



1st Call for H.F.R.I. Research Projects for the Support of Faculty Members and Researchers and the Procurement of high-cost Research Equipment

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**CREATIVE MULTILINGUALISM: FROM PRACTICE TO RESEARCH
TO EDUCATION (MEinART)**

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GEORGE ANDROULAKIS

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TRAINER'S GUIDE

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1. Introduction

What does it mean to be a trainer and to train? Is it not just another way of describing teaching? After all, we've all been to school in some shape or form. We've invested much of our youth, spent countless hours, and quite a few resources in various schools and learning institutions. Could "training" really be that different from the standard systems of instruction we know so well and with which we've interacted for so long?

In this concise Trainer's Guide, we have included sections on the differences between (traditional) teaching and training, on adults' learning styles and how they learn, on constructing objectives and outcomes as a trainer, and some crucial points to retain for the stages before, during and after the training.

2. Teaching Styles

Many factors have influenced the learning systems and environments that we have established in our societies. History, religion, culture, and even politics have had an impact. Few people would challenge their political or tribal leaders. As a result, a one-sided environment was created for the flow of information and knowledge – it came from those in leadership down to the people and rarely moved in the reverse direction. From this arrangement, the educational system and culture for learning were established. This created a number of assumptions which became norms in learning environments:

- The teacher is the source of knowledge
- The audience doesn't have enough experience or knowledge
- The mind is like a set of drawers that the teacher will fill with information
- You cannot argue with the teacher; if you do then you are not being respectful and you are challenging his status and the learning process
- The flow of information and knowledge is one-way; students do not participate unless they have question
- The teacher is the center of the classroom – the teacher does all of the talking and the students do all of the listening

The core idea behind these assumptions is that people who have information, knowledge, and experience to share are sacred and are like a pitcher full of water, while the audience is a collection of empty cups. The teacher fills the cup. The student memorizes what has been taught and pours it back to the teacher verbatim in a test or exam. The problem is that this method will generate a learner with the following qualities:

- Passive or inactive (like a sponge)
- Accustomed to memorizing and repeating what the teacher says as opposed to understanding the concepts proposed

- Lacking creativity
- Lacking critical thinking or problem-solving skills
- Feeling as though learning is an awful process.

So while this approach may be easier for the instructor, it doesn't deliver the best possible outcomes for the learner and affects his or her ability to fully benefit from an opportunity to learn. Indeed, the negative impacts of a poor educational experience can be enduring and undermine people's openness to learning and the ability to be innovative and creative in the long-term.

So what makes training different from teaching and why can it often deliver a better experience for learners? The chart below outlines some of the key contrasts between the two approaches.

	Approach to Communication	Assumption about Knowledge	Aim or Purpose	Ways of Delivering Content	Physical Environment /Room Layout
Traditional Teaching	One-way (from teacher to students)	The teacher is the only one who knows, and he knows more than the students He provides the correct answers	Transfer knowledge	Lecture Reading assignments	Row-by-row (see Picture 1)

Training	Two-way (between the trainer and participants)	Everyone in the room has the ability to contribute to the learning process	Developing:	Role Play	U-shape or any other layout that can facilitate conversation and participation
	Learning is participatory; knowledge and experience are shared among all	The trainer guides the learning process but is not the only source of knowledge and experience in the room	1. Knowledge	Case Studies	
			2. Skills	Simulations	
			3. Attitude	Discussions Problem- solving exercises Examples and activities	

3. Core Elements of Training

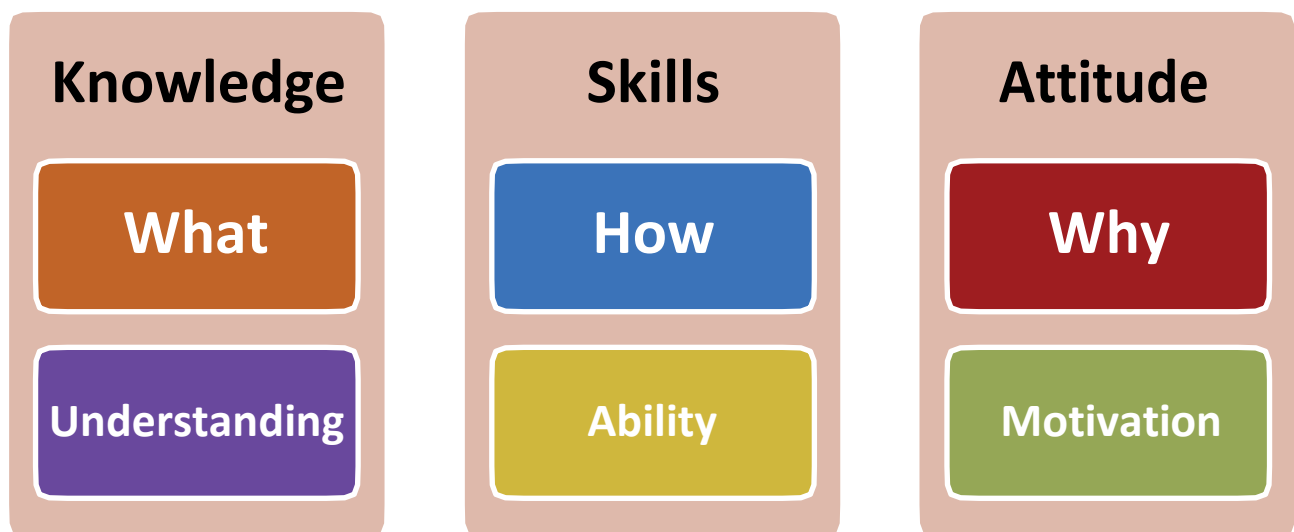
Formally defined, training might be described as:

The continued and organized process to gain and develop a defined set of skills in order to achieve a goal or accomplish a specific task

A planned human activity that aims to create change in an audience's knowledge, experience, skills, performance, and attitude

The organized development of knowledge, skills, and attitudes that a person needs to accomplish duties in an efficient manner.

Training, therefore, requires a different approach and a different skill set from the instructor. Rather than being the source of knowledge, the trainer is a facilitator of knowledge. What this means in practice is that the role of the trainer is not only to share information but to help learners develop stronger abilities by focusing on three areas:



Knowledge → All learning involves the acquisition of new knowledge to some degree and memory has a role to play in this. In training, however, the focus is on learning with understanding rather than sheer memorization. This means that learners have the opportunity to work with and explore new information in ways that allow them to understand its application and purposes in the real world, as well as how it is relevant to them as individuals.

