1-hour lunch break would be sufficient, but if the lunch lasts longer because of the service, it will be inconvenient for you and for the participants. Whenever possible, ask the personnel how much time will be needed to serve the food.

Administrative assistance during the course

The administrative activities are an important component of the training management process. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, when you form the training team you clearly define the roles and responsibilities of each team member. Part of this work concerns administrative activities before, during, and after the delivery of the course. The scope of the administrative work will depend on the specific training program; therefore it is difficult to define general rules for their nature and scope outside of the training context. Nevertheless, it is always a good idea to allocate a person to provide administrative assistance during the delivery of the course. Sometimes this task is assigned to the trainers. This is possible, although it can be helpful to separate responsibilities related to organization from those related to the training content and process because this approach decreases tension and allows trainers to concentrate on the training process.

The main administrative assistance tasks during the training are

- Ensure administrative and technical assistance to trainers—prepare materials, the room, and equipment settings; photocopy materials if need arises; etc.
- Ensure quality services. An important organizational task is to give clear instructions to the serving personnel in the hotel/training center of what is expected from them, including a schedule and special requirements. Although most details should have been agreed before the start of the training course, immediate interference can be necessary to improve unsatisfactory quality of services.
- Deal with unexpected situations. Such situations may occur regardless of how well the training is prepared. They may be related to logistics, participants' health problems, or any other circumstances.
- Ensure assistance to participants. Even if they have attended numerous courses, participants will probably feel uncertain and disoriented when they arrive for your event. This is natural because every training course is a unique combination of time, location, content, and attendees. A well organized welcome and registration process facilitates participants and makes them feel secure and comfortable. For example, organizers may provide prepared written material with information about organizational issues. It can contain information about the program, the location of the training rooms, where the food will be served, what facilities participants can use free of charge and for which they should pay, provision of medical services, etc. During the training course, the main administrative task is to provide assistance to participants and to respond to their specific needs. Sometimes organizers wonder how it is that independent adult persons become completely dependent once they arrive at a course. Yes, they are independent adult persons, but they are attending your training course and should conform to the location, schedule, food, rules, etc., selected by you.

Therefore, organizers should always do their best to create a comfortable training environment that will improve the learning process and will increase the overall satisfaction of participants.

In conclusion, create an identity for your course and provide facilities for participants to feel comfortable in the training environment. This, as well as all the other organizational activities, will increase the quality of the course.

Chapter 6: Trainer Skills

By now, you should have already completed the activities necessary to prepare the training event—you have assessed training needs, designed the training program, and tackled organizational and logistical issues. Now you are going to deliver the training. It is obvious that the skills you have as a trainer play an important role in the success of your training event. No matter how well you have organized the training, if you don't have good skills to communicate with trainees, and you don't understand group dynamics and approaches to managing problems and difficult situations, the good planning will be wasted. This is because the trainer serves as a bridge between the training content and the learners.

This chapter discusses basic trainer skills. Mastering them is not the only guarantee for the success of the training, but the lack of such skills will definitely harm the level of learning and satisfaction among trainees.

6.1 Encouraging Positive Communication

Learners learn best when they participate in the training process. When you use communication and facilitation skills in the training process, you encourage involvement by showing interest in the learners and making them feel free to comment and ask questions. These skills also help you to obtain feedback from the learners about how the training is being received. This enables you to respond to the learners' needs most appropriately. Finally, good positive communication skills will help to minimize conflicts and manage problem situations.

You will use five main facilitation skills in the training process:

- Attending
- Observing
- Listening
- Summarizing
- Questioning

Attending Skills

Public situations cause people to restrain themselves. People tend to hold back and become more dull than they would be in a more comfortable, natural situation. People's bodies, faces, and voices become neutral, betraying their discomfort and nervousness to the audience. To gain the respect and attention of your audience, you must be likable, show commitment, and demonstrate enthusiasm.

“Attending” means presenting yourself physically in a manner that shows you are paying attention to your learners. When you use attending skills, you are building rapport with your learners. You are communicating that you value them as individuals and are interested in their learning. Attending helps you gather information from the learners. Your physical positioning enables you to observe learners' behaviors, which are important sources of information for you in assessing how the training is being received. It also encourages the learners to interact verbally with you.

Maintain eye contact. By maintaining eye contact with the learners, you will appear more credible, relaxed, and interesting. It will also cause learners to look back at you. If you pause to think, try not to look to the ceiling; it will make you appear to be at a loss or not in control. Instead, always try to keep your eyes on the audience or look down slightly. At the same time, you should avoid gazing at a specific participant or place in the room, as well as letting your eyes wander in a restless manner.

Support words with gestures. People are more strongly influenced by what they see than what they hear. Body language is an important element of communication and establishment of a positive working environment in the training process. Face the audience. If the room arrangement allows, move among participants. It is especially important in small group exercises to observe how participants perform. Use natural facial expression and smile when circumstances allow. A smile communicates more than just happiness, it says that you are confident and at ease. And you will find that people generally smile right back. When presenting, use supporting gestures to stress what you are saying. If you are standing up, let your arms start out resting at your sides. If you're sitting down, rest your hands in your lap, but don't clasp your hands tightly. You will find that, almost immediately, your hands will begin to gesture as they would in conversation, naturally supporting your words. The moment you put your hands in your pockets or lock them in front or behind, you begin to look nervous and you restrict your ability to gesture supportively. When your hands are at your sides and gesturing openly, you will communicate a relaxed confidence. Avoid nervous gestures—they usually distract learners.

Keep your voice interesting. Your voice is your most effective tool when you make a presentation. You should speak loud enough to be heard by everyone in the room. If the room is large or the acoustics are poor, consider using a microphone. Try not to sound flat or monotone. Use changes in pitch to add meaning to your words. Changes in pace and pauses also add meaning. A slower pace will help emphasize important points, while a faster pace connotes energy and enthusiasm. Short pauses will give participants time to think about what you have just said and will set up your next idea.

Dress professionally. Professional appearance is also important. If you dress very informally, you may create the impression that you dislike the training. On the other hand, too formal dress may look ridiculous. Finding the right balance depends on the audience (managers, technical staff, etc.) and on the training objective (basic knowledge or skills building). Have in mind that it's always easier during the training to become more informal (for example by taking off a tie or a coat), than to achieve more a formal appearance.

Observing skills

Observing skills help you assess how the training is being received. Based on your observations over time, you can make decisions to continue the learning process as planned, or to modify it to respond to the learners' needs.

There are three steps in using observing skills:

1. Look at the participant's face, body position, and body movements. Is the person smiling? Frowning? Nodding? Yawning? Looking at you? Looking away? Is the person leaning forward? Leaning back in her chair? Tapping a pencil?
2. Formulate an inference of the person's feelings based on what you have observed.

- If you observe smiling, nodding affirmatively, leaning forward, or eye contact, then possible feelings are enthusiasm and understanding.
- Yawning, vacant stares, shuffling feet, leaning back in a chair, or looking at a clock usually express boredom.
- Frowning, scratching one's head, pursing one's lips, vacant stares, or avoiding eye contact may suggest some confusion.

3. Take appropriate action based on the inferences made.

Although a single behavior can serve as an indicator of a feeling, your inferences will be based on the total data you collect from the continuing observations you make as a trainer. Whether you decide to take action or not will depend on the situation as you view it—how many learners are experiencing the feeling, the depth and possible duration of it, the impact it will have on present and future learning, etc. If the situation warrants action in your judgment, consider the possible actions shown below.

Exhibit 10: Responding to Learners' Behaviors

If the inference you have drawn is...	And...	Then...
Enthusiasm/Understanding	Several learners display the behavior	→ Continue and make a mental note that the training is being well-received
	One learner displays behavior	→ Continue and make a mental note to check again later
Boredom	Several learners display the behavior	→ Try taking a break, speeding up, or checking your training method to be sure that the learners are involved in the training process
	Only one learner displays the behavior	→ Continue, but make a mental note to reassess later
Confusion	Several learners display the behavior	→ Ask learners about areas of confusion, and provide clarification by giving examples or rephrasing information
	One learner displays the behavior	→ Ask the learner about areas of confusion and provide clarification. Or, if time is limited, talk with the learner during the next break.

