CHAPTER 17
Training Methodologies

BUZZ GROUPS

So-called "buzz-groups" is a method that can be used at any time in a seminar, training session or workshop, to get people sharing ideas on any topic for a few minutes, before reverting to single group discussion. The name comes from the noise given by the groups or teams at work.

A question relating to a human rights issue is given to the entire group and participants are asked to discuss it with the person or persons next to them (resulting in groups of two or three). Buzz groups are excellent for maximum participation for large groups in a short period of time. In this method, the trainer poses questions or hands out case histories. Then each buzz group work on one problem. Feedback to the group should be given by the groups after the exercise. Some common issues, agreements or themes can be drawn out.

Some advantages

● All the participants are involved

● Many ideas can be generated in a short period of time

● Stimulates participation and interaction

● Non-threatening exercise and even the shy participants can take part

Some disadvantages

● Can get out of hand

● May stray from the topic if not well managed

GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Group discussion is an obvious teaching or training method where the students or participants are divided (for a longer period than with buzz groups) into small groups in order to discus a specific topic or questions. It is a very interactive process where all the participants are involved and can give inputs. Again, groups should report back to the whole group. One can select a reporter.

GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Some advantages

- Many ideas can be generated in a short period of time

- Stimulates participation and interaction

- All the participants are involved

- Inexperienced participants mix with experienced participants

Some disadvantages

- Can get out of hand

- Some participants may dominate the groups causing others not to participate

- May stray from the topic if not well managed

FISH BOWLS

The fishbowl is a dynamic training technique that can be used in any training intervention. The most common configuration is an "inner group", which is the discussion group, surrounded by an "outer ring", which is the observation group or the fish bowl. Just as people observe the fish in a fishbowl, the "outer ring" observes the "inner group". Another method is to use an outer circle with one or two persons in the inside discussing a topic, giving different participants the opportunity to express their ideas or give inputs.

Some advantages

- Controlled situation

- Can be used to discuss controversial or sensitive issues

- Enhance dynamic individual involvement

- Individual differences are respected

- Dynamic group involvement

Some disadvantages

- Can be time consuming if not managed properly

- Not everybody will participate

- Fear of ridicule

- Fear of failure

ROLE PLAY

Role-plays are intended to imitate a real situation and encourage trainees to think about what they would do or feel in that situation. In a role-play, people in the group participate in roles assigned to them without practicing beforehand. They perform the action watched by others, and part of the exercise is to assess afterwards their response to being thrown into a situation. An example is a hypothetical press conference after a crowd control incident that has turned violent. Role-plays can help police officers to see thing from others' point of view. The emphasis is not on problem solving but rather on skill development and attitude change.

Some advantages
● Good if the situation is similar to the actual work situation.

● Trainees receive feedback which may give them confidence.

● Good for interpersonal skills and changes of attitudes.

● Can teach individuals how to act or react in a real situation.

Some disadvantages
● Trainees may be shay – they are not actors.

● Trainees sometimes are not serious or too comic.°   Some situations cannot be implemented in role playing.

● Uncontrolled role playing may not lead to any sufficient results.

● It may not be convincingly similar to a 'live' situation.

● It may produce adverse reactions or aggression.

SIMULATION EXERCISES

These are also role-playing training techniques in which the trainee gets to experience and respond to an environment that is a reproduction of real-life conditions or issues or decisions.

A simulation exercise attempts to create realistic situations of the kind that will be faced in practice, and provides an opportunity for exercising the skills required in dealing with them. Through such a simulation one can re-examine previous behaviour, try out behaviours just acquired, or experiment with behaviours that strike trainees as potentially useful.

Some advantages
● Controlled situation

● Develops practical experience for the trainees in a non-threatening environment where non-consequential mistakes can be made

● Helps in transferring knowledge and giving experience of decision-making

● Helps to evaluate and correct the trainees' behaviour

SIMULATION EXERCISES

Some disadvantages

- Can be time consuming

- Some teams may not take it seriously

LECTURE

A lecture is a speech by a lecturer (instructor), with limited discussions.

