TOOLS FROM THE FIELD

Participant-Centered Techniques for Effective Training

by Beth Gragg
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## Tools from the Field: Participant-Centered Techniques for Effective Training

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The work of many people has gone into this manual. Friends and colleagues who contributed Notes from the Field include: Gina Fiona Agyeiaba, Lucy Aklaku, Muna Al-Khalidi, Estelle Day, Leah Jones, Gretchen Latowsky, Alma Rogers, Della Sherratt, Katherine Shields and Nasira Tasnim. Several people gave very helpful input, including Barbara Garner, David Kahler, Silja Kallenbach, Emily Katarikawe and Joel Lamstein.

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Thanks to the hundreds of people with whom I’ve worked over the past 20 years, either as co-facilitators or participants in workshops or training programs in Cambodia, Georgia, Ghana, Japan, Nicaragua, Pakistan, the Philippines, Russia, South Africa, Thailand, Uganda, the United States, Uzbekistan, Yemen, Zambia and more. They asked questions that made me stop and wonder why we use the approaches that we do. This manual is an attempt to answer some of the most frequently asked of those questions.

Illustrations created by Fiona Hawthorne using Painter Classic software. Fiona’s work can be viewed at www.fionahawthorne.com.

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This book is dedicated to Jill Harmsworth, in memory of her passion for her work.
Introduction

If you are like me, much of what you have learned about facilitation has come from on-the-job experience. You have learned to train others by carrying out trainings, often with little time to reflect on why a particular approach does or does not work. This manual was written to help you understand why we do the things we do: why we structure activities so that they follow the Experiential Learning Cycle and why we use approaches that give both you and the learner opportunities to see how well learning objectives are being met. It was also written so you would have many of the tools you need in one place.

The first section of the manual entitled “Why We Do the Things We Do” is a summary of various learning theories side by side with what the theory means for our practice. Following that section is the Experiential Learning Cycle, which is a valuable tool in designing trainings that follow good learning theory.

The heart of this manual is the participant-centered techniques. They are called participant-centered because they help us base our training on participants’ needs and problems and help participants figure out how they can make lasting changes in their lives. First, you will find a section on Choosing Techniques to meet your participants’ needs, and then a section on how to expand your use of techniques in different stages of the Experiential Learning Cycle. The short section called Using Techniques gives general guidance for carrying out activities that use participant-centered methods.

The next section, Techniques from the Field, includes a description of each technique, steps to follow in conducting them and some considerations to keep in mind when using them. Some techniques also have Variations on a Theme, or ways to modify them for different purposes.

After that you will find some ideas on how to evaluate learning during a training program. This section is called Participant-Centered Evaluation Techniques. I have included some of my favorite Icebreakers and Energizers from all over the world, along with Puzzles and Brainteasers to help you stimulate thinking in different ways.
One last word: sometimes people ask where they can use participant-centered techniques. There are lots of examples: in the United States, practitioners working with immigrants who are pursuing the high school equivalency diplomas use participatory techniques in adult education classes. Agricultural extension workers in places as far-flung as Indonesia and Nicaragua use these same techniques to help farmers of all ages learn about the newest techniques for managing their crops. In Cambodia young girls and boys use these techniques with their communities to help adults understand why they should not be sent to big cities to work and face possible exploitation. Participant-centered techniques are successfully used all over the world with adults, youth and children to teach them how they can prevent the spread of HIV, the virus that causes AIDS.

Though these techniques are very useful with people who have low levels of literacy or little formal education, they are equally helpful when working with highly educated and literate people. I hope you can use this manual to stretch your imagination with all of your groups!

**Notes from the Field:**

Ghana’s educational system uses a top to bottom approach where the learner is seen as an empty tin with no ideas, knowledge or experience. She needs to be filled with information. Dealing with teacher trainers (called “tutors”) at the national level was a major challenge at the beginning. They found it odd when I did not condemn wrong answers and when I threw their answers back to them for discussion. However, after a couple of days together, the tutors were saying that the participant-centered approach was a remarkable one and “if we tutors adopt this approach in teaching our HIV/AIDS curriculum our trainees will change their behaviors.” The teacher trainees said that they never missed a class on teaching about HIV/AIDS because they liked the methodology so much.
**Andragogy:** The art and science of teaching adults.

**Pedagogy:** From the Greek “paid” for child, and “agogus,” meaning “leader of”. Pedagogy literally means the “art and science of teaching children”.

**Didactic:** From the Greek word “didaktos” meaning “taught or able to be taught”. Didactic means involving lecture and textbook instruction rather than demonstration and laboratory study.

**Facilitate:** Derived from the Latin word “facilitat” or “to make easy or to lessen one’s burden”. Part of the facilitator’s job is to make learning easy by providing opportunities for people to learn.

**Interactive:** Mutually or reciprocally active, as in interactive techniques. Examples of interactive techniques are lecturretes with questions and answer and panel discussions.

**Participation:** The act or state of taking part in an activity with others.

**Participatory:** Characterized by providing opportunities for participation.

**Participant-centered:** Describes techniques that help participants make real changes in their lives by focusing on problems and situations from their lives.
Notes from the Field:

I wasn’t formally introduced to the term participatory education until recently, but I soon realized that I’d been using these techniques since I taught my first English as a Second Language class ten years ago. I have taught high school and eighth grade English grammar, Language Arts, and pre-Graduate Education Diploma classes as well, with various levels of success. The best classes always had clearly defined objectives, student-focused strategies, hands-on and group activities, and constant exploration of the perspectives and experiences from which my students were coming to class.

The most complicated lessons do not always go smoothly when I squash in too many ideas, too many goals and objectives. Eyes glaze over and I find myself talking too much. Students don’t leave refreshed and motivated, but rather with what I think of as “academic indigestion,” the discomfort you get from swallowing too much (and perhaps less than healthy) “academic cuisine”. A good class is like a meal that is not over-spiced or over-cooked, with a few fresh ingredients, but for which there can never be too many cooks!!

I often remind my students that by the time they get to GED class, they have a wealth of experience and knowledge, and that collectively, we have tons to learn, and even more to share with each other. We call each other “teacher” and “student,” but really we are all teachers, all students, all facilitators, all creators and sharers of exciting ideas, all “sous chefs”. The “meal” is much tastier and more nutritious if I bring the right ingredients; and as a young teacher, I’m still on the lookout for the best recipes for my classes – but the learning process itself is a joy.
If we take a step back and think about why we carry out training programs, we will see that it is because training is one way of helping people make educated choices about how to change situations so that they can improve their lives, their health, their communities and their work. The training programs we work on are usually designed with an understanding of the contexts in which participants live and work, how people view their world, and what the problems are that they need to address. They are designed to help people respond to those problems when they leave the training and return to their “real lives”. Most often these learning activities are based on an experiential learning model that we tailor to respond to the peoples’ needs, and to the situations they will address.¹

The approaches used in these training programs are based upon what is known about adult learning. Some of this information is in the form of generally-agreed upon theories, known as adult learning theories. Other information comes from actual research conducted to understand how adults learn. Summarized on the following pages are some of the most important principles that researchers and educators all over the world have found to be successful in helping learners learn new material, develop problem-solving and decision-making skills, and change attitudes or behaviors. To make it as useful as possible, each learning theory is accompanied by how a good facilitator (you!) would put that theory into practice.

See the Resources on page 129 if you are interested in references that will give you more information about learning theory.
Learning Theory Says:

Adults need to know why a topic is important for them to learn.

Before learners, especially adults, will make the effort to learn something, many spend a lot of energy figuring out why they should learn it and what will happen if they do not. Most adults are busy people with many demands on their time. If it is not apparent why a subject is immediately relevant, then they have little motivation to learn it.

In school, children’s learning is generally “curriculum-centered” and children study the subjects that are required by the schools or government.

Adults are “life-centered” (or problem-centered) in their orientation to learning. They are largely motivated to learn something if they see it will help them perform tasks or manage problems that they find in their own lives. They learn new attitudes, skills and knowledge most effectively when they are presented in ways that can be directly applied to real-life situations.

Multiple intelligences theory reinforces that perspective. It defines intelligence as “the ability to solve problems and make solutions that are valued in a culture or a community”. This way of viewing intelligence implies that learning should focus on problem-solving and draw on real-life situations and artifacts.

So, our response should be:

Design and carry out participant-centered trainings: trainings that are focused on the participants’ real-life situations and problems.

To find out how the topic relates to the learners’ lives, we need to learn as much as possible about participants’ interests, learning styles, the social and cultural contexts in which they live, their educational and work experiences and the issues they face. By knowing what is important to them, we can design a training that will make connections between the learners and the subject. This will make the topic more relevant and help motivate participants to learn. If the subject is based on real-life situations, it will make it easier for people to use what they learn when they return to their work.

Deliberately following the Experiential Learning Cycle (on page 13) gives learners many opportunities to analyze and solve the problems they are working on. They can develop important skills by identifying why the problem makes a difference to them, finding out the facts of the situation, identifying and evaluating alternative solutions, determining priorities and deciding on the courses of action they will take to solve the problem in their own lives.
Learning Theory Says:

Experience plays a large role in learning. If only because they have lived longer, adults have built up more knowledge and skills than they had as children, and those experiences continue to accumulate and expand. A 30-year old’s experience is much deeper and broader than a 15-year old’s experience. This means several things:

- Any group of adults will bring a wide range of backgrounds, educational levels, learning styles, motivation, needs, interests and goals to the training program.

- Such diverse experiences mean that the group has a wealth of information, knowledge and skills that need to be considered. The richness of the learning will depend on how well the training draws on their experiences.

- Experience has an even more subtle impact on how adults learn. An adult may define herself largely by her experiences by saying, “I am a doctor, I have been a teacher, I am also a mother and a wife.” As a person grows older, her experiences play a larger role in her self-identity, and in some respects, the person’s experiences become her identity. If those experiences are not acknowledged in a learning situation, the person may feel rejected.

So, our response should be:

Carry out programs that draw on participants’ experiences.

If at all possible, before the training begins, we should find out about the participants’ experience with the topics they will work on during the training. Then, as the training progresses, we try to give everyone an opportunity to share their knowledge of the subject. This helps learners to see that their experience is respected, and it also helps the facilitator know at what level to begin introducing new information.

During the training, we should give learners the opportunity to draw on each other’s experiences and skills through participatory, peer-to-peer techniques that allow them to teach one another and learn together. Participants practice new skills and solve problems together and then decide how to apply what they have learned to real-life settings.

By using participatory approaches to tap into the experiences of as many learners as possible, we signal respect for the participants. By having learners work together to solve problems, we help develop a safe learning environment that shows mutual respect for everyone’s experiences and can lead to solutions that are more effective than if individuals work alone.
Learning Theory Says:

People have different “intelligences” or ways of learning. Howard Gardner developed this idea, which is known as multiple intelligences theory. Gardner proposes eight intelligences. They are:

Linguistic intelligence: Being “word smart” means that a person is sensitive to spoken and written language, has the ability to learn languages, and the capacity to use language to accomplish goals. Examples: Writers, poets, lawyers and public speakers.

Logical-mathematical intelligence: Being “numbers and reasoning smart” means that a person has the capacity to analyze problems logically, carry out mathematical operations, and investigate issues scientifically. Examples: Scientists, computer programmers and mathematicians.

Musical intelligence: “Music smart” people have the capacity to use skills in performing, composing and appreciating music. Examples: Musicians, music teachers and deejays.

Bodily-kinesthetic intelligence: People with “body smarts” have the ability to use the whole body or parts of the body to solve problems. Examples: Athletes, dancers and construction workers.

Spatial intelligence: This refers to the ability to represent the spatial world through lines, shapes, color and light. Examples: Painters, chess players, sculptors and other artists; sailors and airplane pilots.

Interpersonal intelligence: “People smart” means that a person has the ability to understand other people, and to work effectively with others. Examples: Educators, salespeople, religious and political leaders and counselors.

Intrapersonal intelligence: “Self-smart” people are capable of reflection and understanding oneself, appreciating one’s own feelings, fears and motivations. Examples: Therapists, poets and ministers.

Naturalist intelligence: “Nature-smart” is the ability to discriminate among living things (plants, animals) as well as sensitivity to other features of the natural world (clouds, rock configurations). Examples: Farmers, gardeners, chefs and florists.
So, our response should be:

**Carry out programs that draw on as many different intelligences as possible.**

The theory of multiple intelligences suggests several ways in which we can develop trainings that draw on participants’ experiences and their “learning styles”. For example, if the training is about how the virus that causes AIDS is spread, the facilitator might have learners read about it (linguistic), calculate the prevalence of the disease in a population (logical-mathematical), study charts and maps that show how it has spread over a geographic area (spatial), show how the virus affects families and communities (interpersonal), examine how the virus affects the body (bodily-kinesthetic and intrapersonal), write a song or choreograph a dance that demonstrates how to reduce the stigma associated with HIV (musical and bodily-kinesthetic).

In this way, the facilitator is giving as many learners as possible a way to engage with the content, helping them to master new information in a way that builds confidence in their ability to learn, make decisions and solve problems.
Learning Theory Says:
Confidence is a key factor in determining whether people will bring about significant change in their lives.

Albert Bandura coined the term “self-efficacy,” stating that self-efficacy is a person’s judgment about how capable he is to successfully carry out a task. Bandura argues that you can compare two people with the same intellectual ability, and if one person has more confidence in his ability to complete the task he will perform better at that task.

Bruce Tuckman adds to the idea of self-efficacy. He states that learning programs can help motivate people to make changes when those programs help them build confidence and trust in their own abilities and when the programs use teaching approaches that help participants set learning goals and monitor their own progress.

So, our response should be:
Ensure that the training builds people’s confidence in their abilities to solve problems and make decisions.

We should structure training programs so that each step builds on the previous step, increasing confidence by ensuring the learner that there is logic and a sequence to the learning. We also need to pace the training so that people can learn in manageable chunks: not too much, not too fast, and not so slow as to be condescending.

We can help to build confidence by choosing an approach in which learners set their own learning goals and observe their own progress. While the facilitator has a range of techniques from which to choose (from didactic to interactive to participatory), the more the learner can actively participate in the learning process the better. Being able to see progress, critique oneself and receive honest feedback from the facilitator and peers is critical for building confidence and increasing motivation.

Carrying out the training in a respectful, safe environment helps learners to develop confidence in their skills and ability to learn. So, we should make sure that there are clear ground rules for how everyone will conduct themselves during the training. These norms should be generated by the participants themselves, and it should be clear that everyone in the training is responsible for helping to maintain a considerate, comfortable environment for learning.
The Experiential Learning Cycle brings together the principles outlined by Erik Erikson, Malcolm Knowles, Lyra Srinavasan, Paolo Freire and many others. Most training designers use the cycle to design individual training sessions, good designers use it to develop entire training programs, and great designers use it to design entire development programs. By using it deliberately and consistently, we can help people develop the skills, knowledge and attitudes that will lead to continuous learning and lifelong change.
The first step in the Experiential Learning Cycle (Learning Cycle) is to **find out what participants already know and do** about a problem that has an impact on their lives. This ensures that the training addresses problems that are specific to the lives of the participants. “Finding out” (or “assessing”) should begin before the program starts so that, by the time the participants arrive, you have identified the major problems that the participants will address in the training.

Taking the time to find out what participants already know and do has several benefits. It saves precious time because you will not repeat content that the learners already know or backtrack to introduce information that you assumed they already knew. And, when you use participants’ experiences as a point of departure for introducing new information, you build the trusting and respectful atmosphere that is so necessary for learning.

In the next stage of the cycle, you provide new information or introduce new skills. This step **builds on what participants know and do**, and is the stage where they learn the majority of the new content. After you have introduced new information, make sure to **clarify content and concepts** in case there are any misunderstandings. This will help everyone move forward with the correct ideas in mind.

Structuring the program so that participants have opportunities to **practice the new knowledge or skills** helps learners to master them. Practicing helps to build confidence, and helps you and the learners see the progress that they are making. Giving learners the chance to experiment with new attitudes, skills and knowledge in a controlled setting helps them build the confidence to risk **applying** new skills and knowledge once they return to the “real world”.

