

# Part - 3

**EFFECTIVE TRAINING METHODOLOGIES**

## MAKING LECTURES EFFECTIVE

The "traditional" and, hence, most common method of conducting education programs has been lecturing to groups of learners. Both educationalists and participants now question whether the lecture is the most effective method of training. As with all methods of intervention, lectures have their advantages and disadvantages.

The traditional view of lectures is that of a teacher standing in front of a sea of faces, giving a one-way flow of information. While this may be true in some cases, styles vary among lecturers, depending on the personality of the presenter, the subject being presented and the size of the group. Concept of the lecture in a training varies to some degree in a staff or community training and it can be made more effective tool with slight variations.

Lectures are useful for giving large amounts of information to a group of any size, from a few to hundreds. With large groups, information flow is usually one-way, from the lecturer to the participants. In case of training, the groups are relatively small and the trainer has a good control of the content and response from the audience. However, In some cases two-way flow of information may be discouraged, due to time constraints or for logistical reasons. For example, free participation amongst many learners may lead the discussion well away from the chosen topic. In the case of smaller groups, there may be more opportunity for learners to participate.

<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Disadvantages</b>
Can be used for large groups	Cannot be used as a sole method for teaching skills, or facilitating attitude or behaviour change
Useful for transmitting large amounts of information in relatively short time	Usually do not allow learner any control over their own learning
Usually few resources required	No participation by learners
Useful for transmitting new or updated knowledge	Participants cannot share own experiences
Easy to plan timing	Participants cannot bring own problems to the learning environment
People know what to expect	Relevance to practice of every participant not able to be demonstrated with a large audience

### Strategies for Maximising the Effectiveness of Lectures In A Training

It is accepted that adults learn best when they have some control over their own learning, are able to participate in their own learning, can bring their own problems to the learning environment and can relate the learning experience to their own practice. Lectures conducted in the "traditional" manner provide little or no opportunity for learner participation or input, and hence do not comply with the principles of adult learning. There are a number of ways to enhance the effectiveness of lectures as a training strategy.

1. Allow the participants to bring their own experiences to the learning environment. By the time adults are participating in training activities, they will have a range of possibly unique experiences and problems behind them. Each of these could be utilised to stimulate further thinking or as useful illustrations for the topic being taught. By enabling the learner to share these experiences, they will feel valued as a participant, which will enhance their learning experience. One method of allowing this to occur is to schedule some time for small group discussion or a whole group discussion so that ideas and experiences can be freely shared.
2. Facilitate the participants having some control over the learning experience. Adults are more ready to learn if they see a need for the learning in terms of their own practice or professional development. Encourage their participation in a needs assessment, and maybe even use a pre-training questionnaire to ascertain their specific needs, interests and perhaps their preferred methods of learning. Inform the participants of the plans, and allow their input in the planning and implementation of the lecture session.
3. Adults often attend training because of a particular problem that they are experiencing at that time. Allow a period of time in a lecture for attendees to share their problems in small groups or in a whole-group discussion. These become a resource for learning, and may benefit the participant with the problem and other attendees. There is also a psychological benefit to others in seeing a colleague sharing a problem with others.
4. Adults need to see the relevance of the topic being taught to their own practice. Lecturers should attempt to link the topic under discussion with the participants' existing knowledge and practice, so that they can see the relevance of the topic to themselves and their practice. Small group discussion may be used during a lecture to allow participants to discuss the relevance of the topic to their practice.

### **Summary**

Lectures are a useful tool for the transmission of knowledge, but are not an effective method of teaching skills or facilitating attitude or behaviour change. A lecture may be used as a sole method of instruction, or in conjunction with other methods such as group discussions, simulations, role plays, or workshops. These additional strategies will increase the involvement of adult learners in the activity.

## **EFFECTIVE WORKSHOPS**

Workshops are a widely used and popular method of training and educational intervention. The large number of training institutes that use them in some format illustrates this fact. Their popularity is possibly due to the flexibility of their structure in terms of numbers of participants, the strategies that can be adopted within them and the types of changes that can be facilitated within them, such as knowledge, skill and attitude. This is an overview of what a workshop is, or can be, and some factors to consider when planning and running a workshop.

