



# Effective Classroom Training Techniques

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## Training Techniques

Think about your best classroom training experience. It most likely was interactive, participatory, and included a variety of engaging activities. Effective classroom training does not happen by accident—it requires a great deal of planning and preparation.

Variety is a key factor to successful classroom training. We all have attended courses when the trainer uses only one training method—usually a lecture. After a short period of time, the participants begin to drift away. Sadly, much of the hard work and preparation that went into that training course has fallen on deaf ears.

To avoid this predicament, each segment of your training should employ one or more training techniques. Use the techniques in a variety of combinations. For example, you may begin a session with brainstorming solutions for a specific problem and then move into a brief presentation. Following the presentation, the participants work in small groups on a case study focusing on the same problem as the brainstorming topic and presentation. Upon completion of the case study, facilitate a discussion of the answers to the case study questions.

Some of the most effective techniques include:

- icebreakers and energizers
- interactive presentations
- questioning
- brainstorming
- group discussions
- case studies
- role playing
- demonstrations and coaching
- simulations
- games.

These are several classroom-training techniques that can motivate and involve the learners, and thereby enhance the learning experience. These techniques are identified during the development phase of course design. Designing a course—known as instructional systems development (ISD)—generally has five phases: analysis, design, development, implementation, and evaluation.

During the development phase, you select the actual training materials for the course—including the training techniques.

Prior to this stage, you need to conduct a thorough needs analysis to determine what the participants need to know. This will help define the appropriate training techniques. You also need to complete a series of design and planning activities. These activities include:

- ☐ Conduct an analysis to determine the need.
- ☐ Analyze the target audience to determine any special needs.
- ☐ Create the course objectives.
- ☐ Select classroom training techniques that best meet the audience's needs while at the same time help accomplish the objectives.
- ☐ Determine what audiovisuals will help support the objectives.

Once you've completed the above tasks, begin to develop the training techniques that will best suit your particular training session. This *Infoline* introduces you to some very effective classroom training techniques and gives clear guidelines on how to develop them. The issue also delineates which techniques are appropriate, or inappropriate, for certain situations. Trainers can use this chapter as a guide when developing and planning all their training courses.

## Selecting Techniques

There are countless classroom training techniques you will come across as a trainer. How do you decide which ones to use for a specific training session? Here are some questions to help you select effective classroom training techniques.

- Is this technique appropriate for the objectives?
- Are there sufficient trainers available to use this training technique? Some techniques may require more than one trainer.
- Are the resources available to use this training technique? Some techniques may require additional materials, supplies, and equipment.
- Are additional facilities required? Some techniques may require breakout rooms or rooms for hands-on activities.
- What is the projected size of the group? Some techniques are more appropriate for a small group than for a larger group.
- Is a special classroom arrangement required?
- What is the background of the learners? Some techniques work better with new employees who do not know each other, while others work better when you have a group of seasoned veterans.

## Icebreakers and Energizers

Key to the success of any course is what happens in the first few moments. Once the participants enter the classroom, initiate an introductory activity. Start the course on a positive note by ensuring all of the learners feel comfortable and get to know one another as soon as possible.

Icebreakers and energizers accomplish many goals, including:

- reveal the group personality
- build group identity
- build or maintains participant self-esteem
- develop trust among participants

- establish a baseline on the group—how comfortable they feel with the level of participation
- let participants know their trainer
- set program tone
- open communication.

They also can serve as a source of additional data about the learners. For example, you can find out:

- how well the group is getting along
- supplementary personal information
- learner reaction to material
- the extent to which the group is bonding
- if any cliques are forming
- the energy level of the group
- if people like to have fun in training.

There are several icebreakers that can help facilitate your course:

### ■ *Divide the Group Into Pairs*

Give the participants a few minutes to interview each other. The participants then have a minute to introduce their partners to the group and share at least two unique characteristics about them.

### ■ *Write Three Questions*

Participants find someone in the room they do not know well. Each participant addresses his or her questions to the other person. The participants then introduce their partners to the group by sharing both the questions and the answers.