Listening Skills

Listening, as defined here, means obtaining verbal information and verifying that you understand the information. Listening skills enable you to demonstrate your understanding of the learners' perspective. Listening to learners also provides you with feedback about how the training is being received. You can use this feedback in considering how you need to proceed in conducting your training.

Listening involves two key steps:

1. Listening to the words being expressed, which means concentrating on what the learner is saying.
2. Paraphrasing what was said to demonstrate understanding, which means interacting with the learner to ensure accurate understanding of the learner's information.

Each of these steps is discussed in more detail below.

Step 1: Listen to the words being expressed.

As you listen to the words being expressed, try to grasp both the content and the meaning of the words from the learner's perspective. While this may sound simple, you will find that the major roadblocks to listening to the learner's words are the internal and external distractions that compete with good listening habits.

Internal distractions are the competing thoughts that develop inside you while the learner is talking. Sometimes they are related to what the learner is saying; sometimes they are mental excursions to unrelated topics. You must eliminate these internal distractions that keep you from focusing on what the learner is saying.

External distractions are things that happen in the learning environment that compete with your attention on the learner. They can be sights or sounds. Exclude them, or at the least, defer giving attention to them, until the learner has finished speaking.

Once you have focused on the learner's message, you can then proceed to the next step—demonstrating your understanding of what the learner said.

Step 2: Paraphrase what was said to demonstrate understanding.

Paraphrasing to demonstrate understanding requires you to verbally interact with the learner. The interaction is either to

- Get additional information to fill in your understanding gaps, or to
- Verify with the learner what you think was said.

Use a phrase such as "You're saying..." or "As I understand it..." before paraphrasing what the learner said. If you then paraphrase the information accurately, the learner can confirm that you have demonstrated understanding. Or, if you paraphrase inaccurately or miss important details, the learner can add the information needed for you to understand.

Active listening means trying to understand other people. In addition to understanding what people are saying, you should ensure that you understand what their feelings and thoughts are, i.e. demonstrate skills to check feelings. For example, say “It seems to me that you are angry about what I’ve just said. Is that right?” or “I have the impression that you want to change the topic.”

Summarizing skills

Summarizing is a communication skill that is a deliberate effort on the part of a trainer to pull together the main points made by the person or persons involved in the discussion.

The purpose of summarizing is to

- Pull important ideas, facts, or data together
- Establish a basis for further discussion or make a transition
- Review progress
- Check for clarity and agreement

By using summarizing in a conversation, you can encourage people to be more reflective about their positions as they listen for accuracy and emphasis.

Summarizing requires you to listen carefully to organize and present information systematically. Summarized information ensures that everyone in the discussion is clear about what transpired in the just-completed portion of the discussion.

For example, a trainer may summarize to ensure that participants remember what has been said or to emphasize key points made during a group discussion. In these instances, summarizing is very useful. Some starter phrases to help you begin a summary are: “In talking about this issue, we have come up with three main points...,” “If I understand you, you feel this way about the situation...,” or “I think we agree on this decision—what we are saying is that we intend to...”

One real benefit of summarizing is that it gives you the opportunity to check for agreement. If people do not agree, it is better for you to know during the discussion than to find out later when a task is not completed or a deadline is missed. One of the most common complaints is that some participants think an agreement has been reached, yet things do not occur as planned afterwards. In many instances, that is because there was not really agreement during the discussion.

Questioning skills

Questions play a very important role in the training process. Generally, they are used to

- Find out what previous knowledge of the subject members may have
- Get all members of the group involved in the discussion
- Check on the group’s assimilation of the subject matter

- Draw out the quiet, shy, or laidback member
- Get people thinking
- Awaken interest
- Keep the discussion moving
- Get each member to hear a range of opinions different from his or her own
- Highlight important aspects of the subject
- Keep the discussion on the subject or bring it back to the subject
- Recall a “wandering mind”
- Stop private conversations
- Prevent monopolization by one member
- Draw out members’ experiences that maybe relevant and helpful
- Pull a “difficult” member into place

There are three skills associated with the questioning process:

- Asking questions
- Handling learners’ answers to questions
- Responding to learners’ questions

Each of these will be explored in more detail below.

1. Asking Questions

Asking questions effectively during training is one of the most important skills you can develop. Asking questions effectively means selecting the right type of question, phrasing it so it elicits the response you are after, and then directing the question appropriately. Questions are most effective when you have planned their formulation and the time you are going to ask them.

Generally speaking, there are two basic types of questions from which to choose—open-ended questions and closed questions.

1. *Open-ended questions* are asked in a general way and may receive a wide range of answers, not the simple “yes” or “no.” Open-ended questions stimulate thinking and discussions. Usually they start with *who*, *what*, *where*, *how*, or *why*. For example, “What actions would be appropriate in this situation?” or “How are the main stakeholders preparing for the introduction of the new system?”

2. *Closed questions* generally result in “yes,” “no” or other one-word answers. They cease the discussion and usually start with *whether* or *have*. For example, “Do you have experience in the preparation of plans?” Fact investigating questions are a variation of closed questions. They investigate information, data, etc. For example, “How many heads of department attended organizational management training?”

In addition, questions can be divided into other useful subcategories, including the following:

- *General questions* are addressed to the group as a whole. The trainer wants to stimulate thinking by all participants. If, before asking a question, the trainer names a person to answer, he encourages the other participants to go to sleep while the “victim” tries to answer. If the trainer puts the question to the group as a whole, every group member will think about it. In addition, if a direct question is used too early in the training process, it may embarrass participants if they are not yet ready to answer.
- A *direct question* is addressed to an individual by name. In some cases it has definite advantages, but must be used very carefully. For example, it can put the person to whom it is addressed in a very uncomfortable and embarrassing position of having to reply when he or she does not have anything to say. On the other hand, if the trainer knows that there is a recognized “expert” on the topic under discussion, he can use a direct question to draw on her experience. The direct question may be used to involve a shy participant, but in this case it should be carefully chosen and the trainer should be pretty sure that the participant will be able to answer. Direct questions can also be used to break up private conversations or to interrupt a “monopolizer” of the discussion (by asking someone else to speak).
- A better approach for the trainer is to phrase the question as a general question first, pause to allow all participants to think and then name the individual who should answer. For example, “What should be done in this situation?”—pause—then, “Maria, you have considerable experience working with clients, how would you proceed in this situation?”
- Another form of the direct question is the *pick-up question*. It is used to refer back to a contribution that got passed over in a heated discussion. This frequently happens with shy participants who speak quietly and are often interrupted by more vocal participants. The important thing is that the trainer should make a mental note and come back to the point later to develop a thesis or just to acknowledge the participant’s contribution. For example, “Mr. Dimitrov, I think you said that you have found a new approach to resolving this problem. Would you say more about it?”
- In the case of a *rhetorical question*, the trainer doesn’t expect an answer and the group knows this. For example, “In these circumstances, what else could we do?” (i.e., nothing else could be done). This type of questions is used usually to end a discussion.
- A *redirected question* may be used when learners ask specific questions. When appropriate, the trainer should redirect the question to the other learners. This type of question will be discussed in more detail below.

You may come across many other categories of questions in the literature on the subject, including imperative, exploratory, provocative, controversial, and ambiguous questions. But the categories above are the most important in the process of training.

Once you have decided on the type of question you will use in a situation, you need to determine how you will phrase it. There are important considerations in phrasing questions so that the learner is focused on the precise information you are trying to obtain.