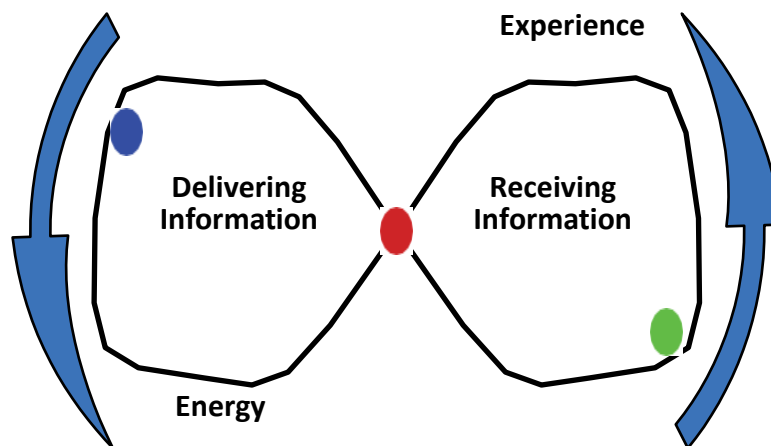
Skills → Training involves not only the ability to think or talk about something but also developing a level of proficiency that allows the learner to actually practice or use that skill in his or her own life or work.

Attitude → Training recognizes that there is limited value in developing new competencies if learners are not motivated to actually use these abilities. For this reason, training also focuses on learners' attitudes and behaviors.

A trainer relies on a student-centered approach, which means that he or she is presenting the idea or activity, and then guides or facilitates the discussion and the learning process. The learning process is participatory and learners contribute to it by bringing in their own knowledge and experiences. In many ways, the participants in a training become their own teachers and the trainer serves as the “maestro” of the processes that allow this to happen.

4. Being a Facilitator of Knowledge

The figure below describes the manner in which energy, information, and experience flow between the trainer and participants during a learning experience:²



In this figure 8, energy, information, and experience are in constant flow on a lateral level among participants and the trainer. The trainer's job is to keep everything moving and make sure nothing gets stuck along the way. Salam was already doing this by intuition, but suddenly the science behind adult learning and what he was experiencing himself in the training room connected.

What is the science behind adult learning? There's quite a bit of it and the research that we have found most useful helps us understand the manner in which adults are likely to perceive and approach learning. Some of the main characteristics of adult learning to keep in mind are as follows:

a) Adults have experience

Adults have lived through various stages of life and accumulated experience. A good trainer will take this into consideration and continuously initiate exchanges that allow participants to draw on these experiences, examine them, and connect them to their learning. Trainers should not expect to interact with adults as passive receivers.

b) Adults are self-directed

As every romantic comedy movie teaches us, we cannot change anyone – even the ones we love! What we can do is provide the knowledge and methods that allow a person to choose change, but the actual choice is up to him or her. Trainers should provide the environment for participants to take initiative, feel responsible, and practice leadership in groups.

c) Adults like to practice

Adults want to practice and do what they are learning. It is not enough just to talk to them about work plans, negotiation, public speaking, etc. They need to design it and they need to practice it.

d) Adults are goal-oriented

Adults want to know how this session can improve their lives. How can this advance their professional prospects or develop a certain needed skill? How will this enrich their family

relations, enhance their social life, raise their profile at work, or improve their income and ability to provide for their families?

e) Adults are practical

Adults want to know why it is important to learn this topic. Why is it essential to attend this course? They must see a reason for learning something. To be of value to the participant, learning must be applicable to their work or other area of their life that is important to them. Therefore, trainers must identify objectives for adult participants before the course begins. This means also that theories and concepts must be related to a setting familiar to participants. This need can be fulfilled by letting participants choose projects within the context of the training that reflect their own interests.

f) Adults are social

Adults want to connect with other people in the training room. They want to have conversations with each other, not just hear from the trainer. They like to laugh and enjoy each other's company; adult learning does not have to be dry and serious. Adults require respect to do their best. What these principles mean in practice is that, in a learning setting, the role of the trainer really is to be a ***facilitator of knowledge***.

Facilitator literally means "a person who makes things easier." A facilitator is a neutral third party who helps to increase the effectiveness of a group, a team or individual by helping them identify and adopt better ways of solving problems or achieving goals. Facilitators are enablers who help others achieve a higher level of understanding and performance.

As a facilitator, you serve as a coordinator and organizer of groups, and ensure everyone is participating and staying on task. A facilitator never imposes a solution on the group. Facilitators clarify issues, focus discussions, bring out viewpoints, synthesize differences and look for underlying agreements.

Good facilitators can:

1. Be clear and to the point, and explain complex concepts in clear and accessible terms
2. "Read the room" and understand what is going on for participants without it being expressed explicitly
3. Maintain a challenging but comfortable pace for learning
4. Help participants build on each other's ideas
5. Demonstrate the ability to listen
6. Manage discussions to bring out key points
7. Use his or her own energy to keep participants motivated
8. Adapt language and training tools to the culture and experience of participants
9. Stimulate participants to think in-depth and look at existing concepts in a different way
10. Help participants see how the course content is connected to their personal and professional goals
11. Use feedback and evaluation for effective learning and constructive development
12. Use summaries and previews to keep the course content connected and relevant.

5. How Adults Learn

Many newer trainers are concerned about whether or not they are going to have difficult participants – people who challenge them, or give them a hard time, or don't pay attention and distract others. They're worried about being able to "control" the room.

As a result, they often start a training session by being very strict: taking away cell phones that ring, publicly admonishing people for having side conversations, creating a punitive system for violations of the ground rules, and so on.

In fact, rather than a sternly disciplined environment, what adults really need to perform their best is respect.

Adults are far less likely to see themselves as learners or students and, in a training room, may even perceive themselves as a peer or contemporary of the trainer. Remember, as adults they are bringing their lifetime of experiences and ideas to the training. They are not just empty vessels there to be filled by the trainer's wisdom.

The role of the trainer is to help create a receptive state for learning – to help participants feel that they want to be there; that it is worth their time, energy, and hard work; that they will gain from the experience. This requires structure and rules, but not autocracy.

The best place to start to create a receptive state for learning is by establishing a foundation of respect.

One of the simplest ways to communicate with adults that their time and interests are respected is to simply and consistently explain throughout the training why things are happening and when they will happen. This basic information helps adults put things in context, sets them at ease, and lets them know their participation is valued.

This type of communication can even begin in advance of the training. Sending out the agenda, trainer bios and photos, logistics briefing, and/or a brief program description demonstrates that you're making an effort to connect the training to the needs and interests of the participants.

Your body language, facial expressions, tone of voice and even your physical appearance should communicate respect for the participants. Ask yourself as you are going along, what kinds of messages am I sending out now?

Active listening plays a key role in demonstrating respect as well. Ensure participants feel they have been heard and when you have to end a discussion or someone's comments for time management reasons (or because someone has gone badly off-topic), do so without making it feel like an insult.

Use verbal and body language that shows that you're receptive to the ideas and suggestions of others, even if they are a direct challenge to the way you are doing things. Adults have opinions, and they are not always going to be the same as yours. It is better that they are heard

and respected, rather than suppressed and allowed to fester. You can respectfully disagree or ask the group to collectively try to solve the problem or address the complaint.

In truth, the more you establish a training environment based on respect, the fewer disputes you are going to have with and among participants.

Inviting participants to play a role in defining how the training will run does not mean they get to be involved in every decision. Many of these decisions need to stay solely with the trainer and program staff in order to maintain the learning objectives and outcomes and to protect the budget, and also to prevent the chaos and exhaustion of every choice being discussed by a large group.