### ■ *Write Four Personal Facts*

One of these facts is not true. Each person takes turns reading their list aloud, and the rest of the group writes down the one they think is not true. When everyone is finished reading the lists, the first person reads their list again and identifies the fact that is not true.

These types of interactive activities are not only useful for starting a training course. *Energizers*, similar to icebreakers, are activities you can use throughout the course to encourage participant involvement and interaction. Here are several energizers you might want to try:

### ■ **Write Three Things You Want to Learn**

The participants attach their lists to a poster board or piece of flipchart paper, which is posted in the classroom. Review these expectations with the group. This activity also helps you focus the course on individual or group learning needs and interests.

### ■ **Create a Long List**

Ask teams to list things that are square, things associated with a holiday, things that are red, things you can make out of a paper towel tube, and so forth. There is no discussion; just list as many items as possible. The team with the most items wins. This activity stimulates group interaction and gets people talking. This can be especially helpful when groups are particularly reticent.

### ■ **Form Small Groups**

Write the word *interactive* on a flipchart. The groups have five minutes to create as many words (two or more letters) as possible from the word *interactive*. The group with the most words wins. This activity also fosters interaction among quieter classmates.

See the *Effective Introductions* sidebar on the next page for more information.

## Effective Presentations

The most common training technique is the presentation. While most presenters feel they do well, many participants will tell you this often is not the case. A presentation can be an effective method for delivering information, but the key is to deliver an energetic, interactive presentation—and that is not as easy as it seems. Some suggestions for delivering interactive presentations include:

**Project your voice.** Periodically change the pitch, volume, and rate of your delivery. Nothing will put participants to sleep faster than someone speaking in a monotone voice.

**Maintain an appropriate pace.** If you move through the presentation content too rapidly, participants may have a difficult time following. If you move too slowly, participants may disconnect and drift away from your presentation.

**Avoid using fillers.** Fillers are expressions such as uh, um, you know, ok, and er. We all have sat in presentations where we started to count the number of times the presenter repeated the same filler. Having notes on paper or key points on a flipchart or projection screen will help prevent these fillers.

**Enunciate clearly and distinctly.** It is distracting and frustrating to listen to a presenter and not be able to understand what is being said.

**Use participant names.** People like to hear their name. Using participant names also keeps the learners focused on the presentation (in other words, they don't doze off).

**Use familiar terms and expressions.** Many presenters feel they need to impress the participants with their vocabulary. Your job is to inform—not impress. If you introduce an unfamiliar term or expression, define it.

**Use lots of examples.** Examples include personal experiences, facts, figures, illustrations, anecdotes, quotes, photographs, slides, real objects, and video examples. Participants want and need examples. An appropriate visual or story will make your point more clear. Examples also should be pulled from the participants.

**Praise participants.** Positive reinforcement increases the participants' interest level, keeps them focused on the topic, and improves the climate of your presentation.

**Use appropriate humor.** Periodic and suitable humor helps maintain participant interest and attention. See the *Adding Humor* sidebar for more information.

**Maintain eye contact.** Look at your participants and watch for questioning looks, confusion, boredom, agreement, and disagreement. Based on what you see, make adjustments to your content, questions, or schedule (maybe it's time for a break). In terms of your notes, glance at them to see the next point, but then return your eye contact immediately to your participants.

## Effective Introductions

The first few moments of a presentation are critical. The introduction is the technique you will use to grab the attention of your participants as you move into a presentation. There are a number of techniques you can use to begin a presentation.

**Review your presentation objectives.** The introduction for every presentation should include the objectives.

**Ask a series of questions.** Take advantage of the fact that many of your participants probably have some background knowledge. Asking a series of questions immediately brings them into the presentation. This immediate interaction also will help you to relax.

**Ask for a show of hands.** This is another technique that involves everyone in the presentation from the start. When using this approach, encourage participants to look around the room to see that they are not the only ones familiar with the topic you are about to discuss.