The following are guidelines for you to use in phrasing your questions:

Ask	Don't Ask
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clear, concise questions covering a single issue • reasonable questions based on what the learners can be expected to know at this point in the training • challenging questions that provoke thought • honest, relevant questions that direct the learners to logical answers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rambling, ambiguous questions covering multiple issues • questions that are too difficult for the majority of the learners to answer • questions that are too easy and provide no opportunity for thinking • “trick” questions designed to fool the learners

2. Handling Learners' Answers to Questions

The second skill associated with the questioning process involves the way in which you handle the learners' answers to your questions. To ensure maximum learning, you need maximum participation by your learners. The way in which you respond to a learner's answer has an impact not only on the individual learner, but also on the amount of future participation you will receive from all learners.

Some ways to handle learners' answers that will maintain a high level of learner participation are to

- Use positive reinforcement for correct answers.
- Acknowledge the effort of the respondent, regardless of whether the answer was right or wrong.
- Minimize potential learner embarrassment for wrong or incomplete answers.

3. Responding to Learners' Questions

The third skill associated with the questioning process involves responding to questions from the group. Learners' questions provide an opportunity to enhance the learning for the group as well as for the individual asking the question. The way in which you respond to learners' questions also affects whether learners feel free to ask future questions during training.

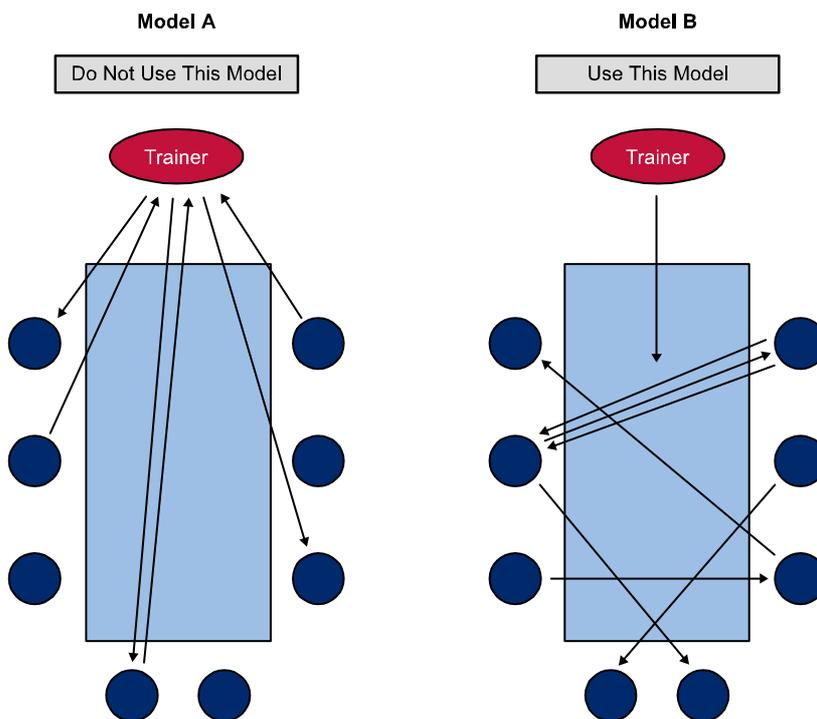
Usually, the first reaction of a person who has been asked a question is to respond, if he or she knows the answer. However, in training, this is not always the right approach.

There are three acceptable ways to respond to learners' questions:

Provide the answer yourself	When	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You are the only person who can provide the answer
Redirect the question back to the same learner, or to another learner	When	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a high probability that the person will be able to come up with the correct answer
Defer the question	When	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The question is beyond the scope of the course The question cannot be handled in the allotted time frame The answer will be provided by material covered later in the course You need time to get the correct answer and get back to the learner

In summary, in order to encourage active thinking and participation, you should use Model B below.

Exhibit 11: Trainer-Participant Interaction



6.2 Working with Groups

Many books have been written on the subjects of group dynamics and development of groups. This section will not go into detail on the subject. Instead, it will focus on issues that you will want to consider for the training delivery. This knowledge, together with the other trainer skills discussed early in the chapter, will help you to successfully guide trainees to achieve the training goals and objectives.

Group dynamics and group development

Any time a group of people come together to work there are dynamics at play. External factors (norms, organizational culture), the group's size, formal and informal leadership, previous experience, gender, and power positions are just some of those dynamics. To successfully manage the training process, as a trainer you should know basic information about the group of trainees. Collect information on the participants' profile and the factors that may have a positive or negative impact on the training. You can use the information collected in the training needs assessment.

In addition, all groups go through stages of development. One well known model of group development is described by Bruce Tuckman. The group moves through four consecutive stages:

1. *Forming is the first stage.* This stage is characterized by politeness and small chance of tension and conflict situations. Group members' behavior is based on the past. Participants are uncertain about why they are here and how they will adapt and they avoid serious questions and issues. They expect the trainer to provide instructions and guidance. The task of the trainer during this stage is to present appropriate activities so that people can feel safe and valued. Forming can be accomplished through introduction and orientation, review of objectives and the agenda, warm-up exercises, sharing of expectations, and establishment of working norms.
2. *The second stage is characterized by rivalry and is called storming.* Participants are concerned about control, power, and influence. This is often manifested through disagreement about the process, emotional responses to task assignments, and challenges to the trainer. The task of the trainer in this stage is to assess the specific problems, manage conflict resolution, and try to separate the issue from the person, without forgetting that you are not the subject of the attack. Note that not every conflict is an indication of storming. Healthy conflicts regarding the training content and the process can occur at every stage of group development.
3. *In the third stage, group members move toward interdependence.* Agreement on objectives and tasks is reached and the group accepts them. This stage is characterized by acknowledgement of the contribution of individuals. Participants share feelings and opinions, discuss, provide feedback, and maintain a secure working environment. The trainer's task is to lead the group and acknowledge contributions of group members.
4. *The fourth stage of development is performance.* The group is working collaboratively and productivity is high. Participants are oriented both toward

performance of assigned tasks and relationships with their colleagues. The trainer's task is to ensure an effective atmosphere for achieving the training objectives, affirm good work, and stay out of the way when not necessary.

The amount of time a group spends at each stage will depend on the group, its dynamics, and its tasks. Some groups go straight through, while others skip stages and need to come back to them later. The role of the trainer is to succeed in structuring and leading the training in such a way that the group can pass the first two stages quickly and move toward the next two, which are characterized by high productivity.

Behaviors that affect the functioning of the group

People behave in a way that reflects their personality and needs, but, from the group's point of view, the most valuable behaviors are those that fulfill a need of the group to get the job done while sustaining satisfactory relationships.

Most generally, behaviors in groups can be categorized by whether they

- Help accomplish the task (task-oriented),
- Help maintain good relationships among members (socially oriented), or
- Hinder the group by expressing individual needs or goals unrelated to the common objectives (self-oriented).

The trainer should support and encourage task- and socially oriented behaviors and try to maintain a balance between the two. Of course, self-oriented behavior should be discouraged as much as possible. The following are characteristics of these types of behaviors:

- Typical expressions of task-oriented behaviors include initiating ideas, seeking and providing information, summarizing data, clarifying problems, generating proposals, and readiness for decision making.
- Socially oriented behaviors are characterized by encouragement, solution of conflicts, and provision of positive feedback.
- Behaviors that divert the energy of the group or damage group cohesion or effectiveness may be expressed by arriving late or leaving early, interpreting others' comments, holding side conversations, putting down efforts of the other participants, refusing to participate, ignoring the process, or making statements of the type "yes, but..."

Resistance

Resistance takes many forms, some of them very subtle and elusive. In the course of a single training event, you may encounter a variety of forms. As you begin to deal with resistance in one form, sometimes it will fade and reappear in a different form.