It is the traditional method of teaching, and is used in many training programs. The lecture is an efficient means of transmitting large amounts of factual information and comment to a relatively large number of people at the same time. A skilled lecturer can organize material and present it in a clear and understandable way. A well-prepared lecture may allow questions from the learners, or be followed by a question-and-answer session, buzz groups or other activity.

Some advantages

- Clear and direct methods of presentation

- Good if there are more than 20 participants / trainees

- Necessary if there is a large amount of content to cover

- Materials can be provided to trainees in advance to help in their preparation

- Trainer has control over time

- Cost effective (cheap)

Some disadvantages

- It is a one-way communication process, it provides no practice, no feedback, no knowledge of results, and it may inhibit the transfer of learning

- Since there is no discussion, it is easy to forget

- Trainees may not have done required preparatory reading

- Requires a high level of quick understanding by trainees

BRAINSTORM / BOARD BLAST

The brainstorm is a quick way to get ideas or proposals from a big group. The purpose of a brainstorm is to generate as many ideas on a specific topic as possible, as quickly as possible, and to get 'first reactions' so that as many possible ideas are thrown in. All these ideas are then written down on newsprint or a board. After all the ideas are written down, the topic is opened up for discussion, comments or questions.

Educator Alex F Osborne introduced the concept of brainstorming during the 1930's. He realised that collective thinking led to greater creative thinking. Thinking on your own about a

problem is not as productive as when a group of people work together in solving it. Collective thoughts are always more stimulating. A brainstorming group is a group with singleness of purpose who apply their creative thoughts to find of a solution to a specific problem. The brainstorm is also referred to as a board blast.

Some advantages
- Many ideas can be generated in a short period of time

- Stimulates participation

Some disadvantages
- Can get out of hand

- Some may not participate

ICE-BREAKERS & INTRODUCTIONS, WARM UPS & 'ENERGIZERS'
The tone to a training group can affect its overall impact, and setting the right tone at the start is very important. 'Ice breakers' or introductions are games or activities that can be used to introduce participants or trainees to each other at the start of the activity. By using ice breakers or introductions we can create a warm, friendly, personal learning environment, one in which trainees will feel comfortable to participate in and learn from.

Warm-ups and energizers are quick games (5-10 minutes) that generate a lot of energy and laughter in the group. These get the participants to relax, laugh, connect with each other and learn while enjoying themselves. Games can warm the group up to the topic and create an atmosphere that is ideal for learning. They do not necessarily have any relation to the topic.

Some advantages
- Good techniques to help people feel part of the programme, at ease, and more comfortable with themselves and with others and feel more "at home" in a group.

- They break up the "cliques" invite people to form random groups, and help individuals meet others in a non-threatening and fun way.

- They can set a tone for the time a group will be together, encourage people to feel "safe," and hopefully evoke lots of laughter and release tension. These create a good atmosphere to conduct training

- Energize trainees for example in the afternoons or during long sessions

Some disadvantages
- Can get out of control

- Can take a long time if not properly managed

TALKING CIRCLES / WORD WHEELS

Participants are divided in two groups, one sitting in a circle facing outward and the other facing inward so that each person faces someone else. The participants are given a topic or a few questions that the have to work on beforehand and then discuss with each other. These pairs then exchange views on an announced topic or questions. After a set period, the facilitator asks everyone on the inside to move one or two seats to the right and discuss with the new person sitting opposite. The participants can then have the opportunity to discuss different questions with different people. This process continues until each person has changed views with several others.

Some advantages

● Interactive

● Good to share ideas

● Everyone participates in the exercise

● The occasional movement energizes the participants

Some disadvantages

● Can get out of control

● People can talk about other topics or conduct side discussions

● Can take a long time

● Ideas are confined to two persons if you do not get group feedback