

Train the Trainer Student Manual

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The information used in the development of this workbook was taken from “Teaching Techniques for Labor Education” – an unpublished work of the AFL-CIO Department of Education and the George Meany Center for Labor Studies, 1997. The contents of this workbook are organized into two sections Adult Learners and Teaching Essentials and Teaching Techniques.

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SECTION I – ADULT LEARNERS AND TEACHING ESSENTIALS

HOW ADULTS/ EMPLOYEES LEARN

Many people hold two mistaken notions about learning. One is that we learn only what is correct. The other is that learning is essentially a classroom affair. Both of these assumptions are false.

Learning has to do with change – change in both the student and the instructor. To bring about the necessary changes, the principles of learning need to be understood.

PRINCIPLES OF LEARNING

1. **Motivation**-A necessary condition for effective learning is motivation, the “why” of behavior. There is a wide variety of different motives, depending on the individual and the situation. These motives may conflict with one another, or they may reinforce each other.

Learning is enhanced if the experience is satisfying for all involved.

This satisfaction can be increased by:

- Encouraging and rewarding active participation
 - Giving immediate recognition for achievement
 - Providing the learner with knowledge of his/her progress
 - Putting the classroom learning experience in a real world frame of reference. For us, this is the workplace
2. **Conditioning**-Sometimes bad habits or associations have to be “unlearned” before new learning can take place. This is so because of previous experiences which evoke a particular type of response in a student. The instructor must set a “tone” or climate that will contribute to an honest “unlearning” and “relearning” process in the classroom.
 3. A well-known device in teaching is **Repetition**. This should not be confused with memorizing or simply repeating the same statement until students cannot possibly forget it. A better form of repetition is to present the same problem in several different manners and situations.
 4. **Attention**. An individual can concentrate on only one stimulus at a time. Therefore, anything that may distract attention should be avoided. Physical surroundings can be distracting, as can an attempt to teach more than one thing at a time.
 5. **Individual Differences**-There are individual differences in the ways and rates of learning. Some do well in reading; others can barely read. Yet the person who can barely read may be extremely quick to grasp the importance of a new idea and be able to put it to use. Some can learn effectively by acting out a case; others are so scared that they cannot remember what took place. The job of the instructor is to recognize these differences among learners and to help each individual learn as much as possible in the ways best suited to that person.
 6. **Using what is learned**-Unless materials or skills that are learned are put to use immediately, they are likely to be quickly forgotten. Therefore, the instructor must see that new learning is applied frequently, or it will not be retained.
 7. **Emotions and learning**. Our emotions definitely affect learning. If we are tense or frightened or angry we do not learn as well as if we are comfortable and

relaxed. The instructor must create the atmosphere in the class that encourages maximum learning.

8. **Age and learning**. Most of the subjects of employees' education can be learned as well or better by older persons as by young persons. Experience and maturity of judgment are important elements of adult education, and it takes time to acquire these qualities.
9. **Pattern of learning**. People learn better as a rule when they know the total framework of the course or program they are taking part in. The instructor should describe the purpose of the whole course initially and then relate each of the pieces to the whole as the course progresses. Summaries at the end of each session and reviews at the beginning of the next session are also helpful in achieving this goal.
10. **How employees learn**. Employees learn by talking with other people at work and in their social lives outside the workplace. They learn by reading, listening to the radio, and watching TV. They learn by doing things and they learn in employees' education programs. Unfortunately, primary and secondary school texts, most teachers and the media (TV and newspapers) do not provide the information or the perspective that employees need as employees and as union employees. In many cases, the opposite is intended – the worker is urged to view himself or herself as just another body.
11. **Self-examination and learning** are more effective when they are not threatening to the individual. Participants in the class should be encouraged to raise questions without fear that they will be thought stupid. They should be encouraged to express doubts and objections honestly. When one individual badgers and dominates a class, monopolizing the discussion and so on, learning is stalled for everyone. Others may feel intimidated from participating, and it's for sure that the individual who is dominating isn't learning anything. That person is there to show that they already know everything.

PROFILE OF THE VOLUNTARY ADULT LEARNER

Voluntary adult learners...