In his book *Flawless Consulting*, Peter Block describes different forms of resistance and the reasons behind them. Common forms of resistance include the following:

Time—“We don’t have time for this!” or “This is the wrong time.” This form of resistance can also be expressed by constant interruptions during your meetings. The whole time issue is most often a person’s resistance against having to tell you how he or she really feels about this training.

Impracticality—Participants keep reminding you that they live in the “real world” and are facing “real-world problems.” This form of resistance accuses the training of being impractical and academic. As in many forms of resistance, there may be some truth in the statement, but then there is some truth in almost any statement. It is the intensity of the emphasis on “practicality” that leads you to suspect you are up against an emotional issue.

Waste of time—This is a variation on the time theme, but is common in organizations and is often unspoken. Participants may think, “Strategic management systems come and go, depending on who is in charge. If we do the absolute minimum and weather this latest of fads, we’ll be fine. This isn’t going to lead to anything other than business as usual.”

Flood you with detail—This is a corollary to the request for detail; you ask someone how this got started and the response is, “Well, it all got started 10 years ago on a Thursday afternoon in September. I think we were in the City Hall and the weather outside was overcast and threatening to rain. I hope I am not boring you, but I think it is important for you to understand the background of the situation, etc., etc., etc.” You find yourself getting more and more detail and understanding less and less. The moment you start to get bored or confused about what all this has to do with the problem at hand, you should begin to suspect that what you are getting is resistance and not just an effusive attempt to give you all the facts.

I’m not surprised—It is one of life’s more amazing facts that for many people it is of primary importance to not be surprised. It seems that whatever happens in the world is OK as long as they are not surprised. The fear of surprise is really the desire to always be in control. When you run into it, it is kind of deflating. It can be seen as a signal that your work is really not that important. See the desire not to be surprised for what it is—a form of resistance and not really a reflection on your work.

Attack—The most blatant form of resistance is when participants attack you. With angry words, a pointing a finger in your face, punctuating the end of every sentence, they leave you feeling like they have violated a line or norms that should never be violated. People often respond to such an attack by withdrawing or responding in kind. Both of these responses mean that you are taking the attack personally and not seeing it as another form of resistance.

Silence—This is the toughest of all. You may keep talking but get very little response in return. “Keep talking, I don’t have any problems with what you are saying. If I do, I’ll speak up.” Don’t you believe it. Silence doesn’t ever mean consent. If you are teaching something important to the organization, it is not natural for participants to have no reaction. Silence means that the reaction is being blocked. If you think a training went well because the participants didn’t raise any objections, don’t trust it. Ask yourself if you received any real support or any real enthusiasm or got personal involvement in the action. If there were few signs of life, begin to wonder whether the silence was a form of resistance.

Moralizing—This type of resistance makes great use of certain words and phrases: “those people,” “should,” and “they need to understand.” When you hear them being used, you know you are about to go on a trip to the world of how things ought to be, which is simply a moralizing defense against reality. People use the phrase “those people” about anyone who is not in the room at the time. It is a phrase of superiority used in describing people who (1) are usually at another level in the organization than the speaker, or (2) are unhappy about something the speaker has done or said and, therefore, “really don’t understand the way things have to be done.” Phrases of superiority are actually ways of putting oneself on a pedestal. Pedestal sitting is always a defense against feeling some uncomfortable feeling and taking some uncomfortable actions.

Resistance and defenses are not to be denied. In fact, they need clear expression. If suppressed, they just pop up later—often more dangerously. The key is how you respond to the resistance and defenses. Resistance is inherent in the consulting process. There are two underlying concerns that cause most resistance—control and vulnerability.

Maintaining control is at the center of the value system of most organizations. There is a belief in control that goes beyond effectiveness and good organizational performance. The whole reward system is geared around how much control, responsibility, and authority you have. When you perform well, you don’t get much more money, you get more control. At some point in history, organizations realized that they couldn’t pay people enough money to commit themselves, so instead, control is held up as the reward.

Control is highly valued. There is nothing wrong with having control, and being out of control is a very anxious state in which to be. When you get resistance, one good guess about its source is that the participant feels that he or she is going to lose control.

Concern that people will get hurt is the second major issue that gives rise to resistance. The feeling of being judged and having to prove yourself again and again creates tension that sometimes is expressed as resistance.

When you encounter resistance, try to understand it. Look for concerns about control and vulnerability. View resistance as a natural process and support the person in expressing the resistance directly. Don’t take the expression of the resistance personally or as an attack on you or your competence.

There are three steps for handling resistance:

1. Identify what form the resistance is taking.
2. Name the resistance in a neutral, nonpunishing way.
3. Be quiet, let the client respond.

Intervening in problem situations

From time to time, a group will have one or two people who seem to be persistent sources of conflict. They may or may not be aware of their impact on the group, but the effect may be devastating on the group’s ability to accomplish its task.

The interpersonal gap

Sometimes the “problem person” brings an important message to the group. The message may not be brought in the way you or others would like, but that person may be on to something. Try listening as if the participant has a crucial piece of information for the group and is trying the only way he or she knows to express it. Thank the person if you really hear the message, and help the group hear it, too. What is intended is never the same as the effect on another person, because of the way people encode and decode communications. Actions that are public and known may not accurately communicate a person’s intention, which is private and unknown. Many times the “problem person” is simply doing a strange job of encoding his intentions, because he is anxious or angry and upset, or because of old patterns learned a long time ago. Using the interpersonal gap concept can be useful in understanding what is happening, as you will see in a moment.

The hardcore problem person

There are also people whose resistance won’t be conquered using gentle methods or who resist actively participating and making a positive contribution to the group’s efforts. You need to have several alternatives for dealing with such people.

The most successful approach is an “escalating intervention” strategy, in which you try the lowest profile, lowest impact alternative first, and move toward the highest profile, highest impact approach as a last resort.

1. The First Approach: Paraphrase and Shift Focus

Here you look the person in the eye and, staying neutral in your voice and stance, you paraphrase what they have said, and ask them if you got it right.

“Maria, it sounds like you’re saying that you think this whole issue is blown out of proportion and you don’t think the group should be addressing it at all. And you feel strongly about it. Is that right? It is? Thank you. Tom, you were also trying to say something here, weren’t you?”

Sometimes just feeling heard will be enough to quiet anxiety. If not, you may need to move to a slightly higher impact approach.

2. The Second Approach: Acknowledge the Point and Validate the Effort to Contribute

Here you frame what the person is saying in a positive way, first paraphrasing it, then acknowledging their point. You are not agreeing or colluding, just letting him hear that he has been understood, that the point has a right to be heard, and that you recognize that he is trying to help.

“Peter, you’ve been a voice in the wilderness here lately. It seems to me that you’re trying to get the group to see that you feel strongly that X Department is the cause of all this, and that the group is wasting its time discussing issue X. Is that right? You want to make sure the group doesn’t get itself into a trap it will have a hard time getting out of, right? That’s a good idea. Can people see what Peter is saying? Who could tell Peter why they don’t want the group to stop discussing this right now?”

Here again, just being understood may help the person get into the flow and drop the blocking behavior. If not, you move to the next approach.

3. The Third Approach: Register the Resistance and Move On

In this approach, paraphrase as above, making sure the issue is articulated by the trainer in front of the whole group to that person's satisfaction and then move the group on, explaining why as honestly as you can.

“Peter, you think we’re wasting time and that Department X should be dealing with this, not this group. You’ve said that several times and are getting frustrated because no one seems to care what you think. Am I right so far? Good. Now I am going to have the group move on because (1) the boss has said he wants us to, (2) the group doesn’t seem to be able to use your input right now in its work, and (3) there doesn’t seem to be any way to deal with your point without a great deal of unraveling of the work from the last 2 hours. You may well be right, Peter! I want you to know that, but let’s move on....”

4. The Fourth Approach: Confrontation and Exploration After the Meeting

You may have to meet with the “problem person” after the meeting is over, when the embarrassment factor is lower for both of you and tell her what you think and find out what she wanted. Using the interpersonal gap method, you could help her see that the actions she used (and here you need to be very accurate and neutral in your description of what she did) are not getting the desired effect, but in fact are making the group angry. Ask, “Is that what you want?”