However, there are certain aspects of a training session or workshop that have a bit more flexibility and adaptability and that can be more effective if constructed by the participants themselves. These include:

Expectations and Aspirations



Expectations concern what the participants would like to get from the training, in terms of KSA, and what type of experience they hope to have.

Aspirations are about what they want to achieve themselves and how this training will help them get there.

- Adults need to know that the work that they're doing is tied to their personal and professional goals, and discussing expectations and aspirations helps to make those connections.

- There's a good chance that participants haven't thought about what they want from the training before they walked into the room. People have busy lives and they may not have had time to put their mind to answering this question. This is especially true if they didn't choose to attend but were instructed to come by someone else.

Ground Rules



Ground rules are the general guidelines the group will agree to follow during the sessions.

- These typically include things like silencing mobile phones, starting and finishing on time, and respecting the opinions of others.
- Rather than dictating a list (or worse, enforcing a set of your own rules that the participants don't know about until they unknowingly break one), allow the participants to construct the ground rules collectively, similarly to creating a community-learning contract.

Timing and length of sessions and breaks



Timing has to do with the length of the training day and when it begins and ends, as well as when breaks are taken and how long they last.

- Is there enough flexibility in the training content and the schedule to allow participants to have a say in how long each session lasts or when breaks will occur or when the training will close for the day?

This does not mean you should sacrifice content to let people out an hour earlier to go and shop! It means that if there is sufficient flexibility, it can be nice to give

- participants a choice.

You will need to set clear rules about how these decisions will be made as not everyone will have the same opinion and you don't want to spend a lot of time debating this. A simple "majority rules" system and a

- show of hands typically does the trick.

These don't need to be long conversations. With the exception of expectations and aspirations, these are largely administrative issues that shouldn't consume big chunks of training time. But having these discussions demonstrates that the trainer views those attending as active participants with opinions, needs, and a role to play in the training, rather than just passive recipients.

As adults, we are more eager to protect and more likely to benefit from experiences that we have helped to create. If participants feel they have had a role in how the workshop will be run, they are more likely to be committed to their own participation.

Demonstrate power with, rather than power over

Within the context of the training room, trainers automatically take on the role of leader, at least in the initial stages. As such, trainers need to decide what type of leader they are going to be and how they will manage their relationship with participants and help them achieve their greatest potential.

Trainers who endeavor to create **power with** participants seek to create collaboration and strong inter-personal relationships with and among participants. They facilitate and manage

both the learning and the dynamics in the training room, but do not try to dominate it, allowing participants to take and demonstrate leadership at appropriate times as well.

Trainers who try to practice **power over** seek to control the behavioral choices of participants. While a directive or prescriptive approach may be appropriate for (very) short times under (very) specific circumstances, if this is the dominant style it not only creates an unpleasant environment but it can shut down learning. When a trainer becomes overbearing or overcontrolling, participants tend to shift their energy and attention towards simply enduring the experience rather than engaging in learning.

6. Build from the Familiar and Incorporate the Learning Cycle

As adults, we've not only racked up life experiences, but we've formed opinions and developed beliefs about how things do work and should work. When faced with new information, we will try to keep it in harmony with the values and understandings we have developed and tend to maintain a bias towards information that appears to confirm our beliefs.

From a human survival perspective, this makes a lot of sense. But it means that trainers need to begin their engagements with participants where they already are.

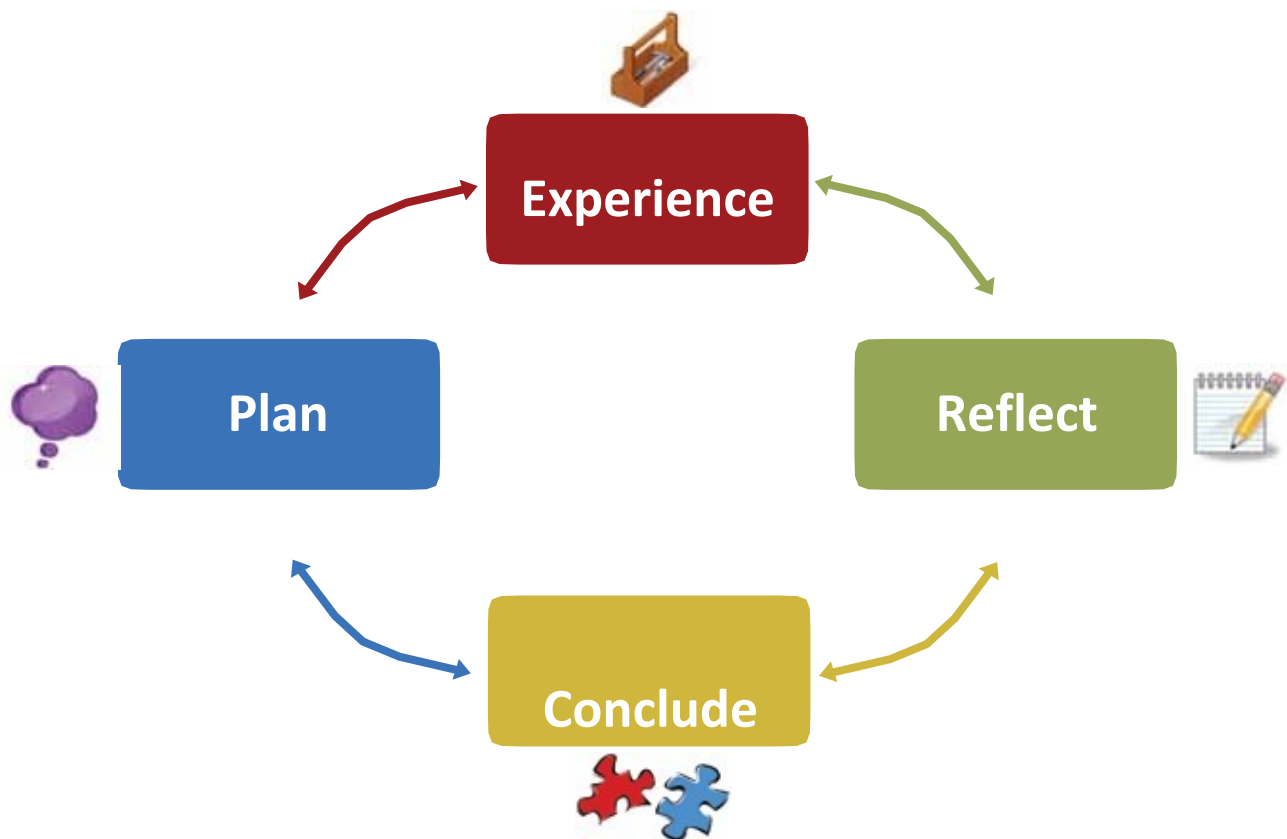
This does not require meta-analysis of demographic data, detailed biographies or exhaustive interviews with participants. It simply means that trainers should start with what is already likely to be familiar to participants and build from there. This is particularly important when the content or practice the trainer is trying to convey is significantly different from what the current social or political norm is.