### **What Is A Workshop?**

A workshop has a flexible structure that can be tailored to suit the participants, the presenters and the topic being presented. Group sizes can vary from a few participants to many. In general the focus of the workshop should be on participation, whether this is in practising skills or in problem solving sessions. The workshop can be presenter centred or participant centred, or can alternate between the two. The strategies used within workshops may vary, from a lecture as an introduction, to discussion, practical exercises or problem solving sessions conducted in small groups.

#### **Workshops:**

- cater for a range of group sizes;
- focus on participation of learners;
- can be used to facilitate change in knowledge, skill, attitude and practice;
- can be participant or presenter centred; and
- can use different teaching strategies within the one session.

## **FACTORS TO CONSIDER IN PREPARING A WORKSHOP**

### **Planning**

As with any educational intervention, the workshop needs to be planned thoroughly. This planning includes the resources to be used in the session such as teaching aids (for example overhead projector), equipment such as medical instruments, and any other materials that may be used in the session. Presenters may also like to have a backup plan, to cover situations such as equipment failure, key people not arriving or loss of power.

### **Defining Objectives**

The planning also includes defining the objectives for the teaching session. These should be clear and measurable, so that the presenter knows the focus of the session, and the skills or knowledge that the participants are supposed to acquire. These objectives should be achievable in the time allowed and with the available resources, and should also be measurable if possible.

### **Who Is the Audience?**

The presenter may find it advantageous to ascertain who the audience will be, and their level of knowledge, experience in the topic being taught and their needs and expectations for the workshop. This information may be able to be obtained from the workshop co-ordinator, or may be obtained through a pre-workshop questionnaire. Another method may be to use brief introductions from group members in the workshop, or simply raised hands to questions about background, experience and interests.

### **What Strategies to Use?**

The topic to be presented should guide decisions about what strategies to use in presenting the material. In workshops, different strategies can be adopted within the one session. A short lecture may be used to introduce a topic and provide a general level of information which participants may find useful during the session. Exercises and group methods may be used for the development of skills such as practical skills, problem solving, management and communication skills. The strategy selected will depend on the topic, the size of the group, the facilities and resources available and will also depend on the strategies with which the presenter feels comfortable.

Planning the session is important to ensure that objectives can be achieved, that the session will not take longer than anticipated, and to help ensure that resources are prepared and available on the day. However, there is always the possibility of things not going to plan, so the presenter should have backup strategies, and be flexible. Participants may also have suggestions about what to do, or alternative venues when things do not go to plan, so don't just abandon the session, go to Plan B, or to the participants.

Planning includes:

- planning the resources and equipment;
- defining the learning objectives;
- finding out about the intended audience;
- deciding on the appropriate teaching strategies; and
- making backup plans in case not all goes to the original plan

## **CONDUCTING THE WORKSHOP**

### **Introduction**

Once the workshop has commenced it is advantageous for the presenter and the participants to have some form of introductions. The way in which this is done will depend upon the size of the group, but may include brief introductions by each participant and the presenter, or even raised hands to indicate some information such as occupation and background, and the provision of name tags. Also, some introductory games can be used with good effect. The benefit of introductory exercises is that the presenter can obtain an idea of the knowledge level of the participants, and the learning environment becomes more relaxed, hence increasing the chance of learning. The introductory phase should not take up too much time. This will depend

on the number of participants and whether they already know each other, the focus of the session and the length of the session.

### **Outline Objectives**

Adults like to be able to plan ahead and know what to expect from the session, so the presenter may consider outlining the objectives for the session, that is, what they are hoping to accomplish by the end of the session. This means that the participants can see how the session will meet their needs, and the presenter can also gain feedback from participants about this.

### **Participation**

In their planning and introduction the presenter should outline their expectations and encourage participation. This includes both informing the participants of the advantage of participation, collaboration and co-operation, but also designing learning activities which encourage participation. These may include practical exercises, group discussion or problem solving exercises. Questions from the participants often provide good discussion topics or problem solving exercises, so they should be encouraged.

### **Principles of Adult Learning**

In planning and implementing the session the presenter needs to be aware of the principles of adult learning. Adults bring to the session a range of knowledge and experience, and this can be used as a resource in the session by means of group discussion and practical exercises. Very often, the session will involve relearning or re-skilling rather than new learning, so the realisation of the existing level of knowledge is important.