You need to be very honest at this point about the effect you see that person is having on the group, the risks she is generating, and help her develop a strategy for the next time. If that person turns out to have been right, make it a point at the next meeting to acknowledge that and apologize!

“Nelly, I think you’re killing yourself in there! And probably not making any friends for the department. What are you trying to accomplish? (Listen ACTIVELY.) So, you are trying to ...? Gosh, it seems to me that the effect you are having is in fact.... Is that what you want? No? Well, would you like to work out another approach that might get you where you want to go?”

5. The Fifth Approach: Confrontation During the Meeting

This approach is last for obvious reasons. Confronting the problem person during the meeting will start an intense conflict, which may or may not be resolved quickly. The person may, in fact, be on to something, and just not doing a good job of getting it across. It will be embarrassing for them, for you, and maybe for other group members. If not done well, or if you really get oppositional, the person is left in a hostile environment with no one on his side or neutral enough to protect him from getting hurt.

The confrontation can be done in a low-key manner, with skill, and from a quiet, neutral place:

“Stefan, you have interrupted Galya twice, Georgi twice, and me several times in the last few minutes. It is clear to me that you feel strongly about this, but I believe what you are doing is making it harder for this group to get its work done. Being heard hasn’t been enough. As facilitator, I’m supposed to protect people and their contributions, but I’m beginning to think I need to protect the group from you! How about cooling it for now and let’s you and I meet afterward to figure out what could be done. Let’s move on....”

There are other clever things that could be done, like putting the problem person in charge of being a watchdog for the group on the volatile issue. Use your imagination! As long as it comes out of a place of caring for the group and the problem person, it will probably be OK.

As a trainer, a good sense of humor, good old-fashioned caring, and a shot of courage will go a long way toward making you a very helpful person to have around.

6.3 How to Overcome Stage Fright

Almost everyone who trains feels nervous before training. Most people—even experienced trainers—report that their “trainer nerves” reach their peak just before the training starts.

Below are tips that can help you feel more at ease before training. They include strategies you can employ well ahead of the training as well as those that can get you through those last-minute anxieties.

- Rehearse until you feel comfortable with your training plan.
- Memorize the words you will say during the first part of your training.
- Check your training materials and practice using training aids in advance of the training.
- Anticipate potential problems and prepare to resolve them if they should occur.
- Get as much rest as possible the night before the training.
- Select clothing you feel particularly comfortable in for conducting your training.
- Try putting yourself in your learners’ shoes and consider how uncomfortable they may feel at the beginning of the training.
- Just before beginning to train, relax by
 - Taking a couple of deep breaths and blowing them out slowly through your mouth.
 - Saying something encouraging to yourself, such as “It’s going to be a good session, and I’m going to enjoy it.”
- Accept nervousness as an energizer that helps keep you on your toes and performing at your best.

- Rely on the most powerful training tool you have—your own unique style, experiences, and abilities as a person.

This chapter examined the main skills a trainer needs—attending, observing, listening, summarizing, and questioning. It considered characteristics of group development and provided suggestions on dealing with problem situations.

Going forward to the end of the training management process, the next, and final, chapter will discuss the training evaluation.

Chapter 7: Evaluating Training

How is the training going? What do the learners think about the usefulness of what we've covered today? What has the training achieved? What can I do differently next time I train? What are the learners doing differently now that they're back on the job? Has the client been pleased with the training?

So many questions... so little time! Nonetheless, it's vital to periodically and regularly assess the effectiveness of training interventions. Absent such assessments, it's impossible to know if your time and effort as trainers, your learners' interests and hopes, and your clients' investment and expectations are satisfied by an intervention that you all, so long ago in the needs assessment, considered necessary to improving the quality of the organization and the performance of its people.

The purpose of this final chapter of the training manual is to familiarize you with the main functions and forms used in evaluating training. As in prior chapters, this chapter will explore training evaluation functions and forms most likely to be useful to you, acknowledge that there is a whole lot more to training evaluation than included here, and recognize once again the ever-present "it depends" factor—that what should be done to evaluate training depends on the context in which it is done.

7.1 It Depends...

Simply speaking, training evaluations have different purposes (formative, summative, and impact), serve different audiences (learners, trainers, and clients), and take place at different times (end of training day, end of training, and post-training). The approach to evaluating training presented here is to look at the most common and useful combinations of these variables and to understand why, what, and how trainers evaluate in their separate and distinct contexts. It really isn't as complicated as it appears.

Before going on, however, it's important to have clear definitions of the different purposes for evaluations:

Formative evaluation. Collects data that are used to inform an ongoing process. For example, data received from learners during daily feedback indicating that they don't have enough time to complete training exercises might lead you to lengthen the training day, restructure the training agenda to make more time for the exercises, or simplify the exercises so learners can complete them. In other words, formative evaluation leads you to take action in response to the data to improve the current training.

Summative evaluation. Collects data that are used to assess whether a process, upon its completion, has achieved its objectives. For example, a test at the end of the training, based on the knowledge and/or skills the training was meant to convey, would let you know whether or not learners understood the training's messages. Analyses of the test responses might lead you to make adjustments in your training content or methods for subsequent training, or recommend approaches to the client and learners for the learners' continuing education. In other words, summative evaluation leads you to take action in response to the data to improve the future of your training and/or learners.

Impact evaluation. Collects data sometime after the intervention to enable you to judge whether the workplace performance improvements anticipated by the process

have been achieved. For example, a performance gap analysis—similar to one you may have used during the needs assessment—would let you know whether or not the intervention changed workplace behavior for the better. This analysis might lead you to make recommendations for further training or technical assistance interventions to the client or learners. In other words, impact evaluation leads you to take action in response to the data for further improvement of workplace performance.

With these evaluation purposes clarified, the next section will look at how they fit into training management by reviewing the most common questions you would want to answer when evaluating your training. For each, the section will examine the purpose of the question, the audience served by the answer to the question, and when the question is asked.

Did the learner respond favorably to the delivery of the training?

Training evaluations that aim to answer this question are often pejoratively referred to as “feel good” or “smile” sheets because they seek to measure learners’ reactions to the training on either a daily basis (formative) or at the end of training (summative). A favorable reaction by learners may not guarantee that learning is taking place, but it’s certain that an unfavorable reaction means that learning is unlikely.

The principal audience for this type of evaluation is you, the trainer, because the feedback received from the learners captures their view of what they like and don’t like about the training, and these perceptions of training will tell you whether or not your training delivery needs to be changed.

Daily feedback (formative)

Seeking regular feedback from learners during the training has the obvious benefit of allowing you to make mid-course corrections in the training for the immediate benefit of the learners. For example, if the pace of your training is too fast and learners feel they are missing main points, they can convey their concerns to you through daily feedback and you can slow down. *Annex 5* includes a model for collecting daily feedback.

When soliciting daily feedback, trainers must be clear about how the feedback will be used and not unduly raise learner expectations of change. For example, if one or two learners in a workshop of 24 people are not happy with the small group exercises, it’s probably not a good idea to change the exercises to satisfy such a small sample of learners without checking their perceptions with the whole group, in the event that many others have felt similarly, but have not remarked on these feelings. Only then would change be warranted. As another example, if learners don’t like the materials in their participant notebooks, there’s almost nothing you can do to correct these materials during the course of the training. Trainers who are “up front” about these limits to daily feedback, and respond openly and honestly to the feedback early in the next training day (e.g., “Feedback suggests that I’m speaking too fast, I’ll try to slow down,” or “I understand that the description of focus groups in your notebooks isn’t a very good one...after the training I’ll find a better one and send it to you”), rarely disappoint their learners. In fact, your acknowledgement of learner feedback—whether you can do anything about it or not—encourages learners to continue providing useful feedback!