1. Consent. They consent to **voluntarily spend time** and dollars to learn what you hope to teach. Thus, they initially approach your class with anticipation and a positive attitude.
2. **Set aside time out of a busy schedule** – often on a work-day evening – to come and learn what you have to teach. Because they may drive up to 30 miles one way, they usually want a two- or three-hour class period.
3. **Expect the instructor to be well-prepared** for the class. This includes having a clear set of objectives and defined content for the course and each class session; being organized, enthusiastic about teaching; and being clearly knowledgeable or expert in the subject matter.
4. **Expect the instructor to provide definite guidance** to students for moving from point of entry to point of stated objectives.
5. Resent being talked down to. They **expect to be treated as peers** who want to be taught and learn about something you know and want to share.

6. **Possess a wider frame of reference** acquired through life experience. This often permits an easier accommodation of knowledge. They are also eager to share their life experiences and “accumulated wisdom” in class.
7. **Seek pragmatic solutions** to their educational needs. They want, need and must acquire enough theory to be able to analyze their problems and alternative solutions. Thus, practical application, discussion and hands-on, problem-solving exercises score high.
8. **Possess high motivation.** They really want to learn – in most cases.
9. **Frequently lack self-confidence** after having been out of formal school for some years.
10. **Expect that the instructor will draw upon the content of the text** in a related direct or supplemental fashion.
11. **Desire assignments in courses where these are needed** to make any kind of reasonable progress. However, it is highly unlikely that all assignments will be completed by all people. Those who really wish to improve welcome the discipline of assignments.
12. **Expect that assignments**—reading, oral, or written—completed outside of class **will be dealt with by the instructor** in some definite way—in or out of the next class.
13. **Often bridge the move into a credit program by enrolling in a non-credit course.** Once they have learned that they can read the text, do the assignments, get to class once per week and hold their own with others in the class, they may be ready to “step” into a credit course.
14. **Miss class on occasion** or consecutively with or without explanation and with or without a “good” cause.
15. **Appreciate a well-organized, competent, enthusiastic instructor** who cares about the students.
16. **Require a longer time to perform learning tasks.** Through their fifties, and sometimes well beyond, they can learn as well as youth, although, because of a slowing up on physical equipment they may not perform some learning tasks as rapidly as youth.
17. May be fatigued when they attend classes. They **appreciate any teaching devices which add interest and a sense of liveliness,** variety of method, audio-visual aids, change of pace, sense of humor, and so on.

HELPING ADULTS LEARN

When we are teaching or training adults, we need to put aside the ideas we have from our experience as children in “school”. For adults to learn, we must use approaches and techniques quite different from those most of us experienced in our school days. Adults are accustomed to learning their own way informally they learn all the time.

- By doing
- By observing
- By reading and watching television
- By asking questions
- By talking with others

We call this “learning by experience”. It is very powerful. It isn’t always enough, however—people learn better and faster if they have an opportunity to analyze their experience with others, get feedback and new ideas, and expand their understanding beyond their own back yards. This is what happens in a good education program.

The teacher’s role is to ...

- Organize the material.
- Help people think about it in a complete and disciplined way.
- Provide an opportunity to hear other ideas and information. Give opportunity to “test” learning or practice it.

The techniques used in education for adults must be chosen to keep students involved as much as possible. The subject matter, the teacher’s style and the physical situation (for example “is there video equipment”?) influence the techniques you use.

For example:

- Information on history might appropriately be covered by a mini-lecture and discussion or a film and discussion.
- A session on recruiting new employees might draw on involvement methods, using discussion and role playing.

In an adult education program, the teacher needs to study the group and adapt to them. Are they office employees? Factory employees? City employees? Old? Young? Etc. What do they already know about the subject from experience? How will this interest or affect them?

Generally speaking, adults come with certain mind sets...

- A. Adults are **problem-centered**. They are motivated, but they are busy. Some problem or other (what to do about toxics) has brought them to the program. For the teacher, this means...
 - The program must be relevant (in their eyes) and useful.
 - It must be well-organized and kept moving.
 - It is better to move from problems to theory rather than vice versa.
- B. Adults **value their own experience** and test ideas against it. They may not see the teacher as an authority. They expand their thinking by sharing ideas and experiences with others in the group, not just with the instructor or the “expert”.

Opportunities for this must be built in...

- In class in a guided way
 - Outside of class independently. “Free” time is important.
- C. Learning is also a **social group experience** for participants, teachers, and staff. People are concerned about social relations, acceptance, and (even) fun. The instructor can provide...
 - Good physical climate: room design, coffee/refreshments, good pacing on time, breaks, etc.
 - Social tone: getting people acquainted, talking to students individually, listening carefully to every opinion in class, etc.

D. Most adults see themselves as **self-directed** and responsible. They come from a multitude of situations and they will return after class to a variety of local organizations.

Necessary are...