Starting with the familiar simply means finding ways to connect the content or subject matter of the training to participants' daily lives or to a common experience so that they are more at ease and feel that they are starting from a place of understanding.

Of course, it helps to find out as much as you can about the participants you will be working with before you even design the training. If you are not already intimately familiar with the group or audience you'll be working with, send out a questionnaire, short survey or even a modest pre-assignment that participants can complete in advance of the workshop and submit to you. This provides a mechanism to get to know them better and will help you anticipate their needs and perspectives before the training even begins.

There are many theories about how adults learn and there are differences of opinion about which are most accurate. As practicing trainers, we have found that one approach broadly matches our experience in training environments, which is the learning cycle as outlined by David Kolb.

Kolb noted that all learners need to go through a series of stages to learn most effectively. He defines the stages as the following:



Experience 	You do something You try it out, you engage with the content, substance or idea.
Reflect 	You think about what happened You review the experience in the context of existing knowledge or information.
Conclude 	You make connections or draw conclusions about it You connect or identify what worked, what didn't, what the results were. Sometimes, you might even seek out additional information to help you make conclusions.
Plan 	You prepare to try again You plan to try out what you have learned, to keep the things that worked and perhaps to change the things that didn't work as well. You begin to take action on what to do next.

The important thing to keep in mind is that the whole cycle should be part of the learning experience. Review your lesson plan and ask:

- Are there opportunities for participants to actively engage with new information? For example:
 - Simulations
 - Team assignments or small group work
 - Problem solving tasks
 - Case studies
- Is there time to allow for reflection and discussion of the experience? For example:
 - Individual journals
 - Team or small group discussions
 - Facilitated brainstorming discussions
- Are there mechanisms that help participants draw conclusions about the content? For example:
 - Outcome mapping where the whole group maps the results of an exercise or experience
 - Discussions in pairs with learning partners

Snowball fight where each participant writes down a conclusion then crumbles the paper into a ball, all are thrown into the air and participants pick up a snowball that is not theirs and these are read out

- How will participants begin to plan what to do next with the new information? For example:
 - Personal action planning
 - Journals
 - Commitment statements

7. Accommodate Different Learning Styles and Preferences

Here's a quick quiz. How many days are there from today until January 1 of next year?

Got an answer? Now, ask yourself how you tried to figure that out. Did you hum a rhyme you learned as a child about the number of days in each month? Did you take out a pen and a piece of paper and make a written calculation? Did you try to visualize some form of timeline in your head?

Your approach to answering this question is a reflection of how you like to process information. This is considered to be your preferred learning style.

A learning style is the way an individual prefers to absorb, process and act upon information and experiences. Nearly every adult gathers information in more than one way, but we all have a preferred way of doing this, which we started to develop in childhood. Our favored mode is the one that generally makes learning easier for us.

Learning styles are stable, meaning that we've gotten pretty good at using our preferred style in all the years we've been practicing it, but they are not fixed. Adults can adapt to different learning environments and situations in order to perform different tasks.

Here's another quick question. Think of two people from your own family who have been raised in a similar environment: two children, two siblings, two cousins, etc. Visualize them in your head. If you were to describe these two people to a stranger, would you use the exact same words, the exact same descriptions, the exact same tones of voice? It's not likely.

People are different. Even people from the same family raised in the same environment can be very different. The same is true for participants in a training. Each one will have a unique and varied approach to learning.

The good news amidst all of this diversity is that there will be multiple ways that participants can engage with the information and content in the training. The challenge for trainers is to figure out the best way to accommodate multiple learning styles in a singular training environment.

The best place to start is to develop an understanding of what learning styles can look like. (This can also help you identify your own learning preferences to ensure you're not training predominantly to styles that match your own.) A useful framework for this purpose is the one developed by Peter Honey and Alan Mumford,⁹ based on Kolb's learning cycle.



Learning Style	Attributes	Activities
Activists 	Activists are people who learn by doing; they need to get their hands dirty Activists tend to be more open-minded rather than skeptical or hesitant Activists can be enthusiastic participants, but they also tend to be bored by elements of training that involve long discussions or planning Activists don't mind making mistakes because they learn from them	Activists enjoy: - problem solving in teams - being thrown into a task without too much time to prepare - competitions - role-play - fast-paced environments

Reflectors



Reflectors prefer to observe events from a distance, rather than jumping right in

Reflectors like to collect data and do thorough research before making decisions; they prefer to “sleep on it” rather than making a quick decision

Reflectors are more cautious and like to take all possible factors into account

Reflectors tend to observe others and take a back seat in discussions; they are good listeners

Reflectors enjoy: discussing ideas having lots of time to prepare for a task reviewing what has happened and thinking through what they’ve learned structured methods for exchanging ideas and views feedback from others, coaching, and interviews

Theorists 	Theorists like to understand the theory behind actions; they need models, concepts and facts in order to engage in the learning process Theorists prefer logical, step-by-step approaches; they are constantly asking how new information makes sense and how it fits with what they already know and understand Theorists can be perfectionists; they prefer certainty and are uncomfortable with subjective judgments or trivia	Theorists enjoy: • having time to explore the relationships between ideas, events or situations complex or challenging situations where they • have to apply their knowledge structured exercises with a clear purpose • using models, statistics or stories that illustrate how to apply theories •
Pragmatists 	Pragmatists are experimenters; they like to try new things to see how they will work in real life Pragmatists are largely practical people who like to act quickly and get things done Pragmatists treat problems and opportunities as a challenge	Pragmatists enjoy: • understanding how to apply what they're learning • having the opportunity to try out new techniques discussion and time to think about how to apply learning in reality case studies, project work, and problem solving

This framework provides a useful perspective on adults' approaches to learning and can help trainers think through how to structure their sessions and adapt content to be more accessible to different learning styles.

However, it is also important to keep in mind that few people fit completely and wholly into any of these categories. Everyone learns from more than one approach. No one has just one learning style – we all tend to use a combination of these, depending on the content, the

situation, our own personalities, and other factors that may influence our learning on that particular day.

The key points about learning styles are:

- It's important to use a variety of activities, stimuli, media and training techniques to accommodate different learning styles.
- Be aware of your own preferred learning styles so that you don't unconsciously train to that style alone. When you're designing session plans, look at how you've decided to approach different subject matter. Chances are that reflects your own preferred learning style. Regularly ask yourself how you could approach ideas differently.
- No matter what you're doing, there may be someone in the room who doesn't like this particular approach to learning because it's not close to his or her preferred style. Don't take it personally. The best thing to do is to explain why you're doing it this way to help keep them engaged, and to change activities regularly.

8. Constructing Objectives and Outcomes

When constructing a training session, start by asking a few fundamental questions:

WHO?	Who is the training for? What do you know about them?
WHY?	Why is the training needed?
WHAT?	What should the results of the training be (in terms of KSA)?
HOW?	How is the audience currently connected to this topic?