The motivation to learn is often within the person and related to factors such as promotion or a problem with which they are dealing in their practice. Presenters can take account of this by acknowledging and utilising the participants' experience, and even using their experience as the basis of a practical or problem solving exercise. The provision of feedback on the results of exercises is important so that the participants feel that the exercise was a worthwhile learning experience. It can also generate further discussion or exercises.

The participants need to feel that they have learned something by the end of the session, and that what they have learned is relevant and useful to them in their practice. A short lecture at the start of the session can help to set the scene and relate the topic to practice. It also ensures common information for group discussions. Encouraging participants to relate their own experiences can also help to relate the topic to practice.

### **Variation In Pace And Strategies**

In order to keep all participants interested and participating, it is important to vary the pace and activities in the session. The pace should flow at a rate to keep the participants' attention, but there should also be changes in pace. Not all participants prefer the same pace, and many will do better with variation, having a short intense session, followed by a more relaxed activity.

The presenter may be able to tell from the reactions of the participants when breaks or a slower pace would be beneficial.

Different training strategies can also be adopted to vary the pace, and the way in which information is transmitted. Not all participants will learn in the same way, so variation in strategies will increase the chance of all participants learning from the session.

### **Summarising**

A summary at the end of the session helps the participants to organise information in their minds about the session. It also helps the presenter to review the session. The summary may include a list of what the presenter was trying to achieve in the session, and a summary of the main points made. The presenter may ask for feedback, such as did the group achieve what they set out to achieve, was the method of presentation effective for the topic, and what other methods may have worked. The presenter may also ask the participants to summarise the main points. This will indicate whether the session has taught what it was meant to teach.

### **Humour and Games**

The use of humour and games in training sessions helps to relax the atmosphere and give the participants a break, and may still provide a valuable learning experience. For this purpose some energisers and icebreakers are given in this handbook. These should not be over-used, though, and some participants may not enjoy them or feel that they are appropriate. Care should be taken in the use of games to ensure that the participants do not get so involved in the game that they do not see the learning point. Games are generally only of short duration, and discussion after their completion should ensure that the learning point is made.

What needs to be considered in conducting a workshop:

- introduction of presenter and participants;
- outline objectives to participants;
- encourage participation of attendees;
- awareness of the principles of adult learning;
- variation in pace and strategies;
- summarising and feedback; and
- use of humour and games.

### **Summary**

Workshops are a much used and valuable strategy for providing opportunities for learning. Their strength is that they allow the use of different teaching methods, and that they can cater for varying numbers of participants. They can be used to facilitate change in knowledge, skill, attitude and practice. There is no "one way" to conduct a workshop. However, consideration of the factors presented above may provide some ideas or guidelines for the planning and presentation of workshops.

## **PRACTICAL EXERCISES**

Practical exercises have been used in the education and training fields for some time, and have been used successfully in some areas of the health field. However, they do not seem to be widely used, possibly because they may be more difficult and time consuming to organise than traditional modes such as lectures, and that they rely heavily on the participation of the learners. However, well-organised and relevant practical exercises can provide a valuable learning experience for participants. This section outlines the utility of practical exercises, the strengths and weaknesses of the method and the factors to be considered in employing practical exercises as a training strategy.

### **What Are Practical Exercises?**

- Practical exercises provide the opportunity for learners to participate in a scenario that imitates a complex situation. This allows them to experience such factors as the interpersonal and communication skills and the dynamics of a situation.
- Practical exercises may include educational games, role-play, computer simulation and role reversal exercises.
- They may be employed when the participants would benefit from experiencing a situation of which they have knowledge, and to give them practice in a role for which they are being prepared.
- Simulation exercises are useful for programs that emphasise application of knowledge, such as planning, decision making and management, as well as programs that involve the development of interpersonal and communication skills. They can also be used to facilitate attitude change.

### **Advantages Of Using Simulation Exercises:**

- allow learners to participate;
- provide learners with the opportunity to practise without the cost of wrong decisions or actions;
- compress real time into lesson time;
- allow provision of immediate feedback, discussion and chance for reflection;
- can be used to develop interpersonal and communication skills;
- can be used to facilitate attitude change; and
- learners of any background or ability can participate.