Finally, novice trainers occasionally make the mistake of asking learners orally, at the end of the training day, “So, how was your day?” Unless you are prepared to listen to and process unfocused learner responses to this question, it is almost always better not to ask this orally.

Having a feedback process in place, such as the end-of-training-day completion of the daily feedback form (*Annex 5*), is a much more focused and productive approach.

Alternatively, if you have not prepared a form for soliciting feedback, you can get learner perceptions of their day using a flip chart and sticky notes. For this approach, set up a flipchart near the training room's exit and draw a line down the middle of the flip chart to create two columns. Label one column "+," and the second "-." Give each participant a sticky note and ask them to place their note in the column of the flipchart that best captures their feeling about the day—on the "+" side if they were generally pleased with the day, and on the "-" side if they were not. Explain that should they want to make a comment or two regarding specific sessions, they can do so on the sticky note before posting it. It's a quick, and reasonably informative, approach.

Workshop evaluation (summative)

Although regular "do they like it or not" reactions from learners are important indicators of a successful training, it's equally important for a trainer to solicit learner perspectives regarding the training's objectives, content, delivery, relevance to the learner's work, and the workshop setting. A workshop evaluation model including these aspects is found in *Annex 6*.

Focused impressions of these major training aspects gives you an inclusive and in-depth view of your training through the eyes of your learners. This "view" can be helpful in a couple of ways. First, it serves to alert you to changes that may be necessary to make aspects of your training better in the future—whether you're offering further rounds of the current training to new learners, or developing and delivering new training. For example, if learners were to rate the adequacy of the training content negatively, you'd look to find out what's been left out and make sure it's included in subsequent training. Or, learners may say that your presentation of material in large group sessions was hesitant, leading you to rehearse your presentations more in preparation for later training.

Another way these evaluation data can be helpful is in informing the client of how the learners view the relevance of the training to their work, and to prepare the client for the post-training situation. For example, learners frequently perceive that when they are first applying the skills they have learned in training to their jobs it will take time for the skills to become routine and completion of the tasks with the new skill will take more time than they normally spend on the tasks. Informing the client of this perception dispels a common expectation that the training will show immediate improvements in workplace performance.

Did the learner learn the material?

While learner reactions to the training are important factors in assessing the worth of training, at some point you'll want to know that real learning has taken place—that the knowledge and skills you intended to convey in the training have indeed been communicated to and received by the learners. As you are attempting to determine the *effectiveness* of your training, and not solely the learners' perceptions of the training's delivery, your focus will be on the purpose and content of the training. The objective of your evaluation should reflect the objectives of your training and, simply speaking, answer the question, "did the training work?"

There are quite a number of acceptable ways to measure knowledge and skills gains from training—e.g., interviews, direct observation, tests, surveys, action plans, gap analysis checklists. Whatever method you choose to measure progress will benefit from being

quantifiable, using a before-and-after approach, and obtaining findings from as many of your learners as possible. A quantifiable evaluation method uses numerical values to indicate that learning has taken place. Test scores, or how many times particular skills are seen during a trial demonstration, are examples of quantification. With a before-and-after approach, a learner's knowledge or skills base is measured before the course gets substantively underway and then again at the end of the training. This way, gains in knowledge and skills can be attributed to the training. Using a pretest and a post-test is an example of this approach. Finally, obtaining evaluation findings from each of the learners validates conclusions drawn about the training as a whole, whereas if you have data from only some of the learners you can't have full confidence in the reliability of your conclusions as they relate generally to the training.

To further illustrate these concepts, the next section will concentrate on two ways of evaluating training that are among the most commonly used—pretests and post-tests, and direct observation.

Pretests and post-tests

The pretest/post-test evaluation is the most objective method you can deploy to calculate training gains. Its basis is that a pretest is administered as training begins to establish learners' starting point, and the same test (perhaps with reordered questions) is administered as the training ends. The difference between the two scores (for individual learners and aggregated into a group average score) is the growth in knowledge and skills that can be connected to the training. An added advantage to this method is that it is quantified by its very nature, obviously uses the before-and-after approach, and when administered before the closure of training can provide findings from each of the learners.

Several important observations about this method need to be considered should you choose to use it:

1. The method assumes that the tests examine knowledge and skills conveyed by the purpose and content of the training. For the trainer, this means that relevant test questions are developed prior to the beginning of training, but after the training plan has been completed. Then, and only then, do you know with confidence the content of the training. Allow plenty of time between the end of your training plan and the beginning of training to do this.
2. Developing test questions is itself a skill that takes trainers some time to master. The test shouldn't be too lengthy (50 items maximum), but at the same time must adequately address enough content to give you a sense that all of the training's objectives—course and session—have been met. Allow plenty of time for test development.
3. There is a big difference between questions developed to measure gains in learner knowledge and those developed to measure improvements in learner skills. For example, the chapter on designing training highlighted the specific session objective, "learners will be able to conduct a citizens' focus group to get input on the municipal budget." To meet this objective, both the knowledge and action steps to be taken were planned. The first knowledge step of the session was, "facts associated with the uses of focus groups and determining the focus or scope of the

discussion.” To test learner knowledge of this step, a simple true or false question is sufficient:

True or False: Focus groups are facilitated interactive meetings with small groups of citizens used to solicit attitudes and reactions on a certain issue, problem, project, or initiative from a specific group of people.

Learners marking “true” as their response to the item would indicate a knowledge gain. However, in order to understand whether learners have the ability, the skill, to actually “solicit attitudes and reactions on a certain issue, problem, project, or initiative from a specific group of people” you would want to know if the learners can, as a first step, determine the objectives of a focus group. No simple true or false item can serve to demonstrate the mastery of this skill. Rather, you’d need a test item that briefly describes the problem in a hypothetical municipality, and invites learners to provide particular answers to a specific question regarding focus group objectives. For example,

Case Study

Picture a medium-sized Bulgarian municipality whose municipal strategy calls for improvements in solid waste collection and street cleaning infrastructure and the repair and renovation of the municipality’s six kindergarten buildings. Some user fee rate increases will be necessary to affect these improvements. The last time the Municipal Council proposed raising fees, to extend solid waste collection and street cleaning services to an underserved neighborhood on the east side of the municipality, an angry citizenry took to the streets to protest the rate increases, blocking their enactment. The Municipal Council and the Mayor decided to use focus groups to hear from the citizens before proposing new fee increases. List three objectives for the focus groups:

Finally, you should be aware that tests are inherently difficult for some people. To avoid the likelihood of unreliable data, allow learners as much time as they need to complete the test. Also, be prepared to verbally recast test items to help learners understand what is being asked of them.

As with all methods of evaluation, confidentiality is critical. By promising your learners that you will not share test results either among the other learners or—except in aggregate—with the client (often their supervisor) an important bond of trust is established between you and the learners. This also creates a more relaxed environment for both learning and testing to take place, ensuring the most reliable findings.

The pretest/post-test evaluation is the most objective method you can deploy to calculate training gains. Less objective, but perhaps more revealing—particularly when a training objective calls for skills building—is direct observation.

Direct observation

This method, though more subjective than testing, is perhaps the best way to measure whether skills have been transferred. Key to its success is planning observations such that learners are not pressured. Some people get so nervous when being observed that they act differently, often in ways that neither you nor they want to see. To avoid this, a useful tactic is to videotape performance, without the trainer present, then review the videotape with the learner after the performance.

For this method to work best, it's essential that the trainer employ a checklist of desirable knowledge and skills to "score" the performance of each learner. This assures a degree of quantification and comparability not otherwise possible if trainer responses are limited to ad hoc reactions. Data should be comparable both across learners (i.e., how did Learner A do compared with Learner B), and across time (the checklist should cover knowledge and skills anticipated by the training). It's also important that you allow enough time for this method for all learners to be assessed across an adequate range of knowledge and skills. This is not all that difficult, because your detailed training plan already has the knowledge and action sequence listed—remember the training content sequence—that you would look to when making direct performance observations.