You need a sense of who the participants will be and why this topic is relevant, interesting, or important to them. (Or maybe it isn't considered important by the participants themselves, but someone else thinks they need it, like a supervisor or a manager. Then you could be walking into a room full of people who don't want to be there. We'll deal with those dynamics in the next chapter.)

What level of information are the participants likely to have on the topic? Is this a new concept, something they've done before but need to hone their skills or, as is often the case, will you be working with a group with mixed exposure and ability?

Once you've answered these questions as a starting line, the next step is to skip to the very end. Once this training is over, what will the results need to be? In other words, what should participants be able to think (knowledge), do (skills), or feel (attitude) at the end of this training?

The KSA of trainings are defined in the form of learning objectives and learning outcomes.

Learning Objectives

Learning objectives are action statements that specify what the learner will be able to do as a result of the training program. They are typically written in behavioral terms, meaning they describe certain behaviors in which participants can engage subsequent to the training.

In terms of KSA, learning objectives focus on knowledge and skills. They are measurable – you would be able to assess or evaluate whether or not participants gained or improved these abilities – and should be as specific, detailed, and precise as possible.

Learning objectives **are not** a description of what the trainer will do or teach, or a summary of the training topic, or an outline of the training. Learning objectives are about connecting the content to the participants, not describing the content on its own.

Objectives and Outcomes

Learning objectives are action statements that specify what the learner will be able to **do** as a result of the training program. They focus on knowledge and skills.

Learning outcomes describe how people should **feel** as a result of the training. They focus on attitudes.

Consider the sample learning objectives below, constructed for a Train the Trainers program. As a result of the training program, participants will be able to:

- Understand the difference between training and teaching, and distinguish among the types of skills associated with each
- Prepare for a training session, including constructing effective learning objectives and outcomes, and writing an appropriate agenda
- Apply adult learning concepts, develop a supportive training environment, and design materials to meet multiple learning styles
- Use effective training methods including exercises and activities, creative information delivery, facilitation, effective questioning techniques, and giving and receiving feedback

Construct learning objectives to keep the content of your trainings focused on delivering real skills and information to participants, and to give you a sense of how best to manage the time you have. Use action words when writing these objectives, so that you maintain a vision for what the participants should actually be able to do once they walk out the door, and so you can build the subject matter around this vision.

Typical action words used in constructing learning objectives include:

To write	To implement	To distinguish
To deliver	To understand	To construct
To organize	To lead	To design
To create	To mobilize	To prepare

Learning Outcomes

Let's say you delivered an amazing training on voter contact. Participants walked out of the training with an exceptional understanding of what voter contact is and how it can be implemented.

But, they're not convinced it will work for them. Or, they didn't really find it all that interesting. Or, they're not confident that they can actually do it themselves.

Will much change for these participants? How likely are they to actually use the knowledge and the skills that they learned? Pretty unlikely, we'd guess.

In learning new skills, we don't just engage our brains but also our feelings and our emotions. It doesn't matter how much knowledge we have about a certain subject if we don't feel that it's important or interesting.

Learning outcomes focus on how we want people to feel as a result of the training, the attitude component of KSA.

How do we want learners to feel about the subject matter? How do we want them to feel about their own abilities? How do we want them to feel about putting these new ideas into practice? All of these questions are an important consideration before designing any training as these learning outcomes have a big impact on how both the content and the social aspects of the workshop are constructed, and should influence how the trainer communicates with participants.

Consider the examples below from a training on policy-based advocacy. As a result of this workshop, participants will have the attitude to:

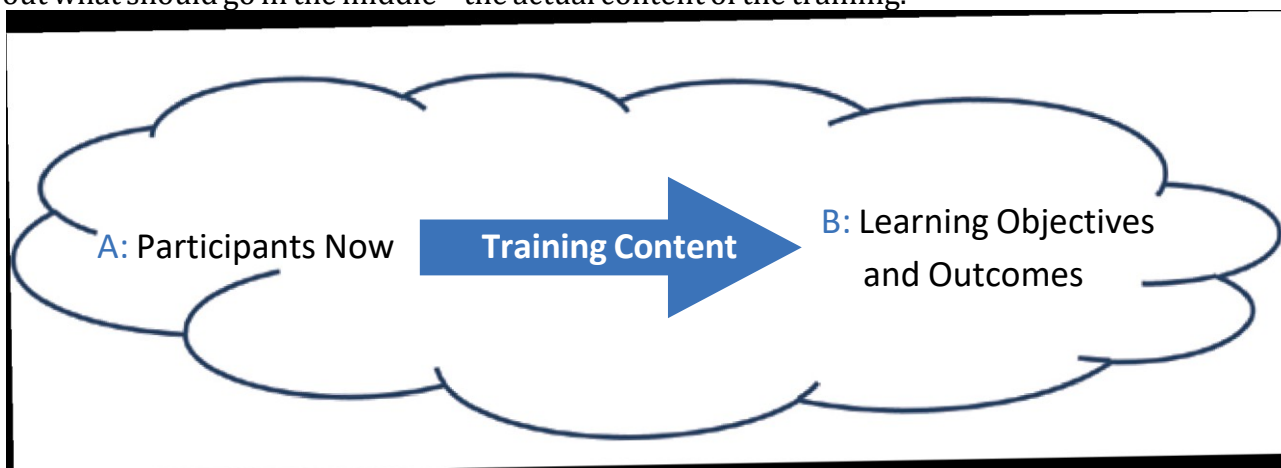
Feel confident in their understanding of the types of research needed to build strong evidence-based policy, and their ability to find or conduct this research
Feel enthusiastic about their ability to construct viable policy solutions to local problems, and advance these through advocacy campaigns

Language typically used in defining learning outcomes includes:

Inspired	Confident	Motivated
Enthusiastic	Energized	Supportive
Reflective	Engaged	Inspired

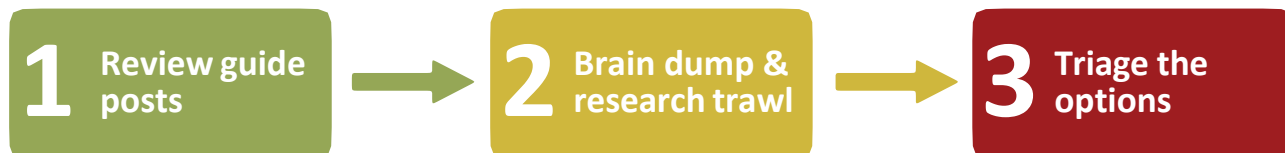
9. How to Choose and Organize Content

Once you've answered the fundamental questions of who, why and what, and written your learning objectives and outcomes, you will have established the two bookends of your training: your starting point and your end point. These should serve as guideposts for figuring out what should go in the middle – the actual content of the training.



Choosing Content

What's the best way to get from point A to point B? How you actually do this is going to be influenced by your own preferred working and learning styles. However, we have found a three-step process that works well for most trainers:



1. Review your guide posts

Before you write a minute of training content, review again what the answers to your fundamental questions have told you about your participants, and what you have established as your learning objectives and outcomes. These are important guides and need to be at the forefront of your mind when constructing the actual content.