**Relate the topic to previously covered information.** This technique is used quite often and works well when you are making several related presentations to the same participants. This technique also is useful during a course that spans several days.

**Relate the topic to work experiences.** This technique is used when you can link your presentation to the participants' work activities.

**Use an interesting quotation.** This can pique the interest of your participants.

**Share a personal experience.** Everyone likes to hear a good story. Be sure that when using personal experiences that they are interesting, relevant, and brief enough that your participants do not lose track of the purpose of the story.

**Relate the content to a real-life experience.** A real-life experience is something your participants can relate to, is topic related, but may or may not have happened to you. The intent is to help them see the connection between the presentation content and a real-life situation.

**Use a case study or problem-solving activity.** Participants enjoy working in small groups to solve a problem or tackle a case study. This technique can work well to introduce just about any presentation where the audience can be divided into small groups of four to eight participants.

**Use videotape.** All or part of a videotape may be an excellent technique for capturing the interest of your participants and then moving into your presentation topic. As this is the presentation introduction, keep the video brief.

**Share an appropriate cartoon.** Everyone enjoys a good laugh and most trainers keep a file of appropriate cartoons. Make sure the cartoon is topic related, not offensive to anyone, and that you are not violating copyright laws.

**Give a unique demonstration.** Some presentation topics lend themselves to a demonstration. This could be a demonstration of a concept or a hands-on skill. Participants not only enjoy watching a demonstration; for some this is consistent with their learning style and will help them understand information delivered during the classroom presentations.

**Use a game or role-play activity.** This is a good technique to start a presentation when you want lots of interaction and discussion on the topic.

**Keep positive facial expressions.** If you look stressed, participants will get the feeling that your heart is not in your presentation. Smile, look relaxed (even if you're not), and project expressions that are enthusiastic and say that you are enjoying the presentation.

**Gesture with your hands and arms.** Appropriate gestures help emphasize key points and maintain the interest of your participants.

**Move about the room with energy.** Moving around naturally and with confidence helps maintain the attention of the participants. Avoid the use of a lectern, desk, or table, as these often create a barrier that prevents movement. Tables arranged in a U-shape offer you plenty of space to move within the group.

### Questioning and Reinforcement

Which classroom training technique do the best trainers employ? Which technique will make your classroom training more interactive? Which technique can be used with almost any other training method? The answer to all of these questions is effective questioning and reinforcement.

The primary purpose of questioning is to encourage the participants to think about the training topic. Participants often say they understand the content, but a knowledge or skills assessment proves otherwise. Effective questioning gives participants an opportunity to think through the content and gain a better understanding of the concepts being presented.

See the *Questioning Tips* sidebar on the next page for more information.

### Brainstorming

Brainstorming is a training technique that stimulates creativity and often is used in conjunction with a group discussion. Brainstorming generates a list of ideas, suggestions, or potential solutions focusing on a specific topic, issue, or problem. This list can be used as the introduction to a presentation or form the basis of a group discussion. Brainstorming requires that participants have some background information related to the topic.

### Adding Humor

Appropriate humor and laughter bring a wonderful energy into classroom training. This is especially critical when training courses are scheduled all day for several days at a time. Humor can help maintain interest, keep participants focused, and make learning more fun for everyone. Here are some suggestions for adding a touch of humor to your classroom training:

- Humor must always be appropriate and never offensive.
- Use topic-related anecdotes, puns, and stories at appropriate points in your presentations. These can be presented orally or visually using the flipchart or a projected image.
- Avoid telling jokes. This can open the door for participants wanting to tell jokes, and that can be a disaster.
- Use topic-related cartoons or drawings shown on a projection screen.
- When you make a mistake, turn it into an opportunity for laughter. For example, you realize that during brainstorming you have misspelled a word on the flipchart. Step back, look at all sides of the flipchart, and ask, "Does anyone know how to run spell check on one of these?"
- Interject topic-related trivia or brainteasers.
- Give participants working in small groups a topic-related cartoon with no caption and ask them to create a caption of their own. After the groups have shared their caption, share the original. This activity creates a great deal of laughter, as many are better than the original.
- Use your facial expressions, gestures, and body language to create humor.
- Don't joke about a person's name or nationality. As a trainer, you will run across some very unusual names. However, resist the temptation to remark about it.
- Use topic-related quotes and sayings. You can use the original quote or modify one to fit your specific needs. Be sure to credit your source.
- Never tell a funny story about a previous trainee or course. You never know who knows whom.
- Collect books, articles, cartoons, images, stories, and bookmark humor sites on the Internet to build your own humor library.
- Avoid trying to impersonate someone else. Develop your own approach.