For example, to measure training success at preparing a cadre of learners to be "able to conduct a citizens' focus group to get input on the municipal budget" an approach to employing direct observation could be to provide learners with a brief case description similar to that used above:

Case Study

Picture a medium-sized Bulgarian municipality whose municipal strategy calls for improvements in solid waste collection and street cleaning infrastructure and the repair and renovation of the municipality's six kindergarten buildings. Some user fee rate increases will be necessary to affect these improvements. The last time the Municipal Council proposed raising fees, to extend solid waste collection and street cleaning services to an underserved neighborhood on the east side of the municipality, an angry citizenry took to the streets to protest the rate increases, blocking their enactment. The Municipal Council and the Mayor decided to use focus groups to hear from the citizens before proposing new fee increases.

Learners might then be instructed to prepare and conduct, working in pairs, a 30-minute mock focus group comprising other learners. During preparation and conduct, you would keep a record—the checklist—of focus group best practices in preparation and delivery that you attempted to convey during the training. You might even scale the performance of the practices—i.e., give separate ratings to indicate whether the performance was poor, acceptable, or good! The checklist might, in part, look like this:

Exhibit 12: Sample Direct Observation Checklist

Performance Indicator	Observed Performance			Comments
	Poor	OK	Good	
Determining the focus or scope of the discussion				
Determining the objectives of the focus group				
Preparing the discussion guide				
Determining the size and composition of the focus group				
Determining location of the focus group and room set-up				

This checklist observes the aspects of the illustrative training content sequence relating to actions. Assessing learner knowledge directly is not necessary, as the ability of the learners to perform the actions “OK” or “Good” assumes that they have the knowledge to do so.

A final advantage of this method is that the evaluation itself becomes a learning tool. Following learner assessment, you have a discussion with the learner about what went well and what didn’t during the demonstration. This gives you, and the learner, an opportunity both to discuss how it might have been done differently and to develop an action plan for improving performance.

The methods described above have formative, summative, and, when applying direct observation as your assessment tool, impact evaluation uses. To measure the true effectiveness of training, you must look closer at the training’s impact on the learner. You have to answer the question...

Did the learner change her or his behavior back on the job?

While there may be many reasons for training, as pointed out in the chapter on assessing training needs, the usual purpose is a change in workplace performance. Although the details of that change should be found in your training’s specific session objectives, the purpose of the training should be featured by the general objective or objectives of the training. In the manual’s case study, for example, the course objective was, “At the end of this workshop, learners will be able to confidently use proven citizens’ participation methods and tools for increasing citizens’ participation in the municipal budget process.” Therefore, when the learners are back home on their jobs they should be “using proven citizens’ participation methods and tools for increasing citizens’ participation in the municipal budget process.” What methods and tools they will use are indicated in the specific objectives of the training—such as focus groups, citizen advisory panels, and press releases—and it would be these methods and tools you would look to see being used.

You'll remember that the course objective was not "Citizens' participation in the municipal budget process increased," although that may be the ultimate goal of the intervention. That's because trainers should only hold the training accountable for what is in their manageable interest to change. Trainers can comfortably state that learners will be able to use the methods and tools after the training, but there are too many possible intervening variables to confidently predict change in citizens' behavior.

The chapter on assessing training needs said that there are five categories of information required for the purposes of training development and delivery. One section, Who are the target participants (learners)?, noted how crucial it is to investigate the learners' current job performance, so that it can be compared with what you, the client, and the learners agree is optimal job performance. This performance gap is what training should fill. Therefore, to measure the impact of the training on learners' job performance, you can conduct essentially the same assessment, looking now to see whether the learners are performing optimally.

As a general training evaluation rule, usually wait until 3 months have passed following the training before doing an impact assessment. In some cases—for example, using a new computer system—the wait time may be shorter, and in others, such as citizen satisfaction with their participation in the municipal budget process, it could be quite a bit longer. It depends! It depends on when there is enough good information produced by learner performance to tie such performance to the training.

As in the answer to the "Did the learner learn the material?" question above, here, too, there are many acceptable ways to measure training's impact on learner behavior—interviews, direct observation, tests, surveys, or gap analysis checklists. As above, whatever method you choose to measure impact will benefit from being quantifiable, using a before-and-after approach, and obtaining findings from as many of your former learners as possible.

Direct observation

Direct observation is favorable over other available ways of measuring impact, because it is the method least filtered or influenced by subjective perceptions. The trainer bears principal witness—i.e., makes the findings from which conclusions and recommendations can be drawn—which is helpful because it's almost always the trainer who understands best what the "findings" should look like.

Take for example how you might evaluate job performance for training with the purpose of "at the end of this workshop, you will be able to confidently use proven citizens' participation methods and tools for increasing citizens' participation in the municipal budget process." In its most basic, and perhaps most useful approach, you would want to know what methods and tools were used, how often they were used, and whether they were used well (i.e., conforming to best practices). A simple table for record keeping and a schedule from the municipal government of activities leading up to budget finalization should be all that you need. The schedule will tell you where and when municipal officials will be interacting with the public on budget issues, so that you can go and observe the interaction. As you witness an interaction, you can make note of the following:

Method/Tool Used	Date	It was...			Comments
		Poor	OK	Good	
Press Conference					
Focus Group					

Following budget finalization, you would collate your findings on the frequency and quality of learners using proven citizens' participation methods and tools for increasing citizens' participation in the municipal budget process, comparing these with the optimal frequency and quality suggested by the needs assessment. From this analysis, you would be able to conclude whether the training had met its purpose and recommend, if called for by the client or learners, next steps in improving municipal use of citizen participation methods and tools.

However, what if you can't spend as much time in the target municipality as would be necessary to conduct a thorough assessment? Several other options are possible. You might organize several of your former learners into an "assessment team," which you would instruct on the data collection method, and with which you would consult regularly until the assessment period is over. Among former learners you'll usually be able to find several honest and interested souls to take on this challenge. Alternatively, you might seek out the help of a local citizen watchdog group to act as evaluators. Should this be your only option, you'll have to spend considerable time with them at the beginning so that they'll be able to reliably distinguish the types of intervention (e.g., focus group or community meeting) and the quality of the interaction (e.g., What's good? What's OK? What's poor?).

An impact evaluation, unfortunately little practiced, is the most rewarding type of assessment that you can do. After all, it lets you know the change you're having on your society and your country. Well then, why don't trainers do them all the time? Because the kind of evaluation that you'll do is contingent on the nature of the course and its objectives, and the needs of your training stakeholders (client and learners).

Which evaluation method should you use?

Again, "it depends!" Zenger and Hargis, in their article "Assessing Training Results," suggest applying three parameters to help you make an evaluation decision:

1. **Rigor.** How much reliability, validity, and precision is required in the evaluation?
2. **Relevance.** Does the evaluation have to show how training is linked to individual and institutional performance goals?
3. **Economy.** How will costs and benefits be factored into the evaluation?

An evaluation centered on answering the question, "Did the learner respond favorably to the delivery of the training?" is not very rigorous. It doesn't tell you if you have successfully conveyed the purpose and content of the training, it only tells you that your learners liked what you did convey. If reliability, validity, and precision are not required, this type of evaluation is quite OK. A training with the purpose of acquainting learners with the important aspects of a law may be satisfactorily assessed this way.

On the other hand, an assessment looking to answer the question, “Did the learner learn the material?” requires greater rigor, and would be ill-served by using only those evaluation approaches investigating learner likes and dislikes. In these circumstances—when greater reliability, validity, and precision are necessary to determine whether the training purpose and content have been well-conveyed—economical pretest/post-test methods are appropriate (written or by direct observation). Several examples of these appear earlier in this chapter.

