

## Commonly Used Training Techniques

TECHNIQUE	DESCRIPTION	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
Lecture	Speaker delivers message to learners.	Allows speaker to give lots of information in a short time.	Learners can be passive or not listen at all.	Can be informative, humorous, inspirational, motivational, etc.	If not a clear speaker, and a good one, can lose audience quickly.
Discussions	In groups, learners talk about a given topic, solve problems, generate a plan, etc.	Opportunity to learn from one another, reflect on information just given, and/or build team spirit.	Even in small groups, one learner can dominate while others can be passive. Can be difficult to control by trainer if parameters (time, topic) are not clearly stated.	Can go in-depth on a particular topic area; can learn of a wide scope of ideas in a short period of time.	With numerous groups in a small space, it can be difficult to hear for some.
Brainstorming	Group process where ideas are generated and listed without judgment or discussion.	Gives opportunity to generate a lot of information in a short period of time.	Seems to be overused; learners may have some reluctance to do it again.	Can be a good way of getting started; talking about a topic gets everything on the table first.	If not discussed, prioritized, acted on, can be one more waste of time.
Case Studies	Individuals or small groups react to a narrative concerning a particular topic.	Narrative can be pointed to focus the discussion or open-ended to encourage big-picture discussions.	Difficult to give enough information without giving too much. If poorly written, learners may argue over content and not process the information.	Can objectify situations; instead give opportunity to ask "what if?" or "how would I resolve, react, change this?"	Depends on people able to read the same material, reflect on it, and discuss it within a short period of time.





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Role Playing	Individuals are given "parts" to play in a scenario to experience the issues first hand.	Can bring the subject "up close and personal."	Participants can feel vulnerable and foolish doing "play-acting."	Can move people beyond their given niche to think and act more creatively.	For a period of time this was overused and learners now refuse to "play."
Dramatization	Individuals or groups develop skits to act out a particular situation.	The process of working on a skit can build teams while generating the key information in a particular situation.	The idea of acting in a skit immediately causes stage fright in some learners.	Can give an opportunity for team building, having fun, or carrying a serious message forward.	As above, everyone has to agree to "play" or you can lose some learners.
Problem-solving	Small groups are given an issue to discuss and resolve, solve a puzzle, make recommendations about a problem.	Can provide several ideas or resolutions for a single issue or problem that builds team spirit.	As in any small group, ideas that appear to be ignored can create hurt feelings and stop participation.	Can result in creative, energetic responses and a new resolve among team-members.	Without enough information or without the ability to act, learners can lose interest.
Panel	As an audience watches, small groups of people discuss/debate an issue.	Can generate excitement, controversy, and/or more questions than answers.	Can leave learners bored and passive.	If used to stimulate further discussion among learners, can generate and focus issues and questions.	Unless learners are engaged, can result in the panel discussing something while the learners daydream.
Demonstration	Trainer shows learners how to do something or complete a particular technique.	Can give an opportunity for the trainer to show the one right way to do something or model the wrong way for further discussion.	May not actively engage learners.	Can be entertaining, humorous or sternly serious about the correct procedure.	Unless carefully done, can be too complex or too simple to provide any real help to learners.





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Simulation	In a particular setting (real or imagined) learners try out skills.	Can idealize a setting for practice before it is necessary to "do it for real."	Similar to role-playing, participants can "opt out of this weirdness."	Can provide a safe environment for trying out something new without fear of retribution or repercussion.	Learners can refuse to participate.
Games	Learners compete or participate in a situation requiring particular skills or problem-solving abilities.	Can build the team, strengthen self-esteem, and develop ability to practice outside of usual settings.	Can be threatening and/or require skills or physical abilities beyond those of the participants.	If structured, can give feeling of success and energize learners.	If not structured, can fall into chaos and/or into win-lose.
Visualization	Trainer takes the learners on a mental journey to generate ideas, idealize the future, etc.	If done well, can get people outside of their routines and boxes into more creativity.	Can be frightening; participant risks looking foolish or failing.	May open participants to "ah-ha's" and new insights.	Has been overused and badly done. For people who are hearing impaired, it may not be engaging.
Artistry	Participants indicate knowledge and/or attitudes through drawing pictures, creating murals, collages, etc.	Can get participants out of concrete, logical way of thinking and into more creative thinking.	Fear of ridicule over "bad stick figures" ranks right up there with stage fright, math phobia, and fear of spiders.	If introduced carefully, gives people an opportunity to move outside of niches and self-imposed boxes.	Can result in loss of participants who consider this "Mickey Mouse" work and not real training.







## What if . . .

- You went to a training this year that did not include a lecture or a brainstorming session?
- You were in a comfortable, trusting environment for a day and did nothing but simulations, artistry, and visualizations?
- You spent three hours listening to a very entertaining, bright, and enthusiastic lecturer who provided you with time to reflect and answer questions on your own?
- You did not speak or read English or you were visually impaired or hearing impaired; which of the above would work for you?

## What if, as a trainer. . .

- You faced a crowd willing to try anything; what would you try?
- You faced a crowd unwilling to participate in anything; what would you try?
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- You had the luxury of spending an hour each day thinking about new techniques or variations on old ones; what would you think about? (**Why not set that as a goal for yourself?**)