### **Disadvantages Of Using Simulation Exercises:**

- can be time consuming in their preparation and application;
- learning outcomes can be difficult to predict;
- evaluation needs to be able to encompass unpredicted outcomes; and
- Some learners are reluctant to participate.

### **Factors To Consider**

While practical exercises have many advantages, they should not be used just for the sake of variety. The intended outcome of the exercise should

relate to the learning objectives, and this should be clear to the participants, either through the exercise itself or through the discussion after it. The benefit to learners will be lost if they cannot see how the exercise relates to reality. It should be ensured that the participants do not become so involved with the exercise that they miss the learning point. Practical exercises should be followed by a discussion and feedback session to alleviate any concerns or problems experienced by participants, and to highlight the main points to be learned from the exercise.

### **Summary**

The use of practical exercises can be a valuable learning experience for participants of educational programs, as they allow learner participation and involvement, hence complying with the principles of adult learning. While they may be time consuming to prepare and trial, the exercises may be able to be reused for programs with the same learning objectives, or adapted for other programs with similar objectives.

Practical exercises are powerful learning tools when used and adopted appropriately. They can be used to facilitate change in areas that are difficult to teach or change by traditional methods, such as interpersonal skills, communication skills, and attitudes. They also allow the participant to appreciate another's position or point of view, and to gain an overview of a situation from a participant's point of view. Further knowledge and understanding of the types of practical exercises that may be used can be gained from the references listed below.

## FIELD/EXPOSURE VISITS

Exposure visits is the term used to describe visits to other organisations to observe their successful practices in the different fields for the purpose of delivering a specific, targeted training message. It is a kind of academic detailing, and is based on the detailing methods used successfully by many rural development programmes for many years. The learning strengths of this method are the specific nature of the message the participants get from the presentation of visiting organisation and observation of their activities in the context of that specific training. The method has been shown to be effective with replication of successful rural development practices and their longer lasting effects on other community organisations. Similarly, staff exposure visits to other organisations and field units provide them with information that can not be delivered to them in a written form.

### The Process of Education Outreach

Step	Example
Identify specific need of the staff or the community members	Examination of successful community initiated schemes
Identify the individual organisation to be visited	ABC organisation with identified practice or profiles
Identify the individuals to undertake the exposure visits	Community members from Kohat with some expertise and knowledge of community self-help schemes.
Provide the community members with motivation to change	Provide information about the reason for change, such as benefits of acting and disadvantages of sitting doing nothing.
Provide the community members with an alternative approach	Alternative to their present unsuccessful practices of self-help schemes
Provide follow up and support	Opportunity for feedback, and answers to questions

There are a number of strategies to **identify specific needs**. This can be achieved while training the participants over the initial five day-class room training. Alternatively, through a community needs analysis, the HRD section may be aware that a number of community organisations have identified the need for skills to initiate and manage the self-help schemes.

**Identifying the individual organisations to be visited** may be as simple as selecting a geographic area, and deciding to target successful community based programmes in that area.

**Identifying those people who will undertake the exposure visits** is an important step. Mostly exposure visit is part of the training, but it can also be separately arranged when there is a need to undertake this such a trip. Usually those community or staff members for an exposure visit are selected, who have acknowledged some prior expertise in the subject for which the

exposure visit is being arranged, or who have gone through the related training course, as they are more likely to be able to relate the discussion to particular problems that may be encountered during the visit and benefit from it.

**Providing the motivation for participants to change** is probably the most difficult part of the process. Most people believe that their practises are safe and competent. The exposure visit is not to demonstrate the deficiencies of the trainees/participants practice, rather it is to provide information against which they can evaluate their own practice. For instance, providing evidence of the sanitation related side effects of certain water supply schemes and ways to counter them may be enough to encourage the participants to reconsider their own water supply schemes.

**Providing alternative strategies** is essential. Information about the difficulties of undertaking some schemes or practices may only increase organisation and scheme management problems for the community members, unless an alternative strategy is discussed. Exposure visit and some discussion sessions therein could help chalk out some strategies that the would help the trainees get the desired results.

**Further follow up, support and information** can be provided so that the trainees have a reference point, and can obtain feedback about any actions, or answers to further questions that may arise. The process of follow-up gives the participants the opportunity to reinforce the message, and may provide them with information about whether the exposure visit was successful in changing practice.