Assessments linked to the question immediately above are not satisfactory, however, if the training is expected to be relevant. That is, if it is expected to have an impact on back-home job performance. If the general objective of the training indicates this as the purpose of the training, then there’s no substitute for direct observation of post-training job performance. However, costs—in terms of time and money—often make this approach prohibitively expensive.

Results from any one of the three evaluation approaches will help to identify weaknesses in the training that can and should be improved. Evaluation is how you will grow as a trainer. It’s how you can best serve your clients.

Annex 1: **Worksheet for Assessing Training Needs**

Organization: _____

Date: _____

1. WHY IS TRAINING REQUIRED?

a) **Source of Request:** Identify the person, group, or organization requesting training. Enter your name if you identified the need for training.

b) **Negative Consequences If Training Is Not Delivered:** Specify the negative outcomes and lost opportunities that will result if training is not provided.

c) **Expected Benefits:** Specify the positive outcomes that will occur as a result of the training.

d) **New or Changed Behavior Desired:** Record the specific job behaviors (new or changed) expected of the learners as a result of the training.

b) WHO ARE THE LEARNERS?

- a) **Categories or Size of Learner Groups:** Identify the number and job category of the learners who need training. If more than one job category is involved, specify the number of trainees in each job category.

- b) **Familiarity with Training Content:** Identify the extent to which the learners are familiar with the training content.

- c) **Anticipated Reactions or Problems with Content or Training:** Record an assessment of anticipated learner attitudes about the training. Identify any potential problems learners may have regarding the training content or other aspects of the training.

d) WHAT IS THE TRAINING CONTENT?

- a) **Content:** Identify the general nature of the training content, i.e., the subject, topics, and job tasks involved.

- b) **Available Supportive Resources (documentation, subject-matter experts, training packages):** Note the resources available for use in developing the training.

- c) **Issues or Problems in Formulating Content:** Record any difficulties you might have in formulating the training content.

- d) **WHAT ARE THE TIME ISSUES?**

- a) Note the estimated start date for the training, as well as its length, frequency (if applicable), and any other issues.

- b) **WHERE WILL THE TRAINING BE CONDUCTED?**

- a) Note where the training will be conducted and any special considerations that need to be made because of this location.

Annex 2: Training Plan Worksheet

Time	Objective	Content	Methods	Learning Aid

Annex 3: Workshop Checklist of Equipment and Supplies

Workshop Checklist of Equipment and Supplies		
Item	Number	Check
Easels		
Flipchart Pads		
Projector Screen		
Overhead Projector		
Spare Overhead Projector Bulb		
Laptop Computer		
Printer		
Ink Cartridge for Printer		
Extension Cord		
Copier/Laser Printer Transparencies, Blank, Box of 100		
InkJet Printer Transparencies, Blank, Box of 100		
Printing Paper, A4 Format		
Flipchart Markers, Set of 6		
Transparency Markers, Permanent, Set		
Transparencies Markers, Nonpermanent, Set		
Pens		
Pencils (sharpened)		
Paper Hole Punch		
Stapler		
Staples		
Staple Remover		
Scotch Tape (in dispenser)		
Paper Clips (small), Box		

Workshop Checklist of Equipment and Supplies		
Item	Number	Check
Paper Clips (large), Box		
Binder Clips (medium), Box		
Binder Clips (large), Box		
Pair of Scissors		
Ruler		
Correction Fluid		
Sticky Notes (small)		
Sticky Notes (medium)		
Sticky Notes (large)		
Index Cards		
Masking Tape		
File Folders		
Paper Envelopes		
Writing Pads		
Certificates		

Annex 4: Checklist for Selecting the Training Location

Checklist for Selecting the Training Location

- Access to transportation
- Parking
- Address
- Phone/fax
- Personnel
- Access to conference rooms
- Conference rooms' location and size
- Heating
- Air conditioning
- Lighting
- Electrical outlets
- Acoustics
- Audiovisual equipment
- Space for posting flipchart sheets
- Coffee break location
- Meals
- Rooms
- Attractions
- Security
- Emergency services
- Toilets
- Additional services

Annex 5: **Daily Feedback Questionnaire**

Date: _____

Do you have any suggestions or comments to help make this workshop more effective, now and in the future? If so, please write them on this sheet and give it to the trainer. Thank you!

1. SUGGESTIONS/COMMENTS REGARDING THE TRAINING CONTENT (I.E., THE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS WE COVERED TODAY):

2. SUGGESTIONS/COMMENTS REGARDING THE *PRESENTATIONS* MADE BY THE TRAINERS OR RESOURCE PERSONS:

3. SUGGESTIONS/COMMENTS REGARDING THE INDIVIDUAL AND SMALL GROUP *EXERCISES*:

4. SUGGESTIONS/COMMENTS REGARDING THE *MATERIALS* (I.E., MATERIALS IN YOUR PARTICIPANT'S NOTEBOOK, VARIOUS HANDOUTS):

5. ANY OTHER SUGGESTIONS AND COMMENTS:

Annex 6: Workshop Evaluation

Workshop Evaluation

[Name of Training]

[Location]

[Dates]

Page 1 of 4

Instructions: For each item below, Please place an X in the column 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 to represent your evaluation of each item. Consider 0 the lowest possible rating and 5 the highest possible rating.

	Negative —————> Positive					
	0	1	2	3	4	5
<u>Learning Objectives and Agenda</u>						
Objectives were appropriate, learnable, and suited to my needs						
Agenda was organized to facilitate learning						
Agenda encouraged participant involvement						
Sessions and exercises helped accomplish overall objectives						

Additional comments about learning objectives and agenda:

	Negative —————> Positive					
	0	1	2	3	4	5
<u>Content</u>						
Accurate						
Current						
Adequate in scope						
Sequenced properly						

Additional comments about content:

Workshop Evaluation

[Name of Training]

[Location]

[Dates]

Page 2 of 4

Trainer A's Delivery

	Negative —————▶ Positive					
	0	1	2	3	4	5
Preparation and expertise						
Presentation in large group sessions						
Facilitation during exercises						
Respectful of participant needs and contributions						

Additional comments about Trainer A's delivery:

Trainer B's Delivery

	Negative —————▶ Positive					
	0	1	2	3	4	5
Preparation and expertise						
Presentation in large group sessions						
Facilitation during exercises						
Respectful of participant needs and contributions						

Additional comments about Trainer B's delivery:

Workshop Evaluation

[Name of Training]

[Location]

[Dates]

Page 3 of 4

<u>Relevance of the Workshop to Your Work</u>	Negative ————▶ Positive					
	0	1	2	3	4	5
Relevance of course content						
Relevance of instructional techniques						
New skills will be useable as you manage your tasks						
New skills will save time						

Additional comments on the workshop’s relevance:

<u>Workshop Setting</u>	Negative ————▶ Positive					
	0	1	2	3	4	5
Adequacy of workshop rooms						
Quality of materials, visual aids, and equipment						
Logistical and administrative support						

Additional comments regarding workshop setting:

Additional comments and suggestions for improvement:

Workshop Evaluation

[Name of Training]

[Location]

[Dates]

Page 4 of 4

Would you recommend this workshop to others? Who? Why?

Thank you!

Bibliography

- Block, Peter. *Flawless Consulting*. San Diego, CA: University Associates, Inc., 1981.
- The Center for Development and Population Activities (CEDPA). *Training Trainers for Development: Conducting a Workshop on Participatory Training Techniques*. Washington, D.C.: CEDPA, 1995.
- Ittner, Penny L. and Alex F. Douds. *Train the Trainer: Practical Skills That Work*. 22 Amherst, MA: HRD Press, 1997.
- Kelsey, Dee and Pam Plum. *Great Meetings*. Portland, ME: Hanson Park Press, May 1997.
- Zenger, J.H. and K. Hargis. "Assessing Training Results: It's Time to Take the Plunge!" *Training and Development Journal*, 36(1), 10-16, 1982.