## Questioning Tips

Questioning is not an easy skill. However, there are techniques that can simplify the task. Some tips to developing effective questioning techniques include:

- Develop questions when you develop your presentation notes. Review your content and identify points where you will want to ask questions.
- Design questions to be brief. If you ask a question that is too long, you will hear that age-old response: "Could you repeat the question?"
- Ask questions at different difficulty levels. Some questions should require only a yes or no answer. Others should require that the participant explain a point in detail.
- Ask questions of the entire group. These are referred to as group or open questions, and anyone can respond.
- Target questions to individual participants. This allows you to include those who do not respond to the group questions. This also is an opportunity to use participant names.
- Attempt to involve all participants. While some participants may not want to get involved, most welcome the opportunity.
- Repeat participant responses so others can hear. This also is a form of positive feedback because you are accepting their answers. Plus this is another opportunity to use names.
- Respond to participant questions by repeating the question and either answering the question, opening the question up to other participants, or asking the originator another question to help the participant figure out the answer. If you don't know the answer, admit it. Find out the answer and share this with the participants during the next session.

Here are some guidelines for facilitating a brainstorming session:

**Announce the brainstorming ground rules.** There are three basic rules.

1. All ideas will be accepted.
2. There will be no discussion of suggestions until later.
3. There will be no criticism of suggestions.

**Announce the topic or problem.** Clearly state the focus of the brainstorming session. For example: "During the next few minutes we will be brainstorming and will follow our usual rules. Our topic is 'Improving the performance of our supervisors.' I would like each of you to think of at least one idea. Sarah will write these on the flipchart so that we can discuss them later. Who would like to be first?"

**Maintain a written record of the ideas.** This will prevent repetition, keep participants focused on the topic, and will be useful when it is time to discuss each item. Ask someone to record the responses on a flipchart, as it is difficult to simultaneously pull ideas from the participants and clearly record them.

**Involve participants and provide feedback.** Avoid allowing a few of the participants to monopolize the brainstorming session and encourage those not offering suggestions to do so. When time permits, divide the participants into small groups allowing each group to generate a list of ideas. The reporter from each group can share the results of their brainstorming. When using the small-group approach to brainstorming, provide each group with a flipchart and markers.

**Review the ideas periodically.** This will help stimulate additional ideas. When you notice a pause in the flow of ideas, quickly run down the list to allow the participants to generate some more ideas. The key is to know when enough ideas have been developed.

**Review all the suggestions.** Post the flipchart page(s) on the wall for reference during any subsequent discussions or presentations.



What occurs after brainstorming depends on the purpose of the session. For example, brainstorming the characteristics of an effective trainer at the beginning of a train-the-trainer course may result in the list being posted on the wall for reference throughout the course. On the other hand, identifying potential solutions to a problem is likely to be followed by a discussion of each proposed solution.

### Group Discussion

The group discussion is a training technique during which the participants develop most of their ideas, thoughts, questions, and answers. Your role is to guide the participants as the discussion develops. Group discussion is useful after a brainstorming session, at the conclusion of a presentation, after a case study or role-play activity, following a guest speaker, after watching a video, or at any other time when participants have prior knowledge or experience.