To ensure she doesn't stray from these guide posts when it comes to writing the actual content, Shannon prints out the answers to the fundamental questions and the learning objectives and outcomes and posts them above her desk. Whenever she has to make a choice about what to cover, she goes back to these pieces of information to inform her decisions.

2. Do a brain dump and/or research trawl

Your own learning style and how you prefer to process information will affect how you approach this next step. Essentially, what you are trying to do is to gather as many resources as you can about the subject or topic.



Start by writing down everything that you know or understand about the issue. Then, collect all of the additional information you can: look at videos and presentations about the topic online, pull together any recent research or evidence about it, seek out experts and thought leaders in this area and ask their opinions, buy or borrow new publications on the subject. Essentially, go fishing for as much information as you can about the topic and cast a very wide net.

Gather as many reliable sources of knowledge, analysis, and information as you can, but check references and reviews to make sure your sources are credible. Get to know the material that you've collected.

What you are essentially doing in this step is teaching yourself, i.e., bolstering, expanding and enhancing your own understanding of the topic so that you can train on it as effectively as possible. Do you recall that chart from chapter three, section two about what percentages of information we remember? Well, there's one more line that comes at the end of that particular piece of research that suggests that we remember 90% of what we teach because our interaction with the information is so intensive.

Triage the options

By now, you will have a reasonable pool of resources from which to build your training. From here, take one last look at your guide posts (the answers to your fundamental questions and your learning objectives and outcomes) and start to sort the information into three categories, using a system akin to an upside-down traffic light:

Essential → This is content that **must** be covered because it is essential to understanding the subject matter and/or contributes to meeting learning objectives and outcomes.

Desirable → This is information that is potentially useful which **could** be covered if time and other circumstances allow.



Non-Essential → This is subject matter which should **not** be covered because it's not relevant, doesn't contribute to meeting learning objectives and outcomes, or it's the wrong level for this group.

These simple steps provide a reliable process for collating all possible content for a training session, and then making a guided decision about what to actually use. The important point to keep in mind is that you don't have to use everything. In fact you ***shouldn't*** use everything. It is better to be clear, focused and concise than to bombard learners with more information than they could ever possibly process or use.

Keep your choices strategic: ***what will help this audience interact with the information in the best possible way and provide the most effective route to reaching the learning objectives and outcomes?***

What do you do when you have too much content?

Sometimes, you have to find a way to deliver more information than time (or the human brain) will really allow. Or, you arrive at the training and find that the participants are less familiar with the subject matter than you had anticipated, so you have to go back a few steps and take things slower. What do you do in these situations?

There are a few options:

- Create a workbook, manual or other written resource that participants can take home with them for further exploration of the topic.
- Divide the content in half (or thirds, depending on the situation) and schedule a follow-up session to cover the additional material. In these situations, it can be useful to give participants a task to complete before the next session to keep some mental connection to the subject matter.
- Allow some of the work to be completed as an independent task, in teams or as individuals, with a firm deadline, a reliable process for making sure it's handed in, and a means to provide feedback.
- Post additional materials on a website that's easy to access or circulate materials via compact discs, flash drives, whatever mechanism people can use. Again, include some form of task or follow-up meeting to ensure participants have both used and understood the content.
- Create a Facebook or other social media group to continue the discussion.
- With a decent pool of subject matter resources now staring at you from your desk or computer screen, the next step is to figure out how to organize this heap into an actual training. There are a number of tools to help you do this. The one you choose should fit your personal style as a trainer and your preferred way of managing information.

Organizing Content

As you consider the options outlined below, keep in mind the advice from chapter two about how to organize content to help participants remember. And also, remember this: Power Point (and similar slideshow formats) are meant to function as visual aids to assist learning – they are not a means to organize your notes as a trainer! Trainings in which they are used for this purpose are really just tests of endurance for participants.

Commonly used formats for organizing the flow and timing of training content and activities include:

Session Plans

Affinity Diagrams

Mind Maps

Session Plans

Session plans are one of the most commonly used planning tools for organizing a training session or workshop. These are also referred to as training outlines or learning plans.

Session plans are an organized and structured outline of the subject matter you will cover in a training, the methods of instruction you will use, the timing of activities and breaks, and the resources you will employ. These plans serve as a form of road map that you will use to guide your participants towards the defined learning objectives.

There is no single way to construct a session plan; they can be formatted to accommodate any subject matter or learning objective. They can be as simple as a brief outline or more detailed with scripts for what you will say, prompts or cues for when you will introduce new information or exercises, and even color coding for easy reference. See the following sample:

Learning Objective:			
Subject/Content:			
	How to do this? Learning methods and/or training tools that will be used	How long to do this? Length of time of this portion	What else do I need? Resources, training materials, training toys, etc.
Introduction/Set Up			
Content Exploration, Part 1			
Content Exploration, Part 2			
Content Exploration, Part 3			
Closing/Set Down			

Other areas that trainers may include in session plans are: key points, evaluation or learning check, or learning styles check. The structure and format you use should be guided by your own needs.

Think through the information you will need and how you are likely to put the plan to work. Will these be the notes you use to deliver the training itself? Then you may want more detail and a format that's easy to reference while presenting. Or, are you more likely to use the plan as a skeleton structure and build the actual "meat" of the training using other tools? In this case, a simple outline might do the trick. Are you co-training with someone else? Then more detail will definitely be needed, including who will cover which stage of the training.

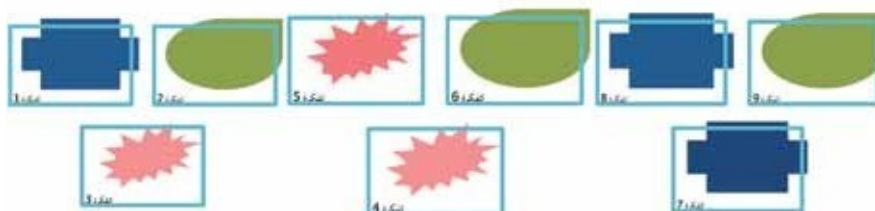
The key is to use the session plan to help you think and plan through every stage of the workshop so that you are fully prepared and able to facilitate a program that takes participants on an enjoyable journey to achieving the learning objectives.

Affinity Diagrams

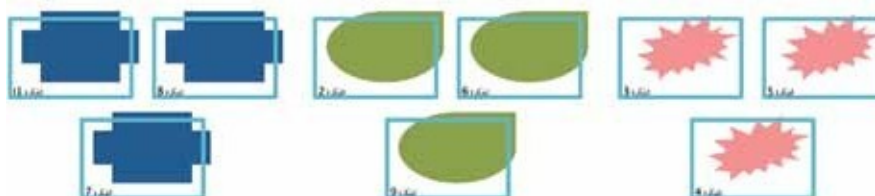
Affinity diagrams are simple tools used to organize ideas and information. They are particularly helpful to use when you are writing a training session on a new topic or one on which you have never trained before, or when you are working with a lot of resource information and you're not certain how to arrange or structure it as a training session.