Paulo Freire, the Brazilian educationalist, has left a significant mark on thinking about progressive educational practice. He was a very strong advocate of **reflection**. One of his basic premises was that without reflection there can be no action. If learners are not given the time, space and structure to think critically about what they have been learning, to figure out if it is important to them to continue learning, and to imagine how they will use what they have learned, then they will be much less likely to take
action that will lead to change. As the Learning Cycle indicates, good programs include ample time and ways for learners to reflect on what they have achieved and what they still need to work on, and then to decide on what course of action to take.

People often notice that evaluation is not mentioned in this cycle. One way of thinking about it is that the entire cycle is an evaluation cycle. When used in conjunction with participant-centered techniques, every step along the way gives both the learners and the facilitator opportunities to see the progress that is being made and to make adjustments accordingly. Helping learners see the progress they are making is key to motivating them to engage and make decisions about how to close the gap between what they know and what they need to know. The Learning Cycle indicates places where the facilitator takes time to clarify concepts and give learners the opportunity to reflect on practice. These are both deliberate evaluation steps and help to make sure that participants and the program are on the right path.

As learners reflect on action and consider their next steps, they are taking an important learning step. When a person begins to use skills and knowledge in new ways and to think of different ways to apply them, she has become a lifelong learner, repeating this cycle over and over again as she makes changes in her life.

**NOTES FROM THE FIELD:**

*I am a medical doctor based at a major teaching hospital in Islamabad, Pakistan. I attended a Training of Trainers that used participatory learning techniques to teach us about how to become better midwives and to train other midwives. I learned a lot of things – about how important it is to listen to the voice of the women with whom we are working, and about the need to reflect on what we learn so that we can become better. This is what I wrote in my evaluation: “I will make my lesson plans in such a way that I assure maximum participation of each member of the group by using the jigsaw technique, small group work, sometimes large groups, role plays, simulations and demonstrations. I will assess my lesson plans from time to time through reflection with facilitators, participants and my own team members. Through this method we can make changes accordingly.” For me this was a very important thing to learn.*
Notes from the Field:

Three of the medical doctors in a training of trainers group really struggled with the desire to have less educated colleagues “do well” versus allowing them to participate and truly contribute their ideas. The impulse to “push them” and to “tell them what to do” was very strong. Two of them seemed to make good progress in that direction; to the very end, one still struggled with the idea of encouraging participation. In theory she knew it was a good thing to do, but in practice it was a difficult attitude to change. She said that a turning point for her was when she decided to use participatory techniques on her children at home, and instead of yelling at them and telling them what they should be doing, she asked them what they wanted to do. She said that the atmosphere at home improved almost immediately. Instead of shouting at the dinner table, they began to discuss things. That is what changed her attitude about how to work with colleagues in the training program.
Participant-centered training techniques are the tools that bring the Experiential Learning Cycle to life. They are called participant-centered because they help learners make changes by focusing on problems and situations taken from their own lives (or as close to their lives as possible). Choose them well and they can help you and the participants set learning goals, monitor progress and decide what else needs to be learned.

This section leads off with guidance on Choosing Techniques, including the importance of writing good learning objectives. Then the Experiential Learning Cycle reminds us that almost all techniques can be used in every stage of the Cycle and gives suggestions for how to do that. The next section, Techniques from the Field, brings together descriptions of seventeen commonly used techniques, their advantages and disadvantages, guidance on how to use them and things to consider when working with them. Some techniques also include Variations on a Theme, or ways to make modifications to keep the technique interesting for you and your participants.

Experiment with the techniques: use them at different stages in the Experiential Learning Cycle and try some of the variations. Use them with adults, youth, children, doctors, health workers, midwives, farmers, engineers, homemakers and factory workers. As Paolo Freire wrote, “Knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiries human beings pursue in the world, with the world and with each other.”6
Choosing Techniques

Know your participants and how they will use new skills and knowledge.

What do you know about how participants will use the skills and knowledge that they learn in your training? Have you visited their workplace or community? What do you know about their current level of skills and knowledge? Do you have some idea about their interests? What will motivate them to participate and then apply what they’ve learned to their own situations?

What do you know about educational levels and how well participants read and write? How about their social backgrounds?

If you have seen the environments in which learners will use the skills and knowledge they get from your program, you can design real-life scenarios for case studies, simulations, role plays, critical incidents and other participant-centered techniques. These will give them the opportunity to work on decision-making and problem-solving skills and help build confidence that they need to be able to use their new skills and ideas once they’re back at work in their communities.

Role plays, oral case studies, field visits, small group work, videos and discussions work well with pre-literate learners. Highly literate people can use written case studies without any problem, and even they learn well through interacting with peers during field visits and jigsaws.

Having people of different social backgrounds and classes in the training can influence how they interact with one another. To establish a safe learning environment, the facilitator has to pay attention to these dynamics, even if she is from the same background as the participants. Working in small groups helps to break down barriers, especially if you take a few open-minded participants aside and ask them to help bridge the gaps among people. They can help win over their peers and reduce resistance to working with people of different social backgrounds.
**Know your resources.**

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<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
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<tr>
<td>How much time do you have to carry out the activity and to discuss its results?</td>
<td>The 1:2 rule helps when deciding how much time a technique will take. For every minute that it takes to carry out an activity, schedule two minutes for discussion. For example, if a brainstorm takes five minutes, allocate ten minutes to discuss it. Similarly, if a case study requires 20 minutes to complete, schedule 40 minutes to discuss its results. While it’s not always practical to schedule this much time, keep the rule in mind when choosing a technique.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How much time do you have to prepare?</td>
<td>Some techniques take a long time to prepare. For example, simulations and field visits require a lot of attention to logistics, but can be absolutely the right techniques for the situation if preparation time is available.</td>
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<tr>
<td>What other resources are available? (Resources include everything that goes into making the learning program a success: people, money, materials, space, etc.)</td>
<td>Sometimes you team up with others to plan and facilitate trainings. Do you all have the necessary skills or will this be a “learning by doing” activity? If so, allow more time for learning together.</td>
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<td>If your budget doesn’t allow for elaborate equipment or materials, keep it simple. No film? Use a role play. In many cases participants are expected to train their colleagues when they return home. The more your training can reflect the resources they will find there, the easier it will be to train their peers. If you can, choose techniques that they will find easy to use.</td>
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<td>Space is important. Is there ample room to accommodate the group for a fishbowl? Can everyone move around for small group work? Will people have tables or desks if they need to write? If field visits are planned, how far is the “field”? How does that affect the budget and timing, especially if transportation is required?</td>
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Write Learning Objectives:

Once you know about your participants, how they will apply what they learn in the training and what resources you have available, it’s time to write learning objectives. A well-written learning objective is a key component to choosing techniques and evaluating learning.

Learning objectives help you:

- Focus on the most critical content to be covered and help learners focus their efforts on what needs to be learned.
- Prepare the content and lesson plans, choose techniques and materials, and decide on ways to assess and evaluate learning.
- Evaluate whether learning has occurred.

Objectives are written so that everyone knows what the participants will be able to do by the end of a given amount of time. In fact, learning objectives hold both the facilitator and the learner responsible for what the learner will have accomplished by the end of the program. They say, “By the end of this training, each participant will be able to demonstrate this new skill or use this new piece of knowledge”.

Learning objectives are SMART and participant-centered.

Specific – Good learning objectives specify the exact skills and knowledge that will be worked on during the learning program. They can also help set the standards for learning, so that the quality of the learning is explicitly stated. This helps the participants and you to identify progress and to make adjustments they need to.

Measurable – Good objectives help the learners and you know when learning goals have been achieved. Everyone should be able to verify that a skill has been learned or that critical knowledge has been gained.

Achievable – Good learning objectives help ensure that the training is not trying to do too much at one time and that the subject is broken down into the most critical chunks of information. If it is not critical, it may have to wait until a later date to be covered.

Relevant – Learning theory says that it is important for learners to know that the content they are addressing will help them solve problems that get in the way of improving their lives or work. Good learning objectives focus on such a problem, making learning relevant to participants and motivating them to take part.

Time-bound – Good learning objectives specify the amount of time needed for learning to take place.
Many people ask, “What is the best technique to use for finding out what people already know and do?” Or, “What is the best technique to introduce new information?” I think you can use almost any technique at any stage in the Experiential Learning Cycle. You just need to know your participants, know your resources and have clear learning objectives. The following pages give you some ideas for ways to use common techniques for different purposes. This keeps learning fresh for you and your participants!
The Learning Cycle says:

Find out what participants already know and do.

Brainstorming is often used as a way of finding out what learners know and do. While it is a good technique for getting a sense of what some people in the group know, brainstorming is not ideal for probing individual knowledge, experience or attitudes. Consider other techniques and tools as a way of assessing learners’ understanding of the topic before introducing new information.

You can use various techniques to assess what learners know about a situation and then introduce new information on the topic. Once you’ve added new information, return to the same technique and scenario to see if participants respond differently given their new information. “Let’s go back to our case study...”

So, try using these:

Critical incident: To find out how participants might respond to a situation, give them a critical incident and ask them to answer the question, “What would you do in this situation?” This gives you an idea about how the participants think about the problem and gives them a chance to work on critical thinking skills.

Case study: Longer than a critical incident, you can explore more about what participants would do in a given situation or what they know about it.

Role play: Ask volunteers from among the participants to act out a situation. This will show you (and them) what they know about it.

Demonstration: Typically, the facilitator demonstrates and then has the learners practice by demonstrating the same skill. Try reversing the sequence: have a volunteer or two demonstrate a skill so that you can see where you need to start your own demonstration.

Simulation: Takes time to prepare, but a simulation is an excellent way of assessing levels of knowledge and skills in managing complex situations. For example, seeing how people respond to entering a new culture, how they coordinate complicated tasks, or how they manage the dynamics of a meeting can give excellent clues about participants’ level of knowledge and skills.
The Learning Cycle says:

Build on what participants know and do and, because it is important to make sure that participants leave with accurate understanding about the new content, take time to clarify content and concepts.

Lectures, or their shortened version called “lecturettes”, are often the method used to “impart knowledge”. Even when they are as interactive as possible and involve learners by asking questions and using visual aids, you cannot assume that participants understood the concepts in your lecture. Other techniques provide ways to build on participants’ knowledge and skills and then help clarify concepts.

So, try using these:

Demonstration: Demonstrate the steps in a process, then ask participants to demonstrate the same process. They can practice with one another (in pairs or triads) while you circulate among them to see if there are any corrections that you need to make. Alternatively one or two volunteers can demonstrate the same process for the whole group. Bring everyone back together in plenary to discuss any confusion or clarifications.

Panel discussion: Bring in “experts” on a subject to talk to learners about their experience with the topic.

Films or videos: Showing films or videos is an excellent way to bring issues and people to life. In addition, by viewing the film together, the participants have a common scenario to discuss.

Fishbowl: Another way of demonstrating a skill or process, but with the added value of learners being charged with observing a process for certain key points. This helps them to begin to analyze the process even as they watch.

Field visit: A great way for learners to see first-hand what a real life situation looks and feels like. Field visits are an excellent way to introduce participants from one country to the situation in another country or from one “level” of learning to another.
The Learning Cycle says:

**Practice new knowledge or skills.** Help learners build confidence in their ability to actually apply skills and knowledge once they return to the “real world”.

So, try using these:

**Case studies and critical incidents:** Give the opportunity to see how they would use new knowledge in a given situation.

**Fishbowls:** Allow some learners to practice skills while others observe. Follow the fishbowl with a structured feedback session that allows everyone to reflect on the skills and knowledge practiced during the fishbowl.

**Practicing:** Putting participants in pairs or in triads to practice is a good way to help them use a new skill and to get feedback from a peer about how well the practice was carried out. This is a good opportunity to practice feedback skills, too.

**Jigsaw:** This technique is a fun and fairly quick way of getting participants to learn new skills or information and then use those skills to teach their peers the same.

**Clinical or field practice:** The daily training structure can include on-site practice in real situations if facilities are nearby and administrators are amenable. Must be followed by a debriefing session to allow participants the chance to reflect on their practice and to clarify any questions that may have arisen. This is a good way for health practitioners or teachers to learn new skills, then practice and reflect on them.

Demonstrations are obvious techniques for giving learners the opportunity to practice new skills, but there are others, too.
The Learning Cycle says:
Be deliberate about always giving participants the opportunity to **reflect on practice** and think about how to **apply** it to one’s work or life.

There are many ideas for helping participants **reflect** on the lessons that they’ve learned and think about how to use them in their own lives.

**So, try using these:**

**Debriefing:** Gives participants a chance to reflect on what they have seen, heard and felt and to begin to apply it to the work at hand. Debriefing should be carried out as soon as possible after a field visit, a simulation or other intense activity is completed.

**Guided Imagery:** This quietly effective technique helps to focus everyone on the topic under discussion and can help people see how their understanding of a situation has changed over time. (See Evaluation Tools for a description.)

**Journal Entries:** A good way for individuals to think about what they have learned during the day and to set their own learning goals. Journals are usually private, although they can be shared with the facilitator and other learners if that is agreed upon before journaling begins. (See Evaluation Tools for a description.)

**Artwork:** In a private journal or in a public space, learners can draw or paint or build something that reflects how they are feeling about a topic or what they learned about a situation.

**Storytelling:** Participants can write or tell a short story about the day’s events. One way to begin it is by asking them to complete a sentence such as, “This morning when I woke up, I never thought that I would…”

**Some questions to guide reflection:**
- What one or two ideas came from today?
- How can I use those ideas in my work?
- What more do I need to learn about this topic and how can I do that?
Using Techniques

Generally, you will follow four steps to carry out participant-centered techniques. You will explain the activity, carry it out, discuss it, and then help participants apply it outside of the training. The following are some tips for carrying out those four steps.

**Explain the task.** Participants will be more productive if they have very clear instructions to follow. Explain the objective(s) of the activity. Make sure that everyone is clear about the purpose of the activity and the results that you expect from it. When you plan the activity, write out the following in their Participant Manual or on a flip chart:

- **Give specific instructions.** If there is a question they should answer, write out the question in clear language.
- **Give the length of time** the participants have for the activity.
- **Instruct the group** on how they should present the results of their work. Do you want them to write on a flip chart? Report orally? Write on a transparency? Should they list as many answers as they can or just three or four?
- **Ask them to organize themselves** for lengthy assignments in small groups. They should pick a member to fill each of these roles:
  - **Facilitator:** Responsible for managing the discussion, keeping the small group on task, managing time and making sure that everyone has a chance to speak.
  - **Recorder:** Responsible for writing down the results of the group’s discussion.
  - **Reporter:** Responsible for presenting the small group’s work to colleagues.

**Giving Instructions**

1. Purpose
2. Overview
3. Check for Clarity
4. Specific Instructions
5. Check for Clarity
6. Timing
7. Check for Clarity
8. Individual Assignments
9. “Any Questions?”
10. “Be back at 3:30”
Carrying out the activity: If you are not actively engaged in the exercise, make yourself available to answer questions and clarify any confusion. Occasionally announce how much time is remaining to work on the activity. If you are actively engaged, make sure you are clear about the objectives, procedure and the content, and keep participants focused on the task.

You will often use techniques that require participants to work together. Once they are finished, their work must be discussed and used. This helps them to see that their input is respected and that the answers that they come up with can help others solve problems.

Reporting back: Reporting back can be time-consuming and repetitive if you use the same method all of the time (or if you have several groups that report back all of their responses to every question!) Use some of the following ideas to break up the routine, but allow time to clarify any questions, make sure that information has been accurately conveyed, and ensure that the objectives for the activity have been reached.

One at a time, please: Ask each group to report their answers to only one of the questions. Then invite others to add new ideas that were not stated yet.

Add something new, please: Ask each group to pick only 2 or 3 of their responses to report back, with each group having to add something that has not been said before.

Modified buzz session: Ask one small group to report to another group, pairing off all the groups. Then come back to plenary and ask the joined groups to report only the answers they had in common to the full class. (Allow time at the end of this process to find out if there were any wildly different responses that participants think are important to share. Important learning often comes out of different points of view.)
This section contains definitions of several techniques that help make your training more participant-centered. The techniques are formatted so that you can make handouts from the definitions, advantages and disadvantages, and “How to Conduct” sections. That is why they use the more formal “facilitator” instead of “you”. Tips are things to consider when you carry out the techniques and Variations on a Theme are ways to modify the technique for different situations. Happy experimenting!