Conducting a group discussion when participants have limited knowledge of the topic often results in little or no interaction and thus an ineffective discussion. When participants are familiar with the topic, the ensuing discussion is likely to arouse participant interest, stimulate thinking, and encourage active participation. This interaction affords you opportunities to provide positive feedback, emphasize key points, and create a positive learning climate.

Follow these suggestions to ensure successful group discussions:

**Arrange seating to encourage interaction.** Set up tables and chairs in a U-shape, square, or circle so the participants face one another. Group discussions work best for groups of no more than 15-20 participants. See the *Tips for Arranging Your Classroom* sidebar on the next page for more information.

**State the topic as part of the introduction.** For example, "To conclude this presentation on management styles, let's take a few minutes to discuss the importance of human relations and staff supervision."

**Shift the conversation to the participants.** At this point you should take a seat, becoming an unobtrusive observer.

**Enter the discussion only when necessary.** For example, if two participants begin to monopolize the discussion you might say: "It is obvious that Mike and Kelly are taking opposite sides in this discussion. Mike, let me see if I can clarify your position. You seem to feel that..."

**Summarize the key points.** This allows the participants to reflect and affords you an opportunity to redirect the discussion, if necessary.

**Keep the discussion on the topic.** If a participant begins to move the discussion away from the topic, you might say, "Kay, can you explain a little more clearly how that situation relates to our topic?" Following the participant's point, move the discussion back to the topic.

**Use the contributions of each participant.** Provide positive reinforcement and encourage all participants to get involved.

**Ensure that no one dominates the discussion.** When this occurs, you might say: "John, you have contributed a great deal to our discussion. Would someone like to offer his or her view?"

**Conclude the discussion with a summary.** Relate the summary to the objective presented during the introduction.

### Case Studies

A case study is a real-life situation presented to participants who are asked to react to the situation. Participant reaction may be given verbally or in writing. Case studies are especially helpful when there is a need to focus on real-life problems or situations. You also can use case studies when you want to ensure participants understand and can apply information.

## Tips for Arranging Your Classroom

How your classroom is set up can have a significant impact on the result of your training. The following tips can help you in this process:

- Arrange for a room that adequately accommodates the number of participants. A room that is too large is just as bad as a room that is too small.
- Use a room that is free of distractions and noise.
- Arrange for a room that is accessible to all participants—including those with limited mobility.
- Arrange for breakout areas or rooms, if necessary.
- Locate the restrooms and telephones, and set up a message center for your participants. Announce these locations at the start of training.
- Select a seating arrangement with chairs that comfortably accommodate your audience.
- Specify your lighting requirements, locations of controls, and so forth. Be sure you can turn the lights up or down when needed.
- Specify your climate control requirements—a room that is too hot or too cold will leave a negative impression on your participants.
- Determine the types of audiovisuals you will need, including the size of the projection screen, computer projection equipment, number of flipcharts.
- Select a good location for refreshments to be placed and serviced throughout the day.
- Remind participants to turn off their cell phones and pagers. These are disruptive.
- Circulate a sign-up sheet for participant names, addresses, phone numbers, and email addresses. Use this list for follow-up purposes.
- Arrange for a table up front for your computer, projector, handouts, and so forth.
- Arrange for a microphone, if necessary—the wireless type works best.
- Make arrangements for distributing your handouts—before, during, or at the end of your presentations.

Case studies, like brainstorming, can be highly participatory, enjoyable, and interesting. Reacting to case studies can be a very motivational activity. However, case studies are not very effective if participants do not have some background related to the topic.

Case studies should be developed prior to the presentation. Situations for case studies can be developed from personal experiences, company records, and experiences from participants who have attended your training. Development of a case study typically involves the following steps:

1. Identify a situation, problem, or issue. Examples of case study topics include human relations issues, management concerns, and equipment problems.
2. Ensure your case study represents a real-life situation. The focus must relate directly to the background, experiences, and interests of your participants.
3. Determine whether individuals will complete the case study or whether the participants will tackle it in small groups.
4. Provide questions or activities that encourage participants to focus on the problem presented.
5. Determine whether participants will report the results of their work on the case study in writing or orally to the entire group.
6. Highlight key points on a flipchart.