Affinity diagrams simply involve organizing information or ideas into groups based on similarity or natural relationships. To do this in a structured way:

1. Write down each topic or idea on a small piece of paper (like sticky notes or note cards).
2. With the papers spread out in front of you, look for ideas that appear to be related.



3. Sort the papers into groups with similar themes or logical connections until all the papers have been used.



If there are any ideas that don't seem to have a logical connection with any of the groups, consider whether this is a topic or concept that actually connects to your learning objectives, and whether or not it needs to be covered in this session.

You can now use the groups you have formed to identify a logical flow to your training, with similar ideas supporting one another and each topic connected to the next.

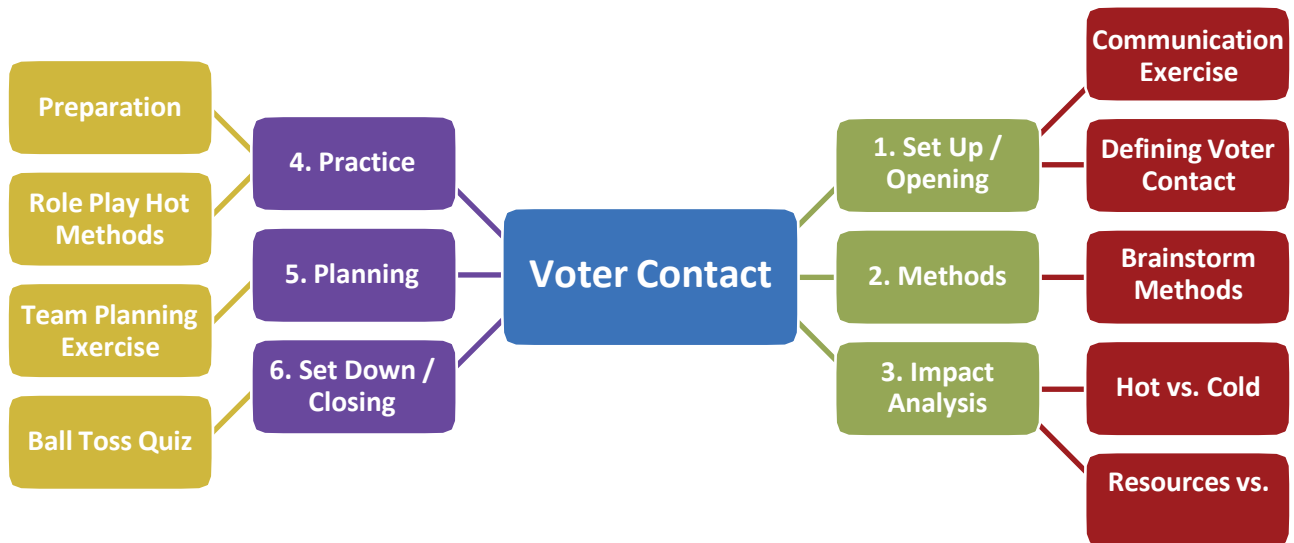
Mind Maps

Mind maps are also known as spider maps or flow maps. In the context of organizing a training, they are a means to map out the course and sequence of content in a way that allows the trainer to see the whole picture at once. These types of maps provide a much more visual format than other planning tools.

Mind maps are about carving pathways for information, energy and ideas to move in a harmonious and connected sequence around a training. The core design of a mind map mimics the shape of a neuron, the basic working unit of the brain that transmits information to other cells. As such, it is much more free form than rigid and can adapt to any training approach.

To construct a mind map or spider map, start with the subject matter or topic in the center, and then move from the top of the map (or the spider's front legs) in a clockwise direction, outlining how each aspect of the topic will be explored. Again, this is a flexible model, so if you are writing in Arabic, Persian, Urdu or any other language that flows from right to left, simply change the order in which information flows along the legs of the spider or the dendrites of the neuron.

Below is a model of a mind map used to plan out a training on voter contact.



There are a number of software packages available that allow these types of maps to be constructed electronically. Most cost money, but there are a few open source options including Coggle, which is a free, online collaborative tool that requires a Google+ account.

Don't forget that the old fashioned method is always available as well – mind maps can easily be written out by hand. In some situations, they may work better this way.

10. Openings and closings

Imagine you are the captain of a spaceship, bringing civilian passengers into space for their very first time. Your task is to gently but firmly lift your aircraft off the ground, through the density of the earth's atmosphere, and into space where you masterfully balance the speed and direction of your craft with enough precision to maintain a perfect orbit. From this unique perspective, you offer your passengers a glorious view of the world around them and the experience of a lifetime.

Then, having explored this small slice of the universe, you gracefully reduce your speed to allow the soft tug of gravity to deliver your passengers back into the earth's warm embrace, with their heads and hearts full of the wonder of adventure and exploration. Or, you could just blast the ship into space, give everyone onboard whiplash, put the gas pedal to the floor and speed around the earth a couple times, and then crash down into a body of water somewhere, thank everyone for coming and hop onboard a passing fishing boat to get yourself home.

Which, do you think, would be the better experience for the passengers?

In some ways, the options for trainers are the same. You can just jump right in there, get to the subject matter, deliver the content, and send everyone home. Or, you can use the opening as a "set up" to skillfully create a receptive state for learning, to put the participants at ease and make them open to learning. And you can use the closing as a form of "set down," to taper the content to a logical conclusion, to allow the participants to complete the learning cycle through debrief and discussion, to bring in repetition and review to help them remember.

Huge opportunities to initiate and complete the learning cycle are lost when trainers fail to facilitate a proper opening and closing for each topic or session. Openings and closings do not have to be complex or long, but they do serve an important function as a means to help participants prepare for and process information, and to organize it more effectively for their own learning.

As such, the movement and momentum of a training session can flow like an arc.

How do you launch a spaceship and make an arc in a real live workshop? Think through what it is you need to achieve in each phase of the training and match your tools to create this.

	Opening	Main Body	Closing
What You Are Trying to Achieve	Get participants' attention Create ease Create interest Clarify what's happening Motivate participants to become involved	Engage participants in the content of the training	Repeating Reinforcing Creating opportunities for participants to process information and practice new skills
How You Are Doing It	Quote, joke or story Song or game Visual aids Asking participants questions about themselves Discussing benefits of the training Active introductions and participatory learning contracts Discussing aspirations Reviewing agendas and logistics Smiling!	Connecting problems and solutions Analyzing the present and planning for the future Posing questions for participants to answer Introducing content in manageable chunks Using visual aids and creating a multi-sensory environment	Large group debrief Discussion groups Team tasks with presentations and discussions Ball toss quiz Individual presentations with feedback session Verbal or written evaluation Discussions in pairs with a "learning buddy" Journal writing or written reflection

11. Length and Timing

To continue with the spaceship analogy, the next important question for trainers is how long can you keep people in orbit? How long can your passengers be strapped into their seats before they want to jump out the window, even without an oxygen mask? In other words, how long should each training session be?

The answer is: it depends.

Chapter three talks about offering information in manageable chunks so that participants do not become overwhelmed, exhausted, or frustrated. This generally means keeping sessions to about a 90 minute limit before stopping for a break in some form. But if the content is dense or complex, you may need to stop sooner. Conversely, if participants are working independently on a project that is interesting and energetic, you could easily go for longer.

The best guideline to use when looking at how to manage time is the 70/30 split – participants should be in charge of their own learning and actively engaging with the information at least 70% of the time; the trainer/facilitator should be the only person talking or leading no more than 30% of the time.

If participant-led content and activities drop below 70%, you need to ask yourself why and whether this is the best approach. Remember, we learn actively, not passively. And trainers are facilitators of knowledge, not lecturers or presenters.

Once you have written your training session, review it once more and ask in each step along the way, “What are participants doing now?” If they’re up on their feet, in motion and/or active, exploring or explaining new ideas, you have more time with which to work. If they’re sitting listening, you’ve got far less time with which to work. In terms of verbal delivery of information (i.e., you, the trainer, simply talking), think of the guidelines for Ted Talks present well-informed ideas in under 18 minutes. After that, impact and retention decrease substantially.

70/30 Split

Participants should be in charge of their own learning and actively engaged in the training at least 70% of the time.

The trainer should be the only person talking or leading no more than 30% of the time.

12. Designing Your Own Training vs. Training to a Pre-Set Curriculum

Designing a solid training is hard work and takes a lot of time. Generally speaking, Shannon plans three hours of preparation time for every one hour of training, including researching, writing and formatting materials, designing activities and exercises, planning the supplies that will be needed, and so on.

The other aspect of training preparation that takes time is rehearsal. Effective training engages not only a trainer's intellectual capacity, but also their social, communication, and presentation skills. You have to know what the materials, the content, the exercises, etc., sound like when they are spoken out loud and get a sense for how the flow is likely to work. This requires actively walking through the training session in a form of dry-run, similar to the rehearsals an actor would engage in before a performance or the run-through a surgeon would lead before a major operation.

Rehearsing new skills and ideas during training sessions helps participants solidify these abilities, and the same is true for trainers. Practicing the delivery of actual training content is a very effective form of preparation.

Therefore, when you commit to leading a training, make sure you have enough preparation time in advance to get yourself and your materials organized, and to try out what you plan to deliver.

This final step is even more important when you are training to a pre-set curriculum. Although it can be a relief to be asked to deliver a pre-set curriculum because you don't have the workload of writing and organizing your own training – a pre-set curriculum means the content has already been written by someone else – it can actually take just as long (if not longer) to learn.

When you are the creator of your own training, the research and writing phase is actually also a learning phase: you are learning the content as you go and making your own choices about what is essential and what is not. As you progress, your brain is moving information to long-term memory because it has been consciously tagged as important, so your mastery of the subject matter increases as you construct.

When you deliver content written by someone else, this step is taken away, which means that the rehearsal phase becomes even more important.

You will have to review the materials to get to know them well and integrate them with your personal training style. It is very important that you have a clear understanding of the learning objectives that are tied to the specific content you are delivering, so that you can keep your delivery within those parameters. Many pre-set curricula are designed in a building block format – one piece builds on top of another – so it is vital that you know exactly what is supposed to be in the bricks that you are laying so that the structure stays solid.

13. Co-Training

There are a lot of benefits to co-training. Having more than one trainer offers variety and diversity to participants and can help keep energy levels high. Trainers working in pairs or teams can serve as resources to one another and are often a great source of new ideas and constructive feedback.

But co-training can also be a lot of work and, if it's not done well, can go very badly. Here are our tips for working with other trainers.

Have clearly defined roles

Be very clear about who is doing what and who is delivering what. Stay focused on delivering the learning objectives for which you are responsible, and stay supportive of other trainers delivering theirs. Agree what roles the other will play when they are not the lead trainer. For example, will they be available to help write on the flipchart or distribute materials?

Rehearse together

If preparing for your own training by doing a dry-run is important, it can be even more vital when trying to choreograph the efforts of multiple trainers. Find ways to walk through the content together. This doesn't have to be in a strict rehearsal form per se where you go through every word verbatim (although in some situations, this might be a good idea) but you need to have a clear sense for how you will coordinate your efforts as seamlessly as possible.

Even when you're not training, you're training

One of Shannon's pet peeves in a co-training situation is when a trainer finishes his piece and hands-off to the next trainer, then immediately sits down and whips out his phone or computer and hops on Facebook or starts sending text messages to friends. This trainer is sending a clear message to all the participants that what is being covered now is not worth paying attention to.

If you are training with a team, you are training as a team. Even when you are not in front of the room, you are a trainer. Your body should be in the training room and your body language should model interest and engagement and commitment, at all times. This is not just an act – what is being said and discussed in any session is relevant as you may have to build on this in the next piece that you deliver.

Stay on message and in harmony

Trainers should be reinforcing the same key learning points and should never contradict one another in front of participants. If a serious error in content is made by one of the trainers and needs to be addressed, explore it from a point of elaboration or discussion with participants, not as a means of pointing out a mistake. It's not only bad form, but trainers directly contradicting one another creates confusion among participants, who then become more likely to lose confidence in the program overall.

Adults require respect to do their best

Just like participants, trainers working in a team need to offer each other respect in order to do their best. Keep to the time you are given to avoid other trainers having to cut content. Be supportive and constructive with other trainers; don't hesitate to offer compliments for what they do well. Communicate regularly during the program to discuss how things are going and try not to be too possessive about the pieces for which you are responsible, if another (possibly better) way emerges to approach these.

14. Checklists Suggestions

Pre-Training Activities Checklist

- Training Needs Assessment is a very important component of a training programme. The results serve as the basis for determining the knowledge, attitudes, values and skills that the prospective participants should acquire during the training programme.
- The objectives of a training programme should be stated according to the acronym SMART: specific, measurable, achievable, results-oriented and time-bound.
- The availability of resources such as manpower, funding, equipment and materials is critical for attaining the objectives of a training programme.

Conducting the training programme Checklist

1. Make sure that everyone involved in the training programme understands clearly the objectives of the training.
2. Make sure that you have made all necessary arrangements concerning the training venue and the sites for field visits.
3. Prepare materials in advance for use during training and finalize the equipment needed by resource persons and participants.
4. Make sure that the time allocated for any session is appropriate for the length and importance of the topic and the activities to be undertaken.
5. Decide in advance the outline and format of the action plans that trainees must complete during training.
6. Take seriously the reactions, views and opinions of the participants and be prepared to modify the training approaches and content accordingly.
7. Be prepared for the unexpected to happen at any time during training, and have alternative plans and activities ready just in case.

After training Checklist

- Training is not an end in itself. It should be a continuous process to strengthen the capabilities of the trainees.
- We can see the real impact of training activities in the changed behaviour, improved quality of life and active participation in community activities on the part of beneficiaries.
- Training is a vehicle for empowerment and transformation.