- Brainstorm
- Buzz Groups
- Case Study
- Critical Incident
- Debrief
- Demonstration
- Field Visits
- Fishbowl
- Gallery Walk
- Games

- Icebreakers & Energizers
- Jigsaw
- Lecturette
- Panel Discussion
- Plenary Discussion
- Role Play
- Simulation
- Small Groups
- Videos or Films
**Brainstorm**

Brainstorming encourages active and imaginative input from participants and taps the knowledge and expertise of the participants. It is a technique that helps to generate ideas or a variety of solutions to a problem and can increase the range of factors taken into account in reaching a decision. Brainstorming is generally used to help introduce or direct a topic. It is best used with groups of between five and 20 participants.

The facilitator’s role is to encourage all participants to say the first thing that comes to their minds and to keep ideas flowing quickly. The facilitator also encourages the “safety” of participants by ensuring that no one reacts to the ideas, just offers them. When there are no more ideas to offer, the facilitator leads a discussion of the results of the brainstorm.

**Advantages:** It promotes creativity in finding solutions to problems. The brainstorm works because many people can be shy about putting forward their ideas and in a brainstorm all ideas are accepted. The group is not permitted to analyze an idea before everyone has expressed their suggestions. This can help participants to become less inhibited.

The speed at which a brainstorm is conducted can help to produce ideas. Someone may have a “silly” idea, but others may use it to stimulate their own thinking.

**Disadvantages:** Brainstorms can be overused as a technique for finding out what participants already know about a topic. Another disadvantage is that sometimes facilitators will conduct a brainstorm and then move on to another activity that is not connected to it. Unless the results of the brainstorm are used in further discussion at some point in the program, participants will wonder why they wasted their time to generate ideas.
**How to Conduct a Brainstorm:**

**Stage 1:** Define the Problem

All members of the group must be in agreement about the kinds of ideas that they are trying to produce. Examples of problems might be:

- What are the advantages (or disadvantages) of a piped water supply in a village?
- What might encourage a man to use a condom?

**Stage 2:** Conduct the Brainstorm

The facilitator asks for suggestions or ideas in response to the focus question. She records these on a board or flip chart or overhead projector as quickly as possible. At this stage, *no idea is rejected and no discussion or clarification of any kind is permitted.*

The facilitator makes sure that anyone who wants to contribute ideas has the opportunity to do so until all ideas have been exhausted.

**Stage 3:** Discuss the Brainstorm

The facilitator reviews each of the suggestions so that everyone understands what each one means. This is necessary because sometimes a complex idea is written with only one word.

The group makes a decision to keep the suggestion on the list for future discussion or to discard it. The aim is not to decide whether the idea is good or not, simply to decide whether it is worth discussing. Sometimes items on the list can be deleted simply because the same idea appears more than once.

Depending on the objectives of the brainstorm, the facilitator helps participants to analyze their responses. Usually this means clustering or categorizing responses so that they are easier to “see” and then deciding which ideas to pursue.

**Stage 4:** Make the Transition to the Next Activity

As the facilitator moves to the next activity, she mentions how the group will make use of the results of their brainstorm, and then refers to the brainstorm during subsequent activities when relevant.
Tips:

Analyzing ideas before they are all on the paper can kill participants’ creativity. So, resist the temptation to analyze before everyone has had their say. Before you begin the brainstorm, explain that you will stop any analysis until all ideas are recorded.

Make sure to use the results of the brainstorm. If you ask a question and take the time to record responses, use those responses in a later activity. To show participants that you are listening to what they say, and that you value their input, specifically refer to suggestions made during the brainstorm.

It is difficult to listen to participants’ responses and to record them at the same time. If possible, have a co-facilitator or a volunteer record responses.
Variations on a Theme:

Small Group Brainstorm
Have small groups conduct their own brainstorm, write their responses on cards and then post them where everyone can see them. Then do a “gallery walk (see page 64)” so that everyone can see all the ideas.

Silent Brainstorm
If you have people for whom reading and writing is not a problem, you may want to try this variation. Everyone silently writes ideas in response to a question and then shares them with everyone else in the group so that everyone gets to add their ideas to everyone else’s.

Stage 1: Present a “Problem Situation.” For example:
“We have recognized that the village needs a piped water supply. We also recognize that the village leaders are resisting the idea. What can we do to improve the village’s chances for a piped water supply?”

Stage 2: Conduct the Brainstorm
Divide participants into groups of five or six. Distribute a Brainstorm Matrix (see sample matrix on page 34) to each participant and give them the following instructions:

“Write down three ideas, one in each column of the matrix. Do this without speaking to one another. In each round you will have about five minutes to think and write down your ideas. Please write your ideas as full statements so that when other people read them, they are likely to understand what you mean. Then hand the list to the person on your left who will read your three ideas and use this as a stimulus to write three more ideas. The ideas might expand on the ideas already written, reframe ideas already written, or be entirely new ideas. After five minutes, pass the paper you have in front of you to the person on your left.”

This process is followed until everyone has read and written on every paper. (45 minutes)
### BRAINSTORM

**Stage 3:** Review the Brainstorm

After the group has finished the six rounds, ask them to “crystallize” the ideas or themes that have emerged from the brainstorm. (15 minutes)

Instruct them to put their themes on cards in relatively complete sentences so that others can refer to them and know what they mean.

Have the participants post their cards on a wall where they are accessible to everyone. Conduct a “gallery walk” (see page 64) so that everyone can see each group’s ideas or themes. Alternatively, ask the groups to write their points on the board or on a flip chart and then to present the ideas generated in the brainstorm.

**Stage 4:** Discuss the Brainstorm

The themes or ideas that resulted from the silent brainstorm are the starting point for analysis and discussion.

#### BRAINSTORM MATRIX

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Round 1</th>
<th>Idea #1</th>
<th>Idea #2</th>
<th>Idea #3</th>
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<td>Round 2</td>
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<td>Round 6</td>
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</table>
The term “brainstorm” can be hard to translate. In Spanish, “rain of ideas” (lluvia de ideas) works well. In at least one language, brainstorm may not be so pleasant. For instance, an Arabic-speaking participant said that the word sounded like someone was taking her brain and “wringing it out”. Chinese participants laughed when a translator introduced the idea of a brainstorm. “There’s no room in the brain for a storm!” they said. The translator found that “free flow of ideas” worked well. Make sure the idea behind brainstorm translates into the language you’re using.
**Buzz Sessions**

Buzz sessions help to develop decision-making skills. The technique starts with small groups of people that join together and get larger and larger to work on a common problem. It is called a buzz session because as the groups get larger, the “buzz” in the room gets louder. At the end of the session, the facilitator listens to and reviews the conclusions and rationale used by participants and helps the group come to consensus (if appropriate).

**Advantages:** This technique gives everyone a chance to think about what he would do in a given situation. This means that everyone has to come to a decision before engaging in conversation with others, a practice that helps decision-making skills. It also strengthens group work, as the participants move relatively quickly from one partner to more partners to a larger group.

**Disadvantages:** The facilitator is not part of all of the discussions that are taking place, so it is important to circulate among all of the groups to listen to their discussions to prepare for the final review. Also, if the group is large this technique can take a lot of time.
How to Conduct a Buzz Session:

**Stage 1:** Start with a clear statement of the situation and instructions for how to carry out the buzz session. It may be helpful to diagram the session with circles representing participants (*see below*).

**Stage 2:** A few minutes (5-10) is allowed for everybody to think individually about the situation. Individuals are shown as separate circles.

**Stage 3:** The individuals form pairs and combine their ideas. They identify where they have the same idea, where there are new ideas and possibly where some ideas should be rejected. It helps to ask participants to write these ideas down.

**Stage 4:** The pairs now join to form larger groups. The facilitator may change the task at this stage to ask the groups to begin to develop responses to this situation.

**Stage 5:** In the final stage, the facilitator can ask for presentations from each of the two remaining groups to draw out the range of responses and the arguments that are used to justify decisions that they would make.
**BUZZ SESSIONS**

**Variation on a Theme:**

During the last stage of the buzz session, you may ask for the two remaining teams to debate their decisions, giving the advantages and disadvantages of each.
In colder parts of the world, this technique is referred to as the “snowball” technique because the group sizes get larger and larger as the activity progresses, just like a snowball grows as it rolls down a hill. In some places where people have never seen snow that idea is hard to understand; that’s why it is called the buzz session here.
Case Study

Case studies encourage participants to analyze situations they might encounter and determine how they would respond. A case study is basically a story that illustrates an event and is followed by questions for participants to discuss. Case studies are particularly effective when they illustrate problems that are similar to the ones that participants face. The case study activity should be structured to allow learners enough time to read, think and discuss.

Advantages: Case studies can present a great deal of information that participants refer to as they discuss and answer questions. Using them provides a way to discover how participants feel about a topic and what skills they would use to respond to a situation. Based on their responses, the facilitator can then add new information. Case studies can also be used to give participants an opportunity to practice new skills or apply newly-learned knowledge.

When carried out in small groups, they give participants who might not otherwise speak in large groups opportunities to voice their opinions and ideas.

Disadvantages: Written case studies can be difficult for participants with low levels of literacy. Therefore, the facilitator needs to find different ways to present the case study information. Case studies take time to read, analyze, respond to and discuss.
How to Use a Case Study:

**Stage 1: Prepare Case Study**

Before the training, the facilitator writes or obtains a case study that focuses on the topic to be addressed, develops focus questions and decides how to use the case study.

**Stage 2: Introduce the Case Study**

The facilitator introduces the objectives for the exercise, gives instructions on how to complete it (individually, in small groups, etc.) and clarifies questions.

**Stage 3: Participants Complete Case Study**

Participants read the case study, then answer a set of questions about the case with the objective of analyzing the situation and solving problems related to it. The facilitator is available to answer questions and to help monitor time.

**Stage 4: Discuss Case Study**

The facilitator leads a discussion on possible ways to solve the problem presented in the case or different actions that participants could take.
CASE STUDY

Tips:
If a case study is long, assign it for reading before the session begins.
If you didn’t write the case study yourself, read it and make sure you can answer all of the questions yourself before presenting it to others.

Variations on a Theme:
Case studies can be used in many different ways. For example:

Oral Case Studies
If you are working with a group of people whose reading skills are not very strong, read (or have a volunteer read) the case study aloud. Write key points on a board or flip chart or have others read along in their manuals.

Visual Case Studies
If you have slides, pictures or a video that illustrate the case you are working on, this can increase the participants’ interest in the situation, convey a lot of information that cannot be conveyed simply in a written case study, and can provide much needed information for participants with lower levels of literacy. Consider using pictures as a way of conveying the information in a case study, and then ask participants to answer questions about the situation that is illustrated.

Serial Case Study
You can use the same scenario several times during different sessions of a training, adding new information and asking additional questions each time you use it. Serial case studies give participants the opportunity to use new information to strengthen their decision-making and problem-solving skills.
For a three-day training of district health managers in Pakistan, we were asked to teach participants how to use health data to inform their management decisions. A serial case study allowed us to take them through the decision-making process step by step. We wrote a scenario about a fictional district that wanted to improve its antenatal and maternal care services. Then we designed a sequence of case study activities based on this scenario.

In small groups, participants started by reviewing data and formulating management questions about the scenario – for example, “Which health facilities have the poorest antenatal care coverage in this district?” They returned to their groups during subsequent sessions to work through the stages of decision-making: analyzing the health data to answer their questions, drawing charts, displaying the results of analysis, and planning how to act on their findings. Interspersed with the case study segments were lectures and discussions introducing concepts, such as how to graph different kinds of data or set performance targets.

The serial design allowed us to break down a complex decision-making process into manageable parts. By using the results of each case study segment to carry out the next activity, participants could see how each stage of the process built on the next. The serial case also kept things simple and focused on the essentials, since participants did not have to absorb a new scenario and dataset for each group work.
**Critical Incident**

A critical incident is a special type of case study. It is shorter, focused on a specific problem and followed by a single question posed to the participants such as, “What would you do in this situation?” It focuses attention on alternative solutions and viewpoints to approach a problem and helps strengthen decision-making skills. It can be written or it can be a short oral scenario followed by a focus question.

**Advantages:** It encourages participants to identify different behaviors and solutions to situations and problems they might experience in real life. Critical incidents take minimal preparation, little time to carry out and can stimulate a lot of discussion.

**Disadvantages:** When used correctly, there are few disadvantages to a critical incident. While it takes little time to read a critical incident, the facilitator needs to ensure there is enough time to discuss the participants’ responses.
How to Use a Critical Incident:

**Stage 1: Prepare Critical Incident**

The facilitator thinks of a critical incident on the topic that learners are addressing. She develops a focus question that will stimulate thinking about how they would respond to the situation. For example:

- You are a farmer who is told by your bank that you will not be able to take out more loans unless you buy a certain pesticide. You know the pesticide is harmful to your family’s health. How would you respond?

**Stage 2: Read the Critical Incident**

The facilitator introduces the incident by asking participants to listen carefully to the statement and to consider how they would respond to that situation.

After reading the statement, the facilitator asks the participants to consider how they would respond by posing a question like, “What would you do in this situation?”

**Stage 3: Discuss the Participants’ Responses**

The facilitator leads a discussion to analyze responses and to help participants decide the most appropriate responses to the situation.

**Tips:**

Use a critical incident in either a large group setting, or divide participants into smaller groups to work on their responses.

Critical incidents are short, so they don’t require much memorization. However, it can be useful to write it on a board or an overhead projector for participants to refer to as they respond.
Critical Incident

Variations on a Theme:

Complete the Sentence
Critical incidents can be posed as “complete the sentence” exercises. Read the critical incident statement, and then ask participants to write their responses to a question. “If I were in that situation, I would ...”

Idea Balloon
This is the same idea as a “complete the sentence” exercise except that the participant writes his response in an “idea balloon”.

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**Notes from the Field:**

In Thailand and the Philippines we used critical incidents in our cultural orientation programs. The refugees who were being resettled to the United States came from Cambodia and Laos, and we spent a lot of time working on problem-solving and decision making skills. Critical incidents were good for that – they are short, you can read them aloud so people don’t have to be literate, and they can help bring to light many things that we wouldn’t have thought of before.

For most of the people in our program, negotiating a supermarket would be a new (and foreign!) experience. So, we developed incidents based on shopping in a supermarket. For example:

“A woman opens a box of oats in the store and the store manager yells at her. What should she do?”

“A man needs to write something on his shopping list. He does not have a pen, so he takes one from the stationery display, opens the packet and begins to write. The manager sees him and accuses him of stealing. What should the man do?”

We also used situations we called “dilemmas” to find out more about people’s values and beliefs. For example, we read incidents and then asked people to work together to decide how they would respond. Here are two of the incidents we used:

**Lifeboat:** A ship sinks. Eight people are “safe” in a lifeboat (a doctor, a ship’s captain, an injured nurse, a small child, an elderly woman, a fisherman, an Olympic swimmer, the Queen.) The lifeboat can only hold five people. Which five should stay in the lifeboat?

**Time Capsule:** You must prepare a time capsule to be opened in 100 years. You want to clearly represent life today. What 10 items would you put in the time capsule?
Debriefing is very important to the learning process, especially after learners have gone through a particularly complicated activity such as a field visit or simulation. When participants have engaged in a complex learning activity, they have gathered a lot of information and impressions and need a chance to clarify questions, differentiate between facts and impressions, and reflect on what the experience has meant for them. Debriefing should be carried out as soon as possible after the activity is complete.

**Advantages:** Debriefing gives participants a chance to reflect on what they have seen, heard and felt and to begin to apply it to the work at hand. This helps to solidify the lessons that participants have learned, and to develop concrete plans for applying their new knowledge.

**Disadvantages:** Sometimes it is not possible to meet immediately after an activity is complete. For example, after traveling to a field visit it might be necessary to leave immediately after the visit is over. Debriefing takes time, so this needs to be considered when planning the schedule for the program.
Debriefing

How to Conduct a Debrief Session:

**Stage 1:** Prepare for the Debrief Session

The facilitator arranges for a comfortable place to gather the group after the field visit, simulation or other activity. If possible and if a public record would be useful later in the program, she posts blank flip charts on the wall with focus questions written on them.

**Stage 2:** Lead the Debrief

The facilitator may conduct a debrief session by giving participants 10 – 15 minutes to individually write their observations in their notebooks or on a piece of paper and then to report their observations in a plenary discussion.

If participants worked in teams during the activity that is being debriefed, individuals can write their observations in notebooks and then meet with team members for 15 – 20 minutes to “crystallize” their observations and check with one another about things that they may not remember well. Together, they develop a joint list of major observations and thoughts about how to apply their learning.

**Stage 3:** Discuss Participants’ Observations

The facilitator leads a discussion focused on the participants’ key observations and reflections, making sure to touch on how they can apply learning from the field visit to the objectives of the training. Debriefing usually ends with a brief action plan for how the group will use lessons learned during the activity.
**Debriefing**

**Tips:**
If the debrief session cannot be carried out immediately after the activity, ask the participants to spend a few minutes writing their impressions in a journal or notebook. This will help keep their memories fresh for when you are able to carry out the debriefing session.

See *Field Visit Tips (on page 58)* for more suggestions on debriefing.
Debriefing

Notes from the Field:
I find the following process useful for debriefing. I use these questions to help me and the participants reflect on how they will apply lessons to their own situations.

What? What did you observe or experience?
- How did you feel during the experience?
- What did you observe? (Include what you saw, heard, smelt and touched)
- Check your observations: were they observations or judgments? (This question will help participants to see that their biases may color what they have seen or heard and turn their observations into opinions.)

So What? What learning happened?
- What critical incidents happened that led to an insight?
- What did you learn from the experience?
- What major concept or idea did you learn?
- What things does this relate to or remind you of?

Now What? What applications can be made to real life?
- How does this experience relate to real life?
- From your experience here, what behaviors and attitudes would you like to work on to improve your own situation?
Demonstration

A demonstration brings to life information that could be presented in a lecture, discussion or explanation. When a facilitator lectures on how to apply fertilizer, it may not be as effective as a visual demonstration of how to apply fertilizer because participants can see it first and then do it for themselves later. Demonstrations require that the facilitator is very familiar with both the content and the process of the skill being illustrated, as it must clearly and accurately convey the process and acceptable standards.

Depending on the objectives of the session, the demonstration can be conducted by the facilitator, the participants or both. If the objective is to have participants observe a particular skill or process, the facilitator carries out the demonstration. When the objective is for participants to show what they know about a topic or to practice a new skill, they carry it out.

Advantages: By observing a facilitator-led demonstration, participants can see how a skill or process is carried out. When participants carry out a demonstration, it has several advantages. It helps the facilitator see how well the person conducting the demonstration has mastered the skill or process. It helps the participants to gauge how well they have mastered the skill and, because people are more likely to remember a new skill when they actually practice it, demonstrations can help participants remember the skills that they are learning. It engages people who are hands-on learners.

Disadvantages: While this is a good technique for conveying information and showing how new skills are carried out, if only the facilitator conducts a demonstration it is still mainly a passive technique. To make it more interactive, facilitators should give focus questions before beginning the demonstration and lead discussion on those questions following the demonstration. To make the technique even more participatory, learners can be asked to demonstrate the same skill for themselves and the facilitator.
How to Conduct a Demonstration:

**Stage 1:** Prepare the Demonstration

The facilitator decides what to demonstrate and makes sure that all of the steps in the process are clearly outlined and materials prepared. If necessary, she can follow a prepared checklist. She rehearses the demonstration to ensure that she can complete the entire process in the time available.

**Stage 2:** Introduce the Demonstration

The facilitator explains the purpose of the demonstration. She gives focus points before beginning so that participants know the major points to watch during the demonstration. For example, if training about the safe use of fertilizers, a facilitator’s directions might include, “Please pay attention to the way I measure the fertilizer.”

**Stage 3:** Conduct the Demonstration

The facilitator then demonstrates the procedures or behavior, making sure that everyone can clearly see and hear the demonstration. If a checklist is available, the participants use it to make sure that all of the steps in the process are clearly and accurately followed.

**Stage 4:** Discuss the Demonstration

When the demonstration is complete, the facilitator asks discussion questions such as “What did you see? What happened? How did that make you feel?” At this stage, participants are encouraged to ask questions and engage in discussion.

**Stage 5:** Participants Practice Demonstration

If necessary, participants demonstrate the new skill, both for practice and to help evaluate how well the skill has been learned.
Demonstration

Tips:
Practice beforehand. This will help you make sure you have all the materials you need, and that you can confidently do what you would ask the participants to do in the time you have available.

Variations on a Theme:
To find out skill levels, ask a participant (or two) to demonstrate a skill before you introduce new information. Use their demonstration as a technique for finding out what they know about the topic so you can correct and clarify any mistakes they may make.

Or, ask the participants to write down the steps after seeing the demonstration. Then check to make sure that they have captured all of them.
NOTES FROM THE FIELD:

Using props, such as a small doll and an anatomical model of the pelvis covered in a simple cloth garment and a pillow with a face drawn on it, midwives in a training program in the Caucasus learned about the different positions that can be used to make a woman more comfortable during childbirth. Despite being qualified midwives, none of the participants felt confident to show mothers different positions, and the facilitator decided demonstrations were in order.

In the beginning, the midwives were noticeably quiet, concentrating hard and in some cases looking a little shocked and confused. Many had never considered that women can give birth in any other position than lying flat on their backs. As the demonstrations progressed, the noise levels began to rise as participants were actively engaged and began asking questions and asking if they could try.

First, the facilitator acted the part of the woman giving birth, sitting up in bed. After the demonstration, participants were asked to discuss how the demonstration differed from their usual practice. The demonstration was then performed again much more slowly, pointing out the issues raised by the participants and allowing time for questions and further explanations.

Then, after seeing the whole demonstration performed once more, again in real time, participants were divided into small groups and given the opportunity to do “return” practice with each other. They were supplied with a skills checklist so they could assess each other’s practice. As they conducted their own return demonstrations, they began to relax and, based on the noise levels and amount of laughter, were enjoying the opportunity to try out different ways of doing things.

In discussion, they said that they enjoyed using simple props and trying to make the environment real, because it made them more conscious about what they were doing. A number of the midwives commented that they felt they concentrated more on how they could perform certain tasks in a kind and considerate way with the client, rather than just learning by rote. They also said having a checklist to follow helped them remember the sequencing of the actions. The whole session became a hot topic for discussion and was scored highly on participants’ final evaluations.
Field Visit

Field visits allow participants to see real-life situations with their own eyes. In a field visit, participants are taken to a site where practitioners are using skills or knowledge that are relevant to the learners. Field visits help to establish or strengthen relationships between the participants and the hosts at the places they are visiting, which can be important when learners return to their own workplaces and begin their own programs.

Field visits should be well planned and help stimulate the interest of participants. The facilitator should be aware of time, transportation and budget constraints and must be sure that the people at the receiving end of the field trip have been properly oriented and that proper permission has been received (if appropriate).

**Advantages:** Field visits bring to life ideas that have been discussed and analyzed during the training. They allow participants to see real-life applications of what is being studied. Field visits can be complicated to arrange, but there is no substitute for the experience that can result from this technique.

**Disadvantages:** Field visits require substantial logistical support, and it can be costly to provide transportation if the sites are far from the training center. Resource people at the site must be carefully oriented, and the schedule of the field visit should fit with on-going work at the site so that the visit does not disrupt daily activities. In some cases proper permission must be gained from authorities.
How to Conduct a Field Visit:

**Stage 1:** Preparing for the Field Visit

The facilitator and other organizers must identify sites that will help them complete the objectives of the training. In some cases facilitators will need to get permission to visit the site, and this will require writing official letters requesting permission or in other cases just a phone call is necessary. Ideally, the facilitators and other organizers visit the site beforehand so that they can personally orient the resource people, develop an agenda for the visit, and get an idea of how long the travel time for participants will be.

**Stage 2:** Introduce the Field Visit

The facilitator briefs the participants about the field trip, giving location(s), time and purpose of the trip. Objectives for the trip are outlined.

The facilitator and participants may choose to develop a list of questions, observations or considerations that the participants can use in their investigation. They may also develop a “code of conduct” to help guide participants’ behavior during a field visit. If participants are to work in teams during the field visit, teams are determined at this point.

**Stage 3:** Conduct the Field Visit

Participants travel to the site that they will visit. During the visit, they may be accompanied by community leaders or resource people. They generally keep to a set agenda so that they do not disturb the day-to-day work of the site that they are visiting. Participants are encouraged to ask questions, and to listen carefully so that they can remember what they saw and heard.

**Stage 4:** Debrief the Field Visit

Participants debrief after the field visit is completed. They discuss the visit and make observations about what they have felt, seen and heard. The objectives of the field trip are discussed and a question and answer period allows participants to share their ideas and to think about how they will apply what they learned from the visit.
**Tips:**

To strengthen your relationship with the hosts of the field visit, hold your debriefing session so that they can listen to visitors’ observations and lessons. Give them an opportunity to add information or clarify visitors’ perceptions. This promotes a collegial and transparent atmosphere, important in situations where you are engaged in building local capacity to carry out a common goal.

You might invite resource persons from the sites that you visited to jointly debrief with you at your offices. This further demonstrates a collegial partnership and transparency that is important in building relationships.

Sharing a meal or a snack is a good way to “break the ice” between the visitors and the resource people. Try to time the field visit so that a meal can be shared, or so that you can have tea break during a debriefing session. Bring your own food and drink, allowing enough for your hosts!

It’s a good idea to have participants agree on a “code of conduct” before leaving on a field visit. This code helps remind participants that their hosts are busy people and should be treated respectfully. The code can include assigning an “ambassador” from among the participants who introduces the group and explains the reason for their visit. It can also include an agreement about taking photographs – making sure that participants ask permission to take pictures and possibly assigning only one person to take photographs.
NOTES FROM THE FIELD:

A group of doctors from a capital city were developing a curriculum for health workers in rural parts of their country. Rather than sit in the capital and design the training based on what they thought the health workers needed to know, they visited rural health posts to talk to and observe the health workers at work. The field visits changed their attitudes completely. Before the visits, the doctors viewed the health workers as uneducated, unintelligent people who needed to know “everything”. After the visits, their attitudes had shifted dramatically, as demonstrated by one who said, “We couldn’t believe how much good work the health workers were accomplishing with so few resources.”

The respect that they had gained was clearly evident in the way they structured the curriculum. The case studies that they used were much more realistic than before, using real incidents that the doctors had observed. The problems they designed for learners to work on took into account the equipment and clinical set-up that they had seen on the field visits. They didn’t expect the health workers to be able to use complicated equipment if it wasn’t available. And, possibly the biggest change was that the doctors asked the health workers’ opinions about how to handle problems, rather than simply telling them how they should be handled. This respect went a long way toward building a good learning atmosphere in the training, and it was mostly because the doctors had seen how capable the health workers were in their own posts.
FISHBOWL

The fishbowl creates a boundary in the group, allowing people to observe group dynamics or to see how a process is carried out. In the fishbowl technique, there are three types of participants: 1.) the people who are inside the “bowl” carrying out a task, 2.) observers who watch as the task is carried out and 3.) the facilitator who oversees the fishbowl process and conducts the feedback session following the fishbowl.

The fishbowl is different from a role play in that the observers on the outside of the fishbowl offer feedback on their colleagues’ performance at the end of the activity. Depending on the objective of the fishbowl, the facilitator may interrupt the action to help the group analyze what is taking place inside the bowl and, in some cases, an empty seat may be left open so that observers can move in and out of the bowl to offer their input and ideas.

Advantages: As with a fish placed in a clear bowl of water, participants can see what is happening inside the bowl and discuss what they see. The fishbowl is an excellent technique for analyzing group dynamics, practicing skills and for giving and receiving feedback.

Disadvantages: Feedback after the fishbowl takes careful facilitation so that participants can gain maximum learning from the exercise. It also takes careful timing: in addition to the activity being carried out in the fishbowl, ample time must be allowed for the feedback process after the fishbowl activity is complete.
How to Conduct a Fishbowl:

**Stage 1:** Introduce the Fishbowl

To begin, the facilitator explains the purpose of the fishbowl and what the observers should be watching as the task is carried out inside the bowl. In some cases the facilitator may ask what the people inside the bowl would like the observers to focus on. This helps the learners set goals and focuses the observations and discussions for the feedback session.

**Stage 2:** Conduct the Fishbowl Activity

The people inside the fishbowl carry out the activity that they have been assigned. Unless there is an “empty chair” inside the bowl, the activity is carried out without interruption by observers. Depending on the objectives of the fishbowl, the facilitator may stop action at certain points to help analyze group dynamics, to correct inaccurate information or to slow down the process so that it can be more clearly demonstrated for observers.

**Stage 3:** Conduct Feedback Session

When the session is complete, the facilitator asks the people inside the fishbowl:

- What did you like about the activity that you just carried out? What would you change about it? The facilitator and observers listen carefully, but do not add their own feedback yet. This allows the learners to reflect on their practice and to identify their own learning or performance gaps.

When the people inside the bowl have completed their reflections, the facilitator asks the other observers to state their observations about the activity inside the fishbowl, being careful to focus their observations on the focus questions posed during the introduction. Again, she structures the questions as follows:

- What did you like or appreciate about what you just saw during the fishbowl? What would you change about the activity?

The facilitator should give the people inside the fishbowl the opportunity to respond to and reflect on observations made by those outside the bowl. At the end of all the observations, he should ask those “inside” for any comments or thoughts that they might have as a result of the observers’ feedback.
FISHBOWL

Stage 4: Summarize Learning

The facilitator summarizes observations, including important points from people inside the bowl and those on the outside. In all cases, the facilitator thanks the fishbowl participants and acknowledges their effort.

Tips:

The fishbowl can be used as a continual feedback loop. Over the period of the workshop, participants learn tremendously as they observe their peers’ work. You may see them going back to improve their flip charts, or sitting again with co-facilitators to refine roles and responsibilities. Make sure to mention the changes that you see over time...it reinforces the extra effort that participants take, and it helps them see that their experience has been useful to others.

If you are conducting a series of fishbowls, encourage participants to facilitate the feedback sessions after you have demonstrated how it is done once or twice. This is an excellent opportunity to practice facilitation skills.

Participants appreciate the “personal touch”. If time allows, you can write your personal feedback to the leader of the fishbowl activity. Take a few minutes to sit with the facilitators after the feedback to let them know what you liked and what you would change. It will be much appreciated!
Notes from the Field:

Giving constructive feedback is a critical skill but not an easy one. We tend to focus on the negative aspects of a person’s performance rather than the things that went well. We also run the risk of sounding like we are being critical of the person who carried out the activity, rather than focusing on the person’s performance. Constructive feedback is given in the spirit of trying together to solve a problem or to improve a process.

The itemized response method works well to develop an atmosphere where mutual problem-solving can take place, and where peers are working together with peers, rather than criticizing one another.

The itemized response method looks like this:

“These are the things I liked about the session...” – the positive points;

“These are the aspects I wish we could change...” – the negative points, but expressed as specific ways to improve or alter the situation.

Consistently using this method will go a long way toward helping build learners’ confidence!
**Gallery Walk**

The gallery walk can be a form of brainstorming or a method for small groups to report back their work. Individuals or groups perform a task and present their results in written form on flip charts or pieces of paper, creating a “gallery” of work for peers to read. Everyone walks around the gallery until they have seen all the work on the walls and then the facilitator leads a discussion on their work.

**Advantages:** The gallery walk is a good way to showcase everyone’s work without the repetition of small group reports. It allows time to compare different ideas, attitudes or approaches with peers and gives participants the opportunity to get up and move around the room, a welcome change from sitting.

**Disadvantages:** If used as a report back method, there may be some redundancy in what the participants post on the walls. The facilitator will probably need to categorize responses after they have been posted.
How to Conduct a Gallery Walk:

**Stage 1:** Introduce the Gallery Walk

The facilitator gives clear instructions for how the gallery walk will be carried out. She explains how to present results in writing (e.g. on a flip chart, on a piece of paper, etc.), and reminds them to write their results very clearly and in large print so that others can read them. She provides the necessary materials for the task, such as flip chart paper, markers and tape.

**Stage 2:** Participants Complete their Task

As participants work on their task, the facilitator is available to groups or individuals to see if they understood the task and answers questions as necessary. As people finish the task, she helps them to post their work in a place on the wall where it can be easily seen.

**Stage 3:** Conduct the Gallery Walk

Before beginning the walk, the facilitator gives clear instructions for what participants should do while reviewing their peers’ work. For example, she may give specific guiding questions they should think about. She sets a time limit for the “walk,” and keeps participants focused during the activity by viewing the work in the gallery along with them.

The facilitator can use the gallery walk as an opportunity to summarize responses by asking the participants to group similar responses into one section of a gallery, thus categorizing them. They might also look for redundant responses, and responses that were very different from one another – this gets learners involved in summarizing and synthesizing; it may also save a little time during plenary discussion.

**Stage 4:** Discuss the Gallery Walk

After the Gallery Walk is complete, the facilitator asks participants questions about their reactions to their peers’ work, summarizes key points and helps them apply lessons to the problem they are working on.

**Tips:**

Give each gallery “owner” a flip chart or notebook to use as a “Visitors’ Book.” Ask the visitors to write in the book – things that they liked about the work that they saw in the gallery, any suggestions for improvement that they might have, and words of encouragement to the gallery owner.

Use gallery walks as a way to share ideas from different countries or programs. Before the training begins, invite people to bring samples of their work so that other participants can see what their colleagues’ programs look like, feel the products that they make, and hear about their programs.

Turn a gallery walk into a “Marketplace of Ideas”. Use colorful cloths and lively music to make it fun.
GAMES

Learning games are contests among participants who play the game while following given rules. There is an outcome or a way to “win” that usually requires players to complete tasks while learning something of value to them. Types of games include paper-and-pencil games, board games, card games, quizzes, games that use props, computer games and games involving physical movement.

**Advantages:** Games turn participants into active players and translate inactive information into an enjoyable learning experience. Games can create situations that promote learning at three levels: by helping learners interact with knowledge and demonstrate skills, by giving them opportunities to observe their own behavior and that of others and by discussing what happened during the game. Participants can find ways to apply what they learned during the game to real-life situations.

**Disadvantages:** It can be a challenge to create a new game. A good learning game has a balance of fun and content that can be difficult to achieve.
How to Carry Out a Game:

**Stage 1: Select the Game**

Consider the learners who will play the game and select the appropriate game. Choose a game that reflects their knowledge, skills, abilities and work environments. The game should be formatted to fit the length of the session and should usually have rules that are familiar or easily understood. Play the game yourself so you are familiar with it.

**Stage 2: Research the Game Content**

Make sure that you know the content of the game and that you can answer questions that the players may have, either during the game or when you are discussing it.

**Stage 3: Create the Environment**

Set the atmosphere for the game. Have all of the equipment together, including the equipment needed to play the game, clear instructions, space for everyone to play, prizes and any other props that might be necessary. Make sure that you are clear about the rules of the game so that you can answer any questions that may come up.

**Stage 4: Introduce the Game**

Explain the procedures and structure of the game. If necessary, divide the group into teams and have them select team names if they want. Let the players know how long they will have to play, what the objectives of the game are and what the prizes will be, if any.

**Stage 5: Play the Game**

Instruct players to begin playing the game. Monitor time and answer questions as they arise. (Some games will not allow the facilitator to answer questions about the content, so be clear about that in your instructions.) If the game is led by the facilitator, follow the instructions and carry out your role.

**Stage 6: Close and Discuss the Game**

End the game and discuss it so that it “brings the learning experience home”. Discussion should take place immediately after the game ends so that the experience is fresh in the players’ minds.
**Tips:**

Some games can be tricky to use because they are rooted in a particular culture. For example, Trivial Pursuit is a game that is based on the culture of the United States in the 20th century. People who do not have in-depth knowledge of baseball or other American “pop” culture may feel left out of the game. The concept behind Trivial Pursuit is applicable in other cultures, but the questions and answers need to be adapted to the settings in which you are using the game.

Some games require strenuous physical movement, so check with everyone to make sure that they are willing to participate. By the same token, don’t assume that people with physical disabilities will not be able to play a game—they may be more able to do things than it appears just by looking at them.

The important thing is to be careful that you are using games that do not exclude people who want to play.
NOTES FROM THE FIELD:

We use this word game to stimulate conversation about the topic we’re working on in the training. It’s based on the game called Boggle.

Prepare for the game:
Make sets of cards for each team to use. Each card has one letter written on it. The letters should be related to the topic that’s being discussed in the training; if your topic has lots of acronyms, be sure to include them when you make cards.

Instructions for the game:
Give each team the same set of cards. The goal of the game is for the team to create as many words or acronyms as possible in three minutes. The team gets one point per letter per word. Teams get triple points for words or acronyms related to the topic. For example, if your training is about Integrated Pest Management (IPM), and a team found the following words, they would be scored like this:

- gave = 4 letters = 4 points
- IPM = 3 letters x 3 = 9 points

Ask each team to write their words on a flip chart as they come up with them so that it will be easy to score them at the end of the game.

Allow three minutes to play and then call an end to the game. Ask each team to show the flip charts with their words, and score their own results. Reward the winning teams with a big round of applause or another prize.

Depending on how you want to use it, Boggle can:

1. Give you an idea of how much learners know about simple terms and acronyms related to the topic.
2. Help stimulate discussion about the words that they come up with.
3. Show them what it’s like to work in a team.
ICEBREAKERS & ENERGIZERS

These techniques are used to introduce participants to each other or help them to relax, wake up, or recapture their wandering interest. As its name implies, the icebreaker warms the learning environment to the point that the ‘ice’ that keeps participants from interacting with each other is broken up. And energizers do just that – they get people up and moving around, creating energy in the room.

The facilitator should make sure to have a variety of these exercises in mind so that when the need arises, she can quickly insert an energizer to liven up the atmosphere. She should choose activities that do not take too long (or they can become boring), that include everyone in the room, and that do not require physical abilities that everyone might not have.

**Advantages:** An icebreaker actively involves all participants. Icebreakers should be fun so that they create an initial bond between facilitator and participants and help to set an active, participatory tone for the learning experience. Energizers quickly help to continue that atmosphere and provide opportunities for participants to take the lead by suggesting and leading energizing activities.

**Disadvantages:** There are few disadvantages to icebreakers or energizers. The facilitator should make sure to choose activities that are appropriate for participants, that there is space to carry them out and that they include everyone who wants to be included.
How to Conduct Icebreakers and Energizers:

**Stage 1: Prepare the Activity**

The facilitator decides on an icebreaker or an energizer to use depending on the situation. For example, to begin a workshop with new participants the facilitator might randomly pair off participants and have them work together to find out as much about one another as they can in five minutes. Each participant then introduces the partner to the rest of the group.

The facilitator chooses energizers that include everyone in the group, do not take too long to carry out, and that don’t require space that is not available. Getting people to stand and do “yoga” by stretching their arms, touching their toes, swimming across the ocean (or nearest body of water) are all good ways to get people’s blood moving again.

**Stage 2: Carry Out the Activity**

The facilitator gives clear instructions, making sure that everyone understands how to do the icebreaker or energizer and then leads it. He watches the group carefully to see when energy has returned or that enough time has been spent on the activity, but not so much as to bore people. When the group reaches that point, the facilitator ends the activity.

**Stage 3: Discuss the Activity**

If the facilitator is conducting an icebreaker that relates to the goals of the workshop, he leads a discussion about the icebreaker. The discussion generally focuses on the experience that they had during the icebreaker, and makes connections to the learning objectives.
**Icebreakers & Energizers**

**Tips:**

Icebreakers usually relate to the purpose of the training or the topic under discussion. For example, at the beginning of a team building workshop, you could choose to do an icebreaker that has the group working together to meet a common goal. They could build a house out of playing cards and then analyze how they used teamwork to complete the task.

Make sure the activities that you choose include everyone who wants to participate. For example, make sure that people are physically capable of carrying out the activity: you don’t want to exclude people because they can’t jump or touch their toes, for example.

Be sure that icebreakers and energizers are culturally appropriate. For example, in some places it might not be a good idea to have men and women massaging one another’s shoulders!

Keep energizers short. Five or six minutes is a good amount of time to get people moving and laughing – more than that and the energizer may begin to feel forced and less energetic.

Energizers are good ways to get participants to take charge. Ask for volunteers to conduct energizers, work with them to make sure they are appropriate, and then have fun with them!
NOTES FROM THE FIELD:

As a teacher trainer, I had never used energizers and icebreakers until I attended a workshop to develop curriculum using participatory techniques. Since then the use of icebreakers has helped me tremendously in the following ways:

I use energizers when the lesson takes a long period (for example, two hours). When the students looked bored and tired before I start the lesson, I start with an icebreaker to create enthusiasm in the lesson. The students love to have them and therefore get fully involved. It makes them alert after that and opens them up for discussion.

It improves the rapport between the students and me since I go through every activity with them, and this enhances teaching and learning. Now students are able to confide in me because the energizers and icebreakers have helped them to see me as someone who is approachable, and they can freely discuss issues with me.

One of our favorite energizers is “The Postman Spies”. You put chairs in a circle—one chair less than the number of people who are going to play. One person stands in the middle of the circle and looks around at the people seated to see what some of them have in common (blue shoes, brown eyes, red pants.) He says, “The postman spies someone with red pants!” and everyone with red pants must quickly try to find another chair. Someone will always be left out because there are not enough chairs, and the competition can become rather tough. The person who is left standing in the middle of the circle becomes the postman and starts all over again until everyone has had a chance to get their blood moving.
JIGSAW

The jigsaw technique is used to help learners master different pieces of information that, when put together, cover a complete topic. It provides each participant with an opportunity to become an “expert” on a bit of information and to share this with others. While it takes planning and careful explanation, the responsibility for learning and teaching remains with the participants, making it a powerful participatory tool.

**Advantages:** The jigsaw technique provides an opportunity for people to learn a topic and then immediately teach it to others. This technique encourages cooperation rather than competition. It is an effective way to give individuals training experience and to bolster confidence in their own knowledge and teaching skills.

**Disadvantages:** The jigsaw requires careful attention to groupings and to the topics that are to be learned and taught. It also takes time: generally, two rounds of the jigsaw take about 2½ - 3 hours, including a short break between rounds. Three rounds requires approximately 3½ - 4 hours.
How to Conduct a Jigsaw:

Stage 1: Introduce the Jigsaw

The facilitator explains the purpose of the activity, which is for all participants to get a brief overview of a wide range of topics. It allows people to quickly learn about one topic, and then pass on that information to other participants, thus completing pieces of the “jigsaw” or puzzle.

Stage 2: Set Up the Jigsaw

The facilitator divides the large group into smaller groups of equal size and assigns each group a number.

The facilitator divides the topics into a number that can be divided equally among the small groups. Assign each “number” group an equal number of topics. *The following example is based on a group of 16 participants and 15 topics:*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Round 1</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group:</td>
<td>1 abcd</td>
<td>2 abcd</td>
<td>3 abcd</td>
<td>4 abcd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants:</td>
<td>1 – 4</td>
<td>5 – 8</td>
<td>9 – 12</td>
<td>13 – 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topics:</td>
<td>abcd</td>
<td>abcd</td>
<td>abcd</td>
<td>abcd</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The facilitator explains the jigsaw process to participants.

Stage 3: Conduct the Jigsaw

In Round 1, participants meet in their first small group. They review the topics they have been assigned, and decide which one(s) they will learn well enough to teach to another group. They prepare to teach about that topic by learning it well, preparing all of the materials that they will need, and practicing their training methods within their own group.
JIGSAW

In the second round of the jigsaw, the “number” group divides up and each member moves to a different group, where they are the only experts on their “number” group’s topic. In the second group they are responsible for training all of the other members of the group about their topic. In turn, they each learn about the topics on which each of the other “number” group members have become experts.

If time allows and there are sufficient topics to learn and teach, the groups can all re-shuffle into a third round, where they will repeat the process of teaching one another about their areas of expertise.

Stage 4: Discuss the Results of the Jigsaw

After the jigsaw is complete, the facilitator leads a discussion about the topics the participants learned and taught. He clarifies any questions that they might have and focuses on how the topics can be applied to the situations they are working on.

Tips:

There are lots of tasks to be carried out by participants during the jigsaw. Make sure they have a detailed Task Sheet to follow. This helps them manage time and follow all of the tasks that they are supposed to complete as part of the activity.

This is an excellent tool for learning about many different topics in a relatively short period of time in a very interactive way. Topics that lend themselves to this technique include Participant-Centered Techniques, Evaluation Techniques and Icebreakers and Energizers among others. Remember that the topics require reference material that participants can refer to for learning about the topic and possibly for teaching others.
This particular workshop was quite long. We were at a training site in rural Uganda for two weeks, working with counselors and HIV/AIDS specialists to develop a training program for HIV/AIDS counselors. The drivers who brought us to the site were usually just given menial tasks to carry out. They helped us set up the materials, took us on field visits, made phone calls, went to the market to buy special treats to keep up participants’ enthusiasm.

One day we were conducting the jigsaw technique to introduce inexperienced participants to the wealth of participatory techniques that we could use in creating the curriculum. We needed one more person to complete the small groups that composed the jigsaw, and James, the driver for that week, was “volunteered”. His group’s assignment included the demonstration technique.

As I was moving among the groups to see how they were doing, I noticed that James was actively involved in the discussions. When it was time for them to do their practice teaching, I again went around to see how things were going.

I was stopped in my tracks by the demonstration that James was carrying out for his colleagues. He had a Coca-cola bottle and a straw, and was demonstrating how the anatomical make-up of a woman’s reproductive system makes her more susceptible than a man to the virus that causes AIDS. He asked his audience to imagine that the straw was the man’s penis and that the bottle opening was the woman’s vagina. He indicated that there is more surface area to the vagina than there is to the penis, meaning that there is more potential for the virus to enter the woman’s body through sexual intercourse with an infected man. Again using the straw and the bottle, he demonstrated how intercourse can cause tears more easily in the vagina than it usually can on the penis.

It was a stunning demonstration: the learners in James’s group captured the idea immediately (and I doubt they ever forgot it) and as a technique that used simple materials at hand it was brilliant. Even more, the jigsaw showed that peer-to-peer teaching can be powerful and creative, and can help level the playing field between “experts” and mere drivers.
**LECTURETTE**

A form of lecture, lecturettes are used to highlight key content; they differ from traditional lectures in that they are shorter and often incorporate interaction between the lecturer and participants. Lecturettes are useful as introductions to topics and to experiential activities and seldom last longer than 15 minutes.

**Advantages:** Lecturettes can provide detailed and specific information in a short amount of time.

**Disadvantages:** Lecturettes run the risk of turning into longer lectures. In a lecturette the information flow is largely one way – from the facilitator to the participant. This makes it difficult for the facilitator to know when he has made his point and that participants understand it accurately.
How to Conduct a Lecturette:

**Stage 1: Prepare Lecturette**

The facilitator reviews or reads the information that he wants to present. He may write an outline of the key points that are to be covered and prepares any visual aids that can help illustrate the presentation. Points are identified where participants can be involved through questioning, discussion or other activities. A well-prepared facilitator will practice and time the lecturette to make sure that he does not have either too little or too much material for the time allotted.

**Stage 2: Introduce Lecturette**

The facilitator introduces the lecturette by identifying the key topic to be covered and giving focus questions for participants to consider as they listen to it.

**Stage 3: Carry out the Lecturette**

The facilitator presents the topic in manageable segments using reference material and/or visual aids to reinforce points. If possible, the facilitator should use “real-life” information from his (or participants’) experience and frequently check to see that they understand the points he is making. (Good checking questions are generally open-ended and require some analysis of the topic: “How does that apply to what we are working on in this workshop?” “What experience do you have that is similar to what I’m talking about?”)

**Stage 4: Summarize the Lecturette**

At the end of the lecturette, the facilitator reviews the two or three major points that he covered and asks for questions or comments about the topic.
**Lecturette**

**Tips:**

Always try to follow a lecturette with a participatory technique that will help participants reflect, practice or apply the new information that you have conveyed in the lecturette. This will give you an opportunity to evaluate how well people have captured key points and if you need to review important information.

As you present your lecturette, keep an eye on the participants and make sure that you are holding their attention. If people start to drift off, do something to involve them or consider changing your method for one that is more participatory. A lecturette is only effective if you are able to keep participants listening, involved and aware of the points you are trying to share.

If visual aids are used, they can help reinforce the spoken word with visual images, strengthening the technique by appealing to more than one learning style.
Notes from the Field:

The setting is a career fair held in the high school cafeteria of Lawrence, Massachusetts, an old factory town north of Boston with a majority immigrant population. I was invited to introduce students to work opportunities that address workplace hazards. I knew that the leap from high school student to occupational safety and health was huge, and I wasn’t sure how to introduce the topic. Drawing from years of experience conducting workshops and giving lectures, I chose to use Rule Number 1 – Engage your audience!

On this particular day I found myself staring into the faces of 300 mute high school students. I knew that I needed a “hook” to help them make a personal connection with the topic and that a lecture simply wouldn’t do. So, I asked, “How many of you have jobs?” A few hands went up, then many. “Have any of you been injured on the job?” Again the hands went up. “Tell me about the nature of your injuries.” One said he was burned on hot water washing dishes in a restaurant. Another said spray cleaners used to clean tables in the restaurant affected his asthma. Still another said that chemical smells in the laundry where he worked gave him a headache. Then I asked if they were given health and safety training or special equipment to protect them from hazards at work. One said he was given heavy gloves that came to his elbows for removing pizza from a hot oven. Another said his employer saw an advertisement on television about cleaners that do not contain hazardous chemicals and bought some for his restaurant. Another said his mother hurt her back lifting a patient in the nursing home where she worked and no one gave her a brace for her back until after she was injured.

They were hooked! And I was able to say, “This is what we mean when we talk about occupational safety and health.” By the end of the “lecture,” using the teens’ experience as a base, we had covered occupational injuries, health effects of exposure to hazardous chemicals, health and safety training, safer alternative practices, and even had a chance to talk a bit about empowering workers to ask for protection on the job.
Panel discussions allow participants to gather information on new topics from visiting ‘experts’ or ‘authorities’ on the topics. It encourages critical and informed questioning from participants and interaction between guest speakers and participants in exploring a given topic.

**Advantages:** This can be a good opportunity to invite guest speakers (up to three or four at one time) into the training setting. It offers participants a different format for learning and gives a change from the facilitators. Also, it can give participants contact references for future work.

**Disadvantages:** It takes time and careful orientation of panel speakers to ensure that they are the best people for the discussion, and that they can make the points that need to be made in a relatively short period of time.
How to Conduct a Panel Discussion:

Stage 1: Prepare the Panel Discussion

The facilitator identifies and orients the experts who will make up the panel and invites them to sit in front of the group. The facilitator (or participant who has been designated beforehand) acts as the moderator of the panel discussion.

Stage 1: Introduce the Panel Discussion

The moderator begins by introducing the purpose of the panel discussion and introduces the panelists. She explains the procedure that the participants will follow, for example, whether they will take questions after each panelist has spoken or after all of the panelists have completed their presentations.

Stage 2: Conduct the Panel Discussion

The moderator invites the panelists to speak on the topic. Her role is to make note of interesting points that arise during panelists’ discussions, to thank each panelist as they finish and to ensure that they stay within the established time limits.

Stage 3: Discuss the Panel Presentations

The moderator takes questions from the audience. She may start by asking for clarifying questions (“Was there something that you did not understand?”) and then proceed to questions of substance about the presentations. She manages time, taking questions that can be answered in the allotted time.

Stage 4: Summarize the Panel Discussion

Drawing from the notes made during the panelists’ presentations, the moderator summarizes key points made by the panelists and key questions asked by audience. To close, the panelists for their time and effort.
Panel Discussions

**Tips:**

Prepare the panelists before the session begins. Make sure they understand what the theme of the discussion is and what major points you are hoping they will address during their talk. Ask if they have visual aids that they would like to use, and if so, make sure that the equipment is available and working properly before they arrive. Also make sure they know exactly how much time they will have for their talk, and what kinds of questions you expect they will receive from the audience.

If you can arrange a tea break for after the panel discussion, invite the panelists to stay on and chat with participants. This is a good way to break the ice, set a less formal tone and allow participants to ask any remaining questions.

**Variations on a Theme:**

You can design panel discussions so that participants themselves make up the panel, thus becoming the ‘resident experts’ on a given topic. This encourages a feeling of involvement and accomplishment and demonstrates that learners are often experts on a topic.
Notes from the Field

We sometimes use panel discussions as a forum for giving personal testimony in our AIDS prevention programs. Our goal is to help young people learn about HIV and AIDS and how it is spread so they can keep from getting it or transmitting it to someone else. We know that we have to appeal to their hearts and their minds to keep their bodies free of HIV. Personal testimonies help us do that.

We have testimonies by people who are infected with HIV, or people who take care of relatives or neighbors who are sick. The witnesses have to be strong and willing to speak openly because stigma is still hard to overcome. We know that their speaking out has a big impact on the youth in our program, so we try to have testimonies especially when we have new youth join our program.

We set it up like a panel discussion. We ask two or three people to come and talk to us. We work with them carefully before they arrive so that they know what they are getting into, but also so that they know why it is so important that they speak out. We have a moderator, and we always tell the panelists that they don’t have to answer any questions they don’t want to answer.

We take a break after the panel is over, and we have tea together, all of us. This gives everyone a chance to talk one-on-one with the panelists, to shake hands with them, to share food with them.

What is most important about the personal testimony is the discussion that follows after the panelists have left. We often have young people say, “She looked so normal! She couldn’t have AIDS!” And that gives us a chance to point out that you can have sex with a perfectly normal looking person, but that person may be infected and you won’t know it. Or, you could be infected and you won’t know it.

Sharing tea afterward is important too. We used to hear that you could get infected by shaking hands with a person who is infected with HIV. We don’t hear that so much anymore, but sometimes we still see people who have to work up their courage before shaking a panelist’s hand. We think the fact that they make contact is a small step toward breaking down barriers.
Plenary Discussion

In this technique, all the participants come together for a discussion. It can take place as a stand-alone activity or as a part of debriefing another activity. This technique is often called a large group discussion.

Advantages: This technique is useful for generating new ideas through the interaction of participants, reaching a consensus in the group, drawing out common conclusions from small group activities, and sharing a variety of experiences of different participants.

Disadvantages: It can be difficult to carry out some functions through large group discussions. Reaching consensus on controversial issues and hearing from everyone in the room are two examples of situations where plenary discussions can be tricky, and the facilitator may want to choose another technique (or prepare individual participants) before beginning the discussion.
How to Conduct a Plenary Discussion:

**Stage 1:** Introduce the Discussion

The facilitator writes specific questions for discussion on a flip chart or slide and thinks of other prompting questions that can be used to keep the discussion moving.

**Stage 2:** Conduct the Discussion

The facilitator explains the objectives of the discussion and poses focus questions to the group. As the discussion progresses, she tries to ensure that all participants have a chance to speak and periodically summarizes the discussion and relates it explicitly to the objectives of the session. She monitors time carefully to make sure there is enough to cover all the important points.

**Stage 3:** Summarize the Discussion

The facilitator concludes by summarizing the conclusions reached by the group and relating them to the learning objectives.

**Stage 4:** Evaluate the Discussion

In many cases, it is good practice to follow the plenary discussion with a more participatory activity that helps everyone use the results of the discussion.
Plenary Discussion

Tips:
There are some ways to make sure that the group is “together” before moving on. While not all of the following are necessary for each discussion, they may help you make sure that the group is moving forward with a common understanding of the subject.

- Correct any misinformation or incorrect answers — If something was said that is misleading or wrong, this is the time to correct it.
- Summarize – Review the main responses that came from the group. For example, “From what you’ve said, there are at least three things to consider here. They are …”
- Compare – Do responses break down into two or more points of view? Are there some major differences of opinion? For example, “We heard that some people think X is the right way to proceed, and others think that Y is the right way to proceed, and others think that Z is the correct way to proceed. Let us discuss each of these options before we decide…”
- Prioritize – Do participants think some of these responses are more important than others? For example, “We’ve reviewed all of the responses. Now, let’s think about which ones are the most important to consider.”
It’s difficult to describe how a good plenary discussion happens. You sort of know one when you see one. First, it takes a well-prepared facilitator, one who knows the content of the discussion very well. Second, it takes a facilitator that is able to hold many different ideas and concepts in her mind and not forget them, even though people may be asking lots of questions, making comments and often diverting the conversation in different directions.

Third, she must be a good listener, able to rephrase questions and comments to make sure that she understood correctly. She is clear about the objectives of the discussion and helps to keep people focused on the objectives, which can be especially difficult when there are a lot of strong people with strong opinions in the group.

A skillful discussion leader must be able to let go of her own agenda in the discussion, focusing on what the group needs to achieve. One thing that I have learned is that an expert discussion leader has probably already paved the way for a productive large group discussion by having small groups discuss controversial topics beforehand. By the time they get to the plenary discussion, most contentious issues have been aired and some consensus reached. This leaves the large group discussion for refining plans for the way forward.
ROLE PLAY

The role play encourages participants to explore solutions to situations or problems under discussion. It is a short, often unrehearsed drama where participants are given roles that they act out. Unlike a drama or skit, there are no ‘script’ or particular words that participant-actors must say, but there is a description of the situation, the positions they should take, what they might do or opinions they should express.

**Advantages:** Discussions following the role play can center on the role, opinions, and actions of characters and thus avoid criticism of the participants themselves. This technique is entertaining as well as educational, and improves participants’ skills of expression and observation. It is an excellent technique for stimulating discussion about a topic and for analyzing the types of attitudes, skills and knowledge necessary to carry out a task.

**Disadvantages:** Role plays must be carefully prepared so that accurate information and processes are illustrated. Actors need to be oriented and may need to rehearse their parts before the actual role play is to take place. Some people are shy and do not want to take part in a role play.
How to Conduct a Role Play:

**Stage 1:** Prepare the Role Play

The facilitator makes sure that the actors know what their roles are and that they are able to correctly illustrate the scenario that they will be carrying out. The facilitator writes focus questions for participants to consider as they observe the actors and then prepares a space for the role play to take place, making sure that all participants can clearly see and hear it.

**Stage 2:** Introduce the Role Play

The facilitator identifies the objectives of the role play. He “sets the stage” for the role play by giving a brief explanation of the situation that the observers will see and the roles of the actors. He also reviews the focus questions with the observers, explaining that they will have a discussion on those questions at the end of the role play.

He ensures that everyone can see and hear the actors.

**Stage 3:** Conduct the Role Play

The actors carry out the role play, illustrating a process or a situation as completely and accurately as possible within a 5 – 6 minute time frame. They should attempt to keep the action lively and their voices should be loud enough for observers to clearly hear.

When they are finished, the actors make it clear to observers that the role play is complete, and that they are no longer “in character”.
ROLE PLAY

**Stage 4: Discuss the Role Play**

The facilitator thanks the actors. He leads a discussion with the observers to find out what they saw and felt as they watched the role play and to make sure that they all understood the critical points that were demonstrated. He gives the actors an opportunity to talk about what they were trying to illustrate and what they felt during the action, making sure that they do not go back “into character” during discussion.

Participants then discuss how what they saw relates to their own lives and situations they encounter. The facilitator makes the link between the role play and the objectives of the learning program.

**Tips:**

You may assign roles to each actor or you may explain the role play scenario to the actors and let them choose their own roles.

If the role play is about a situation that is critical to the remainder of the training, you may decide to play a major role so that you can control the events that the actors illustrate. For example, if the objective is to illustrate the interactions that take place between a midwife and a mother giving birth, you may want to play the role of the midwife so that you can clearly illustrate the behaviors that you want participants to model.

To “set the stage” you can describe the scenario either orally or in a written handout, or both.

Give the actors time to prepare. For example, if possible, ask for volunteers the day before the role play is to take place. Explain the scenario and the purpose of the drama to the volunteers together and encourage them to meet to decide on roles and to rehearse.

Be careful not to let role plays become lectures that one actor delivers to others who passively sit and listen. All actors should be actively engaged in the dialogue and the scenario that is being carried out.
Srei Mau is one of the most capable students in the literacy class in Prey Manoh village, Kampong Trabek district in Cambodia. She declined the chance to go to Prey Veng provincial town to sit a national test for top literacy achievement because it coincided with the day of the Village Action Planning in her village. Explaining her reasons for this decision, she says, “If I go to Prey Veng town it will only be to help myself. If I am successful and I get an award, it is only of advantage to me and my family. But, if I stay in Prey Manoh and participate in the village action planning, I can help my whole community.”

Srei Mau participated in a program to help young girls and their families see why it was important for the village girls to learn how to read and write and to be able to stay with their families and communities rather than being sent to work in the capital where they are at risk of being lost forever. Srei Mau and other girls from the program played an important part in the program by assisting the Village Development Committee workers as they studied the health and nutritional status of Prey Manoh village. They learned how to measure and weigh mothers and children and conduct health surveys, and they used that information to identify the most troubling problems faced by mothers and children in the village.

Role plays played an important part in presenting the information to other members of the village. Srei Mau and her friends wrote role plays about the problems that faced women and girls in the village: girls do not attend school and do not learn skills that would help them earn a living so they could stay in their village. It was an exciting time for Srei Mau. She had never before been able to stand in front of a group of adults and tell them what she thought about important things in life, and now she was able to show it to them through her role play. She could tell that other villagers were paying attention to the scenes that they were presenting because of the way they responded to the play. Later she could tell that they had understood what she and her friends had wanted to get across because their ideas became part of the official village action plan. The village committed to finding scholarships and bicycles so girls could get to school and trying to improve rice yields so that poor families would not have to send their children away to work.
**Simulation**

A simulation reproduces the real world in the classroom. It can be thought of as a role play in which all of the learners actively participate. A simulation involves everyone in practicing skills, making decisions and solving problems based on a particular situation; it is structured so that participants can see the effect of their actions in a real-life scenario. Simulations can be “live” or computer-based.

In most simulations the scenario is clearly designed beforehand and participants are assigned roles that they are to act out during the simulation. There are no scripts, but there is generally a common goal that actors are aware of. They do not usually know the roles of the other actors and must decide how to manage the dynamics of the situation for themselves.

Simulations can help participants anticipate how they will react when they enter a new culture, how they will manage the health needs of thousands of refugees or how a community will decide to allocate its resources for children’s education.

**Advantages:** Simulations are based on real-life situations, meaning that they help participants see how they can apply new skills and knowledge to their own lives. And, because everyone is actively involved and there are very few rules for carrying out the simulation, everyone has a chance to practice problem-solving, decision-making, communications and negotiation skills.

**Disadvantages:** Simulations take careful preparation, as they need to be as complex as the real-life situations they imitate. They take time to conduct so that participants can understand the scenario, decide on their course of action and then see the impact that their actions have had. Because a simulation creates many ideas, ample time must be allowed to debrief the experience.
**How to Conduct a Live Simulation:**

**Stage 1: Identify and Prepare the Scenario**

The facilitator prepares a scenario by thinking of a situation that illustrates the problem on which participants are working. For the simulation to be effective the scenario should be relatively complex, with different actors who represent diverse points of view. The scenario should not clearly point the way to a resolution; leaving options open will give participants the chance to practice their decision-making and problem-solving skills.

The facilitator writes out the scenario, roles and tasks and prepares handouts for each of the participants in the simulation.

**Stage 2: Introduce the Simulation**

The facilitator sets the stage for the simulation. Depending on the objectives for the activity, the facilitator may give many or only a few details about the scenario. Roles may be assigned to different participants, along with a task sheet. The facilitator distributes written instructions to participants.

She clarifies how long the participants have to carry out the simulation, the space in which it should take place, and any other necessary guidelines.

**Stage 3: Conduct the Simulation**

Once the simulation is underway, the facilitator takes on the role of observer. One of the goals of a simulation is for participants to make decisions and solve problems based on insufficient or incorrect information. Therefore, the facilitator does not usually answer even simple questions about roles and tasks.

As the simulation unfolds, the facilitator may occasionally inject a new “twist” to the situation to give participants practice dealing with unexpected changes.
**SIMULATION**

**Stage 4: Discuss the Simulation**

Once the allotted time is finished or the simulation has played itself out, the facilitator leads a discussion or “debriefs” the simulation. This step requires participants to think about what they did during the simulation, how they would change or improve their actions, and then to think about how they will apply their new skills and knowledge to a real-life situation. *(See page 48 for Debriefing Techniques.)*
The participants look at us strangely. “You have to be kidding” they say with their eyes. “We’ve been doing this course for two weeks, today is the last day, we’re tired, our bags are packed and you want us to do a big role play?!”

My co-facilitator and I coax them up, encouraging them to take on the task of providing health care for thousands of refugees that recently moved into a simulated camp setting. We give them roles and responsibilities, and despite initial skepticism these veteran humanitarian relief workers take up the challenge.

Three hours later they’ve held coordination meetings, been told by a donor that they had more money than expected, told by another that they have less than expected. The media has come through with its cameras and notepads and the refugees have protested to the United Nations to say that no one is listening to them. They have so successfully taken on their roles that my co-facilitator and I have to beg them to stop the simulation; they have become so involved in their work that they want to keep going. That’s the beauty of our simulation: it forces people to figure out how to work with others to solve a complicated task. It comes at the end of a long, intense and complex course, bringing together all of the topics that we talked about during the previous two weeks. I watch the group’s dynamics carefully throughout the course to see how to set up the simulation. Sometimes I assign people to roles that they would normally play in their own work, and sometimes they play roles with which they are unfamiliar. Both are helpful – a Ministry representative who is asked to take on the role of a humanitarian “do-gooder” may have an eye-opening experience when asked to think from the other perspective. Sometimes people who are assigned their own real-life roles exaggerate the attitudes that they would normally take, consciously seeing the absurdity of their actions.

We have to leave enough time at the end for reflection and discussion. It’s important for us to see how well they solved the problem, but it’s equally important for them to see how their own personalities and management styles affect their work. Despite their tiredness, participants always end the course on a high note because of the insights that they take away from the simulation.
**Small Groups**

Small groups are very often used to facilitate discussion, problem-solving or team activities and tasks. The technique is frequently used in combination with other techniques: small groups may work together on a case study or a critical incident; buzz groups and the jigsaw techniques are composed of small groups. This is a good technique for getting everyone’s input. When conducting small group work, the facilitator must be sure to allow enough time to discuss the results of the groups’ work.

**Advantages:** Some participants will not speak up in large group discussions. Small groups increase the chances that they will participate more actively, either because they will not feel so shy or because their peers will encourage their participation. The chances of generating interesting information and solutions to problems grow as the number of small groups increases.

**Disadvantages:** When many groups are working on the same topic or task, reporting back may become repetitious and boring, so the facilitator must be creative in the way he asks groups to present their work.
Small Groups

How to Carry Out Small Group Exercises:

**Stage 1:** Introduce Small Group Work

The facilitator divides the large group into sub-groups. She gives instructions to the groups, clarifies questions and helps groups find space in which to work and the materials that they need to carry out the task.

**Stage 2:** Small Groups Carry Out Task

The participants work on their designated tasks. The facilitator makes herself available to answer questions, and periodically lets participants know how much time remains to complete the task.

**Stage 3:** Discuss the Results of Small Group Work

Generally, the small groups present their completed tasks to the other groups, and the facilitator leads a discussion of their work. This allows for an exchange of ideas and generates more solutions to problems.

At the end of the discussion the facilitator and participants decide how to use the results of the small group activity and discussion.
**Small Groups**

**Tips for forming small groups:**

- You may assign participants to groups according to their experiences. For example, a task may require different participants with different perspectives to interact together to complete the task, so you would assign participants from different provinces to work together, or you may want engineers to work with farmers. Or another task might require people with the same experience to work together, so you would ask farmers to work together and engineers to work together in their own groups.

- Ask participants to count off according to the number of groups desired. (For example, if forming five small groups, ask participants to count off from one to five, then work in groups according to their assigned number.) This technique ensures that people sitting next to their colleagues or friends do not work together.

- Make several “puzzles” by cutting up colored paper or postcards into interlocking pieces (one puzzle per small group). Mix up all the puzzles pieces and ask participants to draw a piece at random. Then ask participants to search for the other people whose pieces fit with theirs.

- Ask participants to find others born in the same month (Note: Groups will be different sizes and may have to be adjusted).

- Draw pictures (e.g. an animal, a sun, a star) on post-its and stick one picture on the back of each participant’s chair before the activity starts. Use a different picture for each group. Then ask participants to form groups with the other people who have the same picture.

- Use a deck of playing cards to divide participants into four groups. Randomly distribute cards to participants. Everyone who receives the same “suit” (ace, spade, club or heart) works together. Note: Before beginning the activity, make sure you have the same number of each suit so that the groups are the same size. For example, for 16 participants you will need four cards of each suit.

- Trying to mix genders in groups is usually a good thing, unless you want to hear the women’s and men’s perspectives separately, or you think that one perspective will dominate the other if they are mixed together.
Notes from the Field:

Serafina is a midwife from a small isolated village in the mountains of Bolivia. She speaks Quechua, the language particular to her region of the Andes. She reads Spanish fairly well, but doesn’t feel confident speaking it.

We were training auxiliary nurses to become trainers of other nurses and Serafina fit the profile of the perfect participant. She was a nurse, she had lots of experience in community work and was in a position to be able to train others. There was only one problem: she couldn’t really speak the language used in the workshop. The trainers used Spanish as the training language and spoke no Quechua and very few participants spoke Spanish and Quechua. This effectively isolated Serafina.

On the second day of the training she told the trainers that she wanted to leave because she was not able to understand what was happening, and because she felt that some of the other participants were making fun of her for her lack of Spanish language skills.

One of the participants in the Steering Committee meeting suggested a system that would allow us to include Serafina’s experience without holding back the rest of the group. She suggested that we work in small groups as often as possible, and she and the one or two others in the group who spoke Quechua would make sure to work in the same small group as she. This allowed them to help her understand the task and contribute her experience to the discussion.

It wasn’t perfect – many other women in the training still regarded Serafina with some condescension, even after being together for four weeks of training. But for those in her small groups who listened and encouraged her to speak, and would speak on her behalf when we were in plenary sessions, Serafina provided valuable insights that would have been lost if she had left the training. Small group work proved to be valuable for us in that situation.
Video or Film

Film shows and videos can be used to bring issues and people to life. The selection of an appropriate video or film can offer a low-key, entertaining way to share detailed information or issues. Preceded by focus questions and followed by a discussion of what participants saw, a film can introduce a lot of content in a short period of time.

For a film to be effective it must clearly illustrate the topic. The facilitator should focus participants on the objectives for showing the film and give points for them to consider while they are watching the film. It is important to lead a discussion of those points after the film is complete, and for participants to make the connection between the film and the subject of the training and how they can apply lessons to their own lives.

Advantages: Videos are generally quite entertaining and easily capture the interest of participants. If well done, films can capture information in a short amount of time that might otherwise take months to cover. They can capture in moving pictures and word images that make stronger points than an instructor or resource could ever do in a lecture.

Disadvantages: A poorly chosen film can be distracting and require a lot of explanation. Also, sometimes two people can watch the same film and leave the theater with entirely different ideas about what they saw. Facilitators must take time before a film to focus the learners’ attention and after the film to ensure that “everybody saw the same thing”.

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How to Use a Video or Film:

**Stage 1:** Select the Film

The facilitator should select a video or film that clearly relates to the topic of the training. This includes considering the objectives of the training, the language spoken by the participants and the length of time that is allocated for the session. A major question when choosing a film is, “How well will this help me get the message across without creating unnecessary distractions from the subject?”

The facilitator should always watch the film to make sure it is appropriate.

**Stage 2:** Introduce the Film

The film should be positioned so that all participants can clearly see and hear it.

The facilitator introduces the film to the participants by explaining why it was chosen, how it will help them reach their objectives and what they should focus on as they watch.

**Stage 3:** Discuss the Film

Once the film is complete, the facilitator leads a discussion. The discussion generally focuses on what the participants saw taking place in the film, what they learned from it, and how they might be able to apply what they learned from it.
Video or Film

Tips:

Prepare beforehand. Set up the equipment prior to beginning the program and make sure that it is working properly. It can be an embarrassing waste of time to learn that you've set the video to the wrong point and do not know how to adjust it.

Before beginning the session, cue the film to the place where you want to begin it, and view it at least once before you use it with participants so that you are familiar with the content and can anticipate any questions they may have.

The sound quality, regional accents or speed at which actors speak may make videos difficult to understand for some viewers. Be prepared to re-run a video if many learners have problems understanding it.

Some videos can be used as illustrated case studies. They present a situation and then pause for the facilitator to ask questions. Even if a video is not already programmed that way, you can stop action ("pause") the video and pose a question such as, “What would you do if you were Anna?”

Variations on a Theme:

If you have a video camera available, participants can create their own videos. For example, they may want to document a well-designed role play that they can use with other audiences or they may want to tape a fishbowl session to illustrate how it is carried out. Remember not to let the technology distract the learners from the objectives of the session!
**Notes from the Field:**

As a young trainer, I learned a valuable lesson about films: field test them with people from your audience before you screen them.

When the agriculture extension worker showed up in my small town in rural Ecuador with a film about a new way of cultivating rice, I agreed to help him get all the farmers in town together to see it. When they heard about the film, the farmers said that they were going to bring their families. So, we arranged to project the movie against the white-washed wall of the church on the plaza because it was the only place large enough to accommodate the crowd.

We borrowed seats and benches from the local merchants and pews from the church. Ice cream vendors came to sell their helados to the crowd, and kids chased one another around while their mothers admonished them to slow down and not get their good clothes dirty.

When the time came for the movie to begin, the extension worker got up and introduced the topic of the film. From the back of the crowd I thought that he had done a good job of telling people about what they were going to see. Everyone sat up and paid close attention for the 20-minute film as it showed the new way of preparing and planting the rice and then irrigating and harvesting it.

I thought that the concepts were clear, even though I was not a rice farmer. However, when the film ended, there was a murmuring from the back of the crowd that became louder and louder as people turned to one another and began talking about what they had seen. When the extension worker was able to get people’s attention, he asked what they thought about the movie.

A grandmotherly woman raised her hand from her perch on a park bench. She said to him, “Young man, what do you take us for? We are not ignorant people here. We know how to grow rice, and we know that there is no way for anyone to plant and harvest rice in the 20 minutes time that it took them to do it in your film! Shame on you for thinking that we are so ignorant that we believe this movie of yours!”

Moral of the story: field test whenever possible!
One of the principles of learning theory is that adults must be able to see how they are progressing as they work toward learning a new skill, gain new knowledge and change an attitude. This is one of the key factors in helping people engage in learning and motivating them to take responsibility for change. The facilitator must also be able to measure how well the program is progressing so that adjustments can be made if necessary.

Set aside ten minutes at the end of each day for an evaluation activity, but don’t limit your evaluation to those ten minutes. Use participant-centered training techniques that give the learners the opportunity to demonstrate what they’ve learned, and use a variety of evaluation techniques throughout the day to “check in” and see the progress that is being made.

One simple way to do that is to give participants the opportunity to ask questions and air concerns and disagreements. Frequently ask questions such as “What questions or comments do you have about this topic?” In this way, you will be able to identify which practices and attitudes need more time, and it gives participants a chance to make their concerns heard.

Following are some sample evaluation activities you can choose from, and there are many others as well. Don’t be afraid to use them often!
Review the Day’s Objectives
Ask participants to write their answers to the following questions on a blank piece of paper: “On a scale of 1 – 5, (with 5 being ‘maximum possible’) to what extent were each of the day’s learning objectives met?” Also ask, “What suggestions do you have for the next day of this training?”

Collect the responses and review them before the next day. Report back to the group about any changes that will be made as a result of their feedback.

Written Evaluations
To evaluate how effective the day was for participants, ask them to take a few minutes to write their thoughts about these questions. Ask:

- What was most useful for you today?
- What was most difficult? What suggestions do you have for overcoming this difficulty?
- What suggestions do you have for tomorrow?

Collect the responses and review them before the next day. Report back to the group about any changes that will be made as a result of their feedback.

One–Minute Essay
This is also a short written evaluation. It helps to identify what participants understand and what questions they may still have. It also helps show participants that they are indeed learning, and it can reinforce the habit of journal writing so that people can see their progress over time.

At the end of a session or a day, ask participants to write one or two important ideas that they gained from the session along with any unaddressed issues. Collect and summarize them and then return each participant’s paper. During the remainder of the training, let people know when you are acting on a suggestion from an essay. This strengthens their commitment to making constructive comments.

Role-play
Ask participants to role-play an illustration of a valuable lesson that they learned during the day or ask them to draw a picture of something valuable that they learned and then to explain it to the group afterward.
Temperature Check
Find out about people’s “affect,” or how they are feeling. Ask participants to write down one or two words that best describe how they are feeling at that moment and then to share it with the rest of the group if they want to.

Mood Check
Give each participant a piece of paper with the three faces below printed on it (a smiling face, a neutral face and a frowning face). Before they leave the room for the day, ask participants to put a mark below the face that best describes how they feel about the day with a few words about why they chose that face.

Guided Imagery
Ask participants to close their eyes and think back to the beginning of the day. Ask them to think about how they arrived at or began the activity you are evaluating. Ask them some of the following questions to give them an opportunity to think about the cognitive, attitudinal and behavioral aspects of the activity that you are evaluating. Give participants a chance to think about each question as you ask it before moving on to the next question. No responses are required from participants: the guided imagery helps them privately reflect and analyze.

- What have you felt during the experience? Did your feelings change from the beginning until the end? What surprised you? Were there any disappointments? How about laughter?
- What new skills did you develop? Did you have a chance to practice them? What was that like?
- Was there a nugget of new information about [the topic] that you gleaned from the activity? How would you describe it to someone who was not here?
Physical Continuum
Ask participants to think about a statement that describes a situation on which you would like their opinion. An example might be: “I feel confident that I could effectively deliver a health education session on antenatal care.” Or, “It is important that all children receive a good education.” Ask them to stand at one end of the room if they strongly agree with the statement, at the other end of the room if they strongly disagree, or to choose a place somewhere in between that represents how they feel about the statement. Ask a few participants to discuss why they placed themselves where they did.

Note: This is a good technique to use when controversial subjects arise, and it is important for everyone to see how everyone else feels or thinks about a topic. It can be used to clarify values or to help people reflect and share their learning.

If a co-facilitator records where people place themselves on a continuum, and the same question is repeated later in the training, the group can see any changes that occurred between the two exercises.

Paper Fight
Ask each person to take a piece of paper and to write a question on it that will help evaluate how well the day’s (or course) objectives have been met. For example, a participant might write “List one advantage and one disadvantage of participatory training techniques.” When each person has written a question, ask them to ball up their papers. Then ask them to stand up, facing one another in equally divided teams.

Explain that they will “fight” one another with the paper balls, each team throwing their balls at the other team until you say “Stop.” The goal is to get as many paper balls on the other team’s side as possible.

When everyone is ready, say, “On your mark, get set, GO!” and watch the paper fight for a few minutes. After about a minute, call “Time!”
Sentence Completion
Read one or more of the statements below, and ask participants to write a few words to finish each statement. Collect, review and take note of the written responses and report back to the group about any changes that will be made based on their feedback.

- Tomorrow, I hope that the facilitator....
- I think we are spending too much time on ....
- I think we are not spending enough time on....
- At the end of today’s session, I felt (write one word).
- To help me improve my skills, I wish that I could...

Objective Structured Practical Examination (OSPE)
The OSPE is a way of organizing tests of communications skills, manual skills, decision-making skills and knowledge. It is traditionally used in medical and nursing schools where a variety of skills must be tested and standards met in order to pass exams, but can be adapted for use with learners in other situations.

The OSPE consists of a series of “stations”. Each participant starts the exam at a different station. At each station the participant answers a question or demonstrates a skill by either writing or practicing. At the end of a given period of time (usually five minutes) a bell rings or a facilitator calls “Time!” and each person moves on to the next station. In many cases, especially where skills are being practiced that have standards that must be met, an observer will use a checklist or rating scale to assess each person’s performance.
Poetry
For those people who like to play with words and rhymes, poetry can be a good way to evaluate what they have learned. Challenge participants to write a poem or a story about what they have learned during the training.

Participatory education techniques
We learned all about them, c’est fantastique!

We were parts of a puzzle,
We learned and we taught,
We fit together like peas in a pod.

Critical incidents took us by surprise
Many solutions we all realized.

We swam in the fishbowl
With our eyes wide open,
Observing tasks, tools, or guides,
And discussing what is happenin’.

We heard from the experts
In a panel discussion.
Good feedback, good interaction,
Great clapping percussion.

We simulated being a farmer of fish
And visiting the loan officer -
What a dish!
We learned to think from another perspective,
With different considerations
We became introspective.

Video in the classroom can be a good tool,
If you have the equipment in your school.
The video is appropriate to what’s being learned,
And is culturally sensitive to each one in turn.

Education techniques of the participatory variety
Are great tools to use in every society!
**Host Team & Steering Committee**

These two feedback mechanisms work together to give participants a voice in the training, and facilitators get a frank assessment of how things are going. The Host Team is composed of participants who attend a short Steering Committee meeting at the end of the day’s sessions. The Steering Committee meeting is a place where both facilitators and participants assess, from their points of view, how the day went. They discuss what went well and decide on changes for the upcoming days of training. The Host Team presents a summary of the meeting the next morning to an opening plenary session. Then a new Host Team takes over responsibility for that day.

Besides being a good way to increase the quality of participation in the training, this system provides opportunities for participants to analyze group dynamics, develop solutions to potential problems, synthesize the results of the meeting and make presentations to their colleagues.

**The Host Team** is a rotating, voluntary responsibility. The teams’ responsibilities are to:

- Get people started at the beginning of the day
- Conduct energizers when needed
- Provide information on current events
- Manage daily schedules and act as timekeepers
- Collect feedback from other participants during the day about the training
- Attend Steering Committee and give feedback about the day’s activities; make suggestions for how to resolve any problems that they see
- In the morning plenary session the Host Team reviews the past day’s activities and results of the previous day’s Steering Committee
The Steering Committee
The Steering Committee meets at the end of each day of training. It is composed of facilitators, organizers, and that day’s Host Team. For about 30 minutes they talk about what went well during the day, what could be improved, and any other suggestions they have for improving the training. They discuss what went on in the classroom and other issues such as logistics. Because everyone who has a stake in the training is represented in the meeting, the problems that are raised are likely to be important, and because the goal of the meeting is to help resolve those problems together, the solutions are likely to be more effective than if just one person comes up with them.

The following morning the Host Team gives a brief overview of the Steering Committee’s discussions and makes recommendations for changes. Then, another Host Team takes over for that day.

Tips:
During the Steering Committee meeting, use the same feedback process that is used in giving and receiving feedback following the fishbowl technique. Begin by asking the facilitator what went well about the day. Then ask the participants the same question and then organizers. After that round is complete ask facilitators, participants and organizers (in that order) what they would change about the day. (If you are the facilitator, and are chairing the Steering Committee, don’t be afraid to voice your thoughts!)

Don’t try to resolve all issues alone — ask participants and facilitators what they think should happen. Ask them to focus on concrete suggestions for how to improve the situation. When a problem is satisfactorily solved by group members, it has a much greater impact than if you alone decide what should happen. Having participants from the group present solutions during the morning’s plenary session helps everyone to see that they have a voice in what happens during the training. This goes a long way to gaining commitment and participation from everyone.
The Host Team is open to all participants, and everyone should have a chance to sign up. Not everyone sees its benefits, however, so having each Host Team encourage participation is usually necessary. Here is a sample Host Team Sign-Up Sheet for three days of training. Make it large and post it in a place where everyone can get to it.

HOST TEAM – Please sign up!

Day One
1. 
2. 
3. 

Day Two
1. 
2. 
3. 

Day Three
1. 
2. 
3. 

Keeping learners engaged is not an easy task. Icebreakers, energizers and puzzles can help maintain interest in the learning process. They give people a break from the session, allowing them to relax and have fun. They also engage people’s minds in different ways: some people will sit very quietly during a group discussion, but come alive when it is time to solve a math puzzle. Giving learners different options for engaging with the group and showing how they can contribute is a valuable way to help people gain the confidence they need to be able to continue learning.

This section contains a sampling of icebreakers and energizers from the field. It also has a variety of puzzles that you can copy onto a transparency or flip chart and have ready for the group to complete (or compete!) when new energy is needed.

Icebreakers are usually short and have no specific form. It is how they are used that makes them icebreakers. A joke, short game, or physical activity can all be icebreakers. For example, to begin a workshop with new participants, the facilitator might randomly pair off participants and instruct them to work in pairs and find out as much about each other in five minutes as possible. Each participant then introduces his/her partner to the remainder of the group.

Energizers can be done anytime during the day when energy appears to be lagging (mid-morning and after lunch are always good times). Getting participants to stand, do “yoga” by stretching their arms, touching their toes, swimming across the ocean and returning are all good ways to get people’s blood moving again.

As participants become more accustomed to one another, ask for volunteers to lead their own forms of energizers.
Personal Secrets
This requires prior preparation. Gather information about each participant and prepare a chart that looks like the following table. Make enough copies for each person and distribute them to the group. Instruct them to locate the participant who is described in each of the following phrases and to have him or her initial your paper. Allow 15 minutes to collect the initials of each person in the room.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of Person (Likes to play...)</th>
<th>Initials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Description of Person (Graduated from...)</td>
<td>Initials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description of Person (Plays the guitar in...)</td>
<td>Initials</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Variation I:* Ask people to write one thing about themselves that they know others in the room will not know. Collect all of the slips of paper and then randomly redistribute them to each person. Ask each person to read the slip of paper and then ask the group to decide who is described.

*Variation II:* Ask people to write one “true secret” and one “false secret” on a slip of paper. Collect all of the slips and then randomly distribute them to each person. Ask each person to read the slip of paper and to guess who is described by the secrets. Once they have correctly identified who is described, ask them to decide which of the two secrets is the true one.

Treasure Hunt
Prepare 2 – 3 “treasures”. Write directions on slips of paper (for example, “Sing a song from your homeland,” or “Tell a joke,” or “Teach the rest of the group a dance” or “Name five participant-centered training techniques”. These are directions for the person who finds the treasure.

One participant hides the treasures around the room and tells the others that their job is to find them and then to follow the directions on the treasure.

The Sky Is Falling
People like this one for stretching and laughing. Ask them to stand in a circle. Tell them “The sky is falling and we have to push it up”. Stretch your arms up as far as they will reach, pushing up the sky. After a few seconds, tell them, “The ground is rising, and we have to push it down”. Stretch your arms down toward the ground, pushing it down. You can also swim across the ocean by doing the breast stroke and swim back to shore by doing the backstroke or jump across the river to keep away from crocodiles, and paddle over rapids to keep your boat afloat.
I am…
Give a roll of toilet paper to the group. Tell each person to take a few sheets of the toilet paper from the roll. After each has torn a few sheets of paper off the roll, ask them to count the number of sheets that they have and, for each sheet that they have, to decide on an adjective that describes them. For example, if a person has torn off three sheets of paper, that person must decide on three adjectives that describes him or her. Once everyone has had a chance to think about their adjectives, ask them to tell the group what their adjectives are.

Variations: Same, except that the adjectives can be about the person next to him or her. Or, instead of toilet paper, pass around candy and tell people to take as many as they want.

My Dinner with Andre
Named after a film in which two people have a long conversation over dinner, this icebreaker can help explain a little about people’s personalities. The leader asks participants to think of a person with whom they would like to have dinner. The person may be living or dead. The leader asks each participant to name their dinner partner and explain why he or she chose to dine with that person.

Quiz Show
Although it takes a little advance preparation, this icebreaker is a fun way to review the training content. Make a short list of questions based on the material covered in the previous day’s training session. Factual questions with short answers work best. Divide the group into teams. The leader reads out a question, and any participants who think they know the answer stand up. The first person to stand up then tries to answer the question correctly. Give a point to the person’s team if the answer is correct. The team with the most points at the end wins.

Mrs. Mumbles
Have participants stand in a circle. The leader starts by asking the person on her left, “Have you seen Mrs. Mumbles?” The person responds, “No, I haven’t seen Mrs. Mumbles, but let me ask my neighbor.” The trick is that you must say the lines without letting your teeth show. Go around the circle in turn.
Wind Blow
Have participants sit in chairs in a circle. The leader stands in the middle and says, “Wind blow... on people wearing white shoes” or some other characteristic (can be hair color, nationality or anything else). Everyone who has this characteristic must jump up and find a new chair, while the leader tries to find a chair too. The person left standing becomes the new leader. Continue until everyone has had a chance to change chairs a few times.

Name Game
This icebreaker is a good way to help participants learn each other’s names. Divide the group into two teams. Have the teams line up single file, with the first person in each line facing one another. Two tall people hold up a sheet or piece of flip chart paper between the teams. On the count of three, the sheet is dropped, and the two people facing each other at the front of the lines must call out each other’s names as quickly as possible. The person who gets the name out first wins; the loser must go over to the other team. Continue with the next two people in line until everyone has a turn. (While the sheet is being held up, the teams change their order in the line so that the players don’t know who will be next.)

Name Game Too
This is another way to help everyone learn each other’s names. Starting with any person in the circle, have her introduce herself by saying, “My name is...” Then the person next to her introduces herself and the previous person by saying, “My name is ... and her name is...” The next person in the circle must say, “My name is...and her name is...and her name is...” This continues until everyone in the room has had a chance to say her name (and the names of all of the people who came before her in the circle).

No Words
This energizer can be used for a lot of purposes. The rules are that people must place themselves in a line in answer to a given question, and that they cannot talk while doing so. Depending upon the session, the facilitator may ask them to line up according to:

- Age, youngest to oldest (or their birthdays, if they are shy about revealing their ages)
- Amount of experience in a given subject
- How much they know about a given topic

The more ambiguous the question, the more people have to think about it, and the more they want to speak. It is a good way of generating discussion about communication skills.
Who Am I?
This icebreaker helps participants to become better acquainted. It takes about 20 minutes with a group of 10.

Explain that everyone will work in partners to introduce one another. First, they should identify one item that they currently have in their possession that is a symbol of who they are. Tell them that they can use items they are wearing, such as jewelry or items they have in their purses or wallets. Also tell them that they are not to tell their partner what the item symbolizes.

Ask participants to find a partner, preferably someone whom they don’t know very well. Instruct them to put their item on the table in front of them.

Partners take turns guessing what the item tells about the person. Tell participants that they have a couple of minutes to guess what their partner’s item symbolizes. At the end of that time, their partners should explain what their items actually symbolize if they haven’t already guessed its meaning.

When everyone has finished this part of the icebreaker, ask them to briefly introduce their partners to the remainder of the group and to say a few words about why the item symbolizes that person.

Stranded on a Desert Island
This is a variation on “Who Am I?” It helps people get to know one another, and if taken a step further, can serve as a team-building exercise.

Form groups of about five to ten people and give the following instructions: “You are being relocated and will be stranded on a desert island for an indefinite amount of time. You may only bring one item to the island, and you only have a few minutes notice. What will you bring? Share with your group your object, why you chose it, and what you plan to do with it.”

Have each person briefly share their item, why it is important to them, and what they plan to do with it.

You can end the icebreaker there, or continue it as a team-building exercise. After everyone has shared, instruct the groups to figure out how they can improve their chances of survival by combining the items in creative ways. Allow ten to fifteen minutes of brainstorming time, and then have each group present their ideas. Give a prize to the most creative group if desired.
Commonalities and Uniquities
A group team-building activity in which people identify things that everyone has in common, along with interesting characteristics that are unique to each person in the group. You’ll need two sheets of paper and a pen for each group.

Form groups of five to eight people and give them two sheets of paper and a pencil or pen. The first part of the activity is “commonalities”. Each group compiles a list of the things they have in common. To make the list it has to apply to everyone in the group. Ask them to avoid writing things that people can see (e.g. everyone has hair; we are all wearing clothes). Try to get them to dig deeper. After about 5 minutes, have a spokesperson from each group read their list.

Then, depending on the goals for the session, have half of each group rotate to another group for “uniquities” or leave everyone in the same groups. On the second sheet of paper have them record unities, meaning that each item applies to only one person in the group. The group tries to find at least 2 unities for each person. After 5-7 minutes, you can have each person say one of their unities or have a person read them one by one, having others try to guess who it was. (Again, ask them to go beyond the superficial, avoiding those things that people can readily see.)

This is an excellent team-building activity because it promotes unity by getting people to realize that they have more in common than they might first realize. The awareness of their own unique characteristics can help people feel they have something special to contribute.15
**BRAINTEASERS AND PUZZLES**

Draw these puzzles on a flip chart or overhead transparency so that they are big enough for everyone to see. Have people work in teams or individually to see who can solve them first. Let the people with spatial and mathematical intelligence take over!

*Note: Solutions are on page 127.*

1. Take away 3 lines and leave two triangles.

![Diagram of pentagon with lines removed](image1)

2. Draw these designs in a continuous line without lifting the pencil from the paper.

![Diagram of designs](image2)
3. Count the number of triangles in this diagram.

4. This puzzle consists of placing all the numbers between 1 and 11 at the end of the lines and one of the numbers in the circle that will make every three numbers in every row add up to eighteen.
5. Place eight dots on this checkerboard so that no two are in line horizontally, perpendicularly or diagonally.

6. A square lake has a tree planted at each of its four corners. How can the lake be enlarged to twice the size without replanting the trees or having them surrounded by the lake but still having a square lake?
7. Take one letter away from a word of six letters and leave twelve.

8. A king who loves chess decides to retire. He tells his three sons: “I will give my kingdom to one of you on one condition – you must spend exactly half your remaining days playing chess.” Two sons say there is no way to know how long they will live. The third one accepts the challenge. How can he fulfill his father’s wishes?

9. What occurs once in a second, once in a minute, twice in a millennium, but never in the course of a lifetime?

10. Consider a road with two cars 100 miles apart. They start driving toward each other at the same time. The car on the left moves at a speed of 40 miles per hour, and the car on the right at 60 miles per hour. A bird starts at the same location as the car on the right and flies at a speed of 80 miles per hour. When it reaches the car on the left it reverses direction, and when it reaches the car on the right it reverses again, repeating the pattern until the cars meet.

What is the total distance that the bird has traveled at the moment that the two cars reach each other?

11. By inserting the same letter 16 times in appropriate places the jumble of letters will transform into a sentence of some sense.

V R Y V N I N G R N S T A R N D I G
H T N C N T S X C D I N G L Y A S I L Y
1. The number that goes in the circle is 6. The numbers that go at the end of the lines are: (going clockwise) 11, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, 7, 8, 9, 10.

3. 47 Triangles

4. The word DOZENS. Take off the “S”.

7. He will play chess every other day for the rest of his life.

8. The letter N.

9. It takes the cars one hour to meet. Regardless of the bird’s direction, during that time it covers 80 miles.

10. The missing letter is “E”. EVERY EVENING ERNEST EARNED EIGHTEEN CENTS EXCEEDINGLY EASILY.
ENDNOTES:


3. Ibid.


8. Adapted from World Education Partnership Workshop conducted by Stan Hardman, University of KwaZulu Natal, South Africa.


15. Ibid.
**Resources**

**Adults as Learners:**

Baumgartner, Lisa. “Four Adult Development Theories and Their Implications for Practice.” *Focus on Basics*, vol. 5, issue B. National Center for Adult Learning and Literacy. [http://www.ncsall.net/?id=268](http://www.ncsall.net/?id=268)


More on Multiple Intelligences can be found at: [http://www.nelrc.org/expertise/ami.html](http://www.nelrc.org/expertise/ami.html) and [http://www.literacyworks.org/mi/home.html](http://www.literacyworks.org/mi/home.html)


**Icebreakers and Energizers:**

About the Author:

Beth Gragg has almost twenty-five years of experience as a facilitator and has worked with groups in at least thirty countries around the world. She is an avid gardener, loves fly-fishing, people-watching and hanging out at home. She and her husband live outside of Boston, Massachusetts.