When participants will be working in small groups, suggest that each group select a recorder. The recorder is responsible for taking notes and preparing the group's reaction to the case study. Selecting a recorder in advance prevents confusion and panic among group members when it is time to report their reactions.

When using this technique, the room must be flexible. Make sure that tables can be moved easily so the participants can form their groups. While participants are working on the case study, you should be able to move around the room to observe, check progress, and answer questions.

After the participants have read the case study, they should be given the opportunity to react to the case study. Typical reaction exercises include:

- reports about the problem being analyzed
- responses to the case-study questions
- recommendations on how to solve the problem
- suggestions on how the problem could have been prevented
- discussion of the responses
- summary of the key points.

### Role Playing

A role-play activity is a spontaneous acting out of a situation or an incident by participants. The situation may be developed based on your background, participant experiences, or organizational records. Ensure that the situation is relevant and is similar to situations that participants attending your presentation will face. This is an excellent training technique for developing insights and reactions of participants in a situation. A well-planned role-play activity can enable participants to experience the complexities of the skills they will perform on the job. Role playing can be highly motivational and lead to experiences that will be recalled long after they have happened.

When conducting a role-play activity, always start with ideal physical surroundings. Choose a room that is large enough to accommodate role playing comfortably.

Avoid noisy locations that are open to distraction. No one should be able to enter the room, observe through the windows, or eavesdrop on the session. Restrict telephone or visitor interruptions. Try to find a location with an adjacent breakout room, or use available partitions, blackboards, or large plants for privacy.

Other suggestions to ensure successful role-play activities include:

- Choose an appropriate situation or problem.
- Brief participants on their roles.
- Set the stage for the role-play activity.
- Ask observers to record their observations.
- Give some insight to your participants as to what to look for—use of specific principles or skills, verbal communication skills, and so forth.
- Be ready to handle any unexpected situations that might arise—arguments or discussions that get a little out of hand.
- Prepare a set of discussion questions to follow up the role-play activity.
- Engage participants in a follow-up discussion.
- Summarize key points on a flipchart.

Role playing can accomplish many training goals, including:

- maximize participation and stimulate thinking
- promote learning through imitation, observation, feedback, analysis, and conceptualization
- inform and train participants, evaluate their performance, and improve their skills
- test and practice new behaviors participants can use in their jobs
- develop skills for implementing solutions and decisions
- develop interpersonal and practical skills
- experience and understand a variety of problem situations from other points of view and learn how to empathize with people
- generate feedback that will give participants insight into their behavior, and help them understand how others view them.

## Demonstrations

From time to time you will face the challenge of presenting a demonstration. For example, you have been asked to demonstrate a new portable exhaust-sampling system. This is not a presentation on the importance of exhaust sampling or on the international environmental regulations and certification associated with meeting exhaust particulate standards. It is a demonstration of the steps involved in setting up the testing equipment, taking samples, recording the data, and disassembling the equipment. This type of presentation is different from providing information about exhaust-sampling systems.

The primary difference between an interactive presentation and a demonstration is that your participants will be expected to be able to perform the steps you are demonstrating, as opposed to only having background knowledge about the procedures.

Here are some suggestions for delivering an effective demonstration:

**Plan for your demonstration.** Analyze your audience, determine how many people will attend, arrange the facilities, and do the same type of planning you would do for any presentation.

**Begin with an introduction.** Quickly move into the body of your demonstration showing the participants each step.

**Check whether your participants understand.** Ask questions and provide feedback.

**Explain new terms.** Stress safety principles, when applicable.

**Ensure that each participant can see.** Walk around the room whenever possible. This is especially helpful when the items being demonstrated are difficult to see.

**Avoid passing items among participants.** This may be distracting. If appropriate, ask participants to gather around the demonstration area for a better view.

**Provide notes on the steps.** Walk the participants through the process.

**Perform demonstration one way.** Often a procedure can be performed several ways; demonstrate only one, preferably the most common one. Trying to remember different ways to perform a procedure can confuse your participants.