### **Advantages Of This Method**

As a practice based method, there is greater opportunity for the trainees to see the relevance of the training to their own practice. As the training have been developed from identified, and sometimes quantified needs, there may be increased motivation to for the participants learn. Exposure visits uses the principles of adult learning. It occurs in a non-threatening environment, the participant is a peer able to relate to general practice, and the training message is relevant to practice.

### **Limitations Of The Method**

When translated in monetary terms, the amount of time required to deliver the training message is the major limitation of the method. However, as this training strategy can facilitate a lasting change in practice of the participants, the costs need to be weighed against the benefits. Other less costly methods of training often have limited effects on practice.

### **Conclusion**

Exposure visits is a valuable strategy for disseminating targeted training messages to the participants away from their place of practice. It uses the principles of adult learning, and has been shown to change practice, which is maintained over a considerable period of time. It has had considerable success altering participants' behaviour, and promoting new activities in their

respective areas. While this method has several strengths, it does not seem to have been widely used, possibly due to the perceived costs involved.

## **REFLECTIVE ACTIVITIES**

Reflective activities refer to any of the myriad of ways that trainees think about their own practices. This often involves keeping diaries outlining their activities and the problems they have encountered, and spending time considering practice and professional issues. Reflection can have the effect of increasing self-awareness, enlarging conceptual perspectives, and enabling the practitioner to respond to others more sensitively. As such, reflection contributes to learning and can be considered a learning strategy. It requires time and the ability to critically analyse one's own activities and responses. This method does not suit all people, but for those who are prepared to attempt it, the personal rewards can be considerable. This section deals with the keeping of journals as a reflective activity.

### **Journals**

Diaries can be kept in a variety of ways. Some are used to record basic facts about a particular situation e.g. number of community organisations visited by an SO or the community members met during the course. Others contain far more detail. To be used to facilitate reflection on practice, they need to contain information about events and the feelings and thoughts associated with these events. Reflective is the key descriptor of diaries used in this way.

Keeping a reflective diary is one means by which practitioners can review their activities, examine their thoughts and feelings about events, and consider their responses to particular situations. Depending on its purpose, the diary may be structured to assist the user to focus on a particular theme, or be free flowing allowing a range of themes and experiences to be explored. The writer uses the diary to describe experiences or the day's activities, the feelings experienced in relation to these activities, and how the experience or activity was managed by the writer. Through this process, the practitioner becomes aware of their own practice, recognising patterns of events and their responses to these and possibly identifying learning needs. As the process of writing and reflecting on practice allows practitioners to link theory and practice: keeping a reflective diary can enhance learning experiences.

Diaries may be kept as private documents, but their educational potential can be increased if their contents are discussed with a mentor or supervisor. The supervisor can use the diary to gain an understanding of the staff member's experiences, responses to these, and learning needs. Diaries can also be used to record specific learning experiences.

Initially, many staff members tend to focus on critical incidents, that is, incidents that have some significance or impact, be they positive or negative. As learning needs may include more routine tasks, those using the diary to determine learning needs require more focus on the routine aspects of their work. A way of achieving this is to develop a series of questions that the writer uses as prompts. For instance, the writer could use some of the following questions as prompts each day.

***In a practice situation, or a practice based learning situation:***

1. Write about the most positive experience of the day.
2. Write about the most negative experience of the day.
3. Write about the last job-related activity of the day

***In a learning situation:***

1. What did you learn about your chosen topic today?
2. What else would you like to learn about this chosen topic?
3. What strategies might you use to learn about this?

Keeping a reflective diary does not suit everyone. Some do not feel comfortable recording feelings and analysing their actions. Others consider it takes too much time and some find writing a difficult process. Despite these limitations, they are valuable tools for facilitating trainers and social organisers in particular gaining insight into their practice.

**Conclusion**

Reflection is an effective learning strategy. To facilitate reflection, practitioners may keep diaries in which they record activities, feelings, thoughts, reactions and insights. These diaries may be used privately or shared with a supervisor. Besides increasing the staff members' awareness of their practice, reflective diaries can reinforce learning by facilitating the linking of theory to practice.