**Reinforce your demonstration.** Conclude with an effective summary.

**Practice.** Immediately following your demonstration is an ideal time for your participants to practice the procedures you have demonstrated. Your role then becomes one of facilitating, observing, and coaching.

**Coach your participants during practice.** Resist the temptation to do it for them the first time they falter. Answer questions and give prompts, but keep your hands off unless you really need to step in.

## Simulations

Simulations enable participants to engage in learning activities that may be too complex, dangerous, or expensive to do with the actual equipment, people, or processes. Using a computer software program that creates a scenario surrounding the operation of a nuclear power plant teaches reactor operators about the plant's power-generation systems by imitating or replicating them. Participants learn by interacting with the simulation activity in a manner similar to the way they would react in a real-life situation. During the simulation, the trainer's role is to facilitate, observe, and answer questions.

Simulations are based on the premise that effective training requires a balance of three factors:

**Content:** the dissemination of new ideas, principles, or concepts.

**Experience:** the opportunity to apply content in an experiential environment.

**Feedback:** responses on actions taken and the relationship between performance and the subsequent result.

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The two most important steps to take before designing or implementing a simulation are:

1. Review your objectives.
2. Determine group needs.

Once you have reviewed your organization's issues and expectations, set your goals and give some thought to how you are going to achieve them.

Remember, there are variations within the audience. Tailor the simulation to your participants. Are they executive, middle management, or supervisory? What problem-solving and interpersonal behavior techniques are required for different job functions? Some guidelines for facilitating simulations include:

- Determine the purpose of the simulation—is it designed to guide the participants in acquiring information and skills?
- Select a simulation to match the designed purpose.
- Set up the parameters of the simulation—start and stop time, the type of intervention you will make. As the facilitator, you need to be vigilant, patient, and available.
- Facilitate the simulation activity.
- Actively engage participants in the feedback or review process.
- Summarize the key points on a flipchart.

For more information on simulations, see *Infoline* No. 258412, "Simulation and Role Play."

## Games

Why do people play sports, computer games, or board games? Because they are enjoyable. Games also make excellent learning tools. With games the problem at hand is the most important element. There is no sense in playing unless it is worth the effort. Games can be challenging and stimulating, exploiting the most natural and effective process of learning through personal experience and experimentation. They enable participants to quickly

assess their strengths and weaknesses in a relatively safe environment. Participants become motivated to learn specific knowledge and skills through games and then apply them back in the workplace.

Games encourage participants to take risks. These experiences help them build confidence in their ability to correct their mistakes and improve their performance. They stimulate participants to ask more penetrating questions about themselves, their colleagues, and their actions. Some guidelines for using games as a training tool include:

- Identify a problem or situation related to your learning goals and objectives.
- Select an appropriate game that will be fun and enjoyable for your participants.
- Explain the rules of the game to your participants.
- Facilitate the activity—award points, keep score, and resolve any disputes.
- Engage all participants in a follow-up discussion.
- Summarize the key points on a flipchart.

For more information on using games, see *Infolines* No. 258411, "10 Great Games and How to Use Them"; No. 259106, "More Great Games"; and No. 250105, "Fun in the Workplace."

## Keep It Active

When sitting in a classroom passively listening to a lesson, adults likely will forget the information delivered to them. One study concluded that within one year, adults are likely to forget 50 percent of what they have learned through passive methods. Another study indicated that approximately half of one day's learning may be lost during the ensuing 24 hours. In two weeks, an additional 25 percent may be lost.

When a trainer uses active training techniques, the learners take part in the lesson and are able to construct personal meaning from the presentation. When used correctly, the active classroom training techniques discussed in this issue will increase the longevity and relevance of your presentation.

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## Job Aid

### Assessment: Effective Classroom Training

The following checklist will help you assess the effectiveness of your classroom training techniques.

**Directions:** Complete the checklist by checking yes or no next to each item. "No" answers indicate areas where you may need to improve the effectiveness of your classroom training. Record possible solutions and ways to improve your classroom training in the section for comments.

#### Icebreakers and Energizers

1. Planned icebreakers and introductions for the first day of the course.
2. Prepared energizers for use at appropriate times during the course.

#### Interactive Presentations

1. Projected voice and periodically changed pitch, tone, and volume.
2. Maintained an appropriate pace.
3. Avoided the use of fillers.
4. Enunciated clearly and distinctly.
5. Used participant names.
6. Used familiar terms and expressions.
7. Used numerous examples.
8. Praised participants.
9. Used appropriate humor.
10. Maintained eye contact.
11. Maintained positive facial expressions.
12. Gestured using hands and arms.
13. Moved about the room with energy.

#### Questioning Techniques

1. Developed some questions in advance.
2. Designed questions to be brief.
3. Asked questions at varying levels of difficulty.
4. Asked questions of the entire group.
5. Targeted questions to individual participants.
6. Attempted to involve all participants through questioning.
7. Repeated participant responses and questions.
8. Provided positive reinforcement after participant responses.
9. Responded to participant questions.

Yes	No	Comments

**INFO LINE**



**Job Aid****Brainstorming**

1. Announced brainstorming rules.
2. Announced the topic or problem.
3. Maintained a written record of ideas and suggestions.
4. Involved the participants and provided positive feedback.
5. Reviewed ideas and suggestions periodically to stimulate additional ideas.
6. Concluded brainstorming by reviewing all suggestions.

**Yes****No****Comments****Group Discussion**

1. Arranged seating to encourage interaction.
2. Stated the topic as part of the introduction.
3. Shifted the conversation from the facilitator to the participants.
4. Entered the discussion only when necessary.
5. Summarized the key points of the discussion periodically.
6. Kept the discussion on topic.
7. Used the contributions of each participant and provided positive feedback.
8. Ensured no one participant dominated the discussion.
9. Concluded the discussion with a summary of the main ideas.

**Case Studies**

1. Identified a situation, problem, or issue on which participants were to focus.
2. Ensured that the case study represented a real-life situation.
3. Determined whether the case study was to be completed individually or in small groups.
4. Provided questions that encouraged participants to focus on problem presented.
5. Determined whether participants would report results in writing or orally.
6. Highlighted key points on the flipchart.

**Role Playing**

1. Selected an appropriate situation or problem.
2. Briefed participants on their roles.
3. Briefed participants on background information.
4. Asked observers to record their observations.
5. Gave some insight as to what to look for.

*(continued on next page)***INFO LINE**

## Job Aid

	Yes	No	Comments
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Handled unexpected situations.</li> <li>7. Created a set of discussion questions for the follow-up discussion.</li> <li>8. Engaged all participants in discussion activity.</li> <li>9. Summarized key points on the flipchart.</li> </ol>			
<b>Demonstration</b>			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Planned for the demonstration—analyzed audience and arranged facilities.</li> <li>2. Kicked off the demonstration with an effective introduction.</li> <li>3. Asked questions.</li> <li>4. Explained new terms and stressed safety principles.</li> <li>5. Walked around.</li> <li>6. Concluded with an effective summary.</li> <li>7. Allowed participants time to practice.</li> <li>8. Coached participants during practice session.</li> </ol>			
<b>Simulation</b>			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Determined purpose of simulation.</li> <li>2. Selected a simulation to match purpose.</li> <li>3. Established parameters for simulation.</li> <li>4. Facilitated simulation activity.</li> <li>5. Engaged participants in feedback process.</li> <li>6. Summarized key points or steps on the flipchart.</li> </ol>			
<b>Games</b>			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Selected a game that was fun and enjoyable.</li> <li>2. Selected a problem or situation that was related to the learning objectives.</li> <li>3. Explained rules.</li> <li>4. Facilitated activity.</li> <li>5. Engaged participants in follow-up discussion.</li> <li>6. Summarized key points on the flipchart.</li> </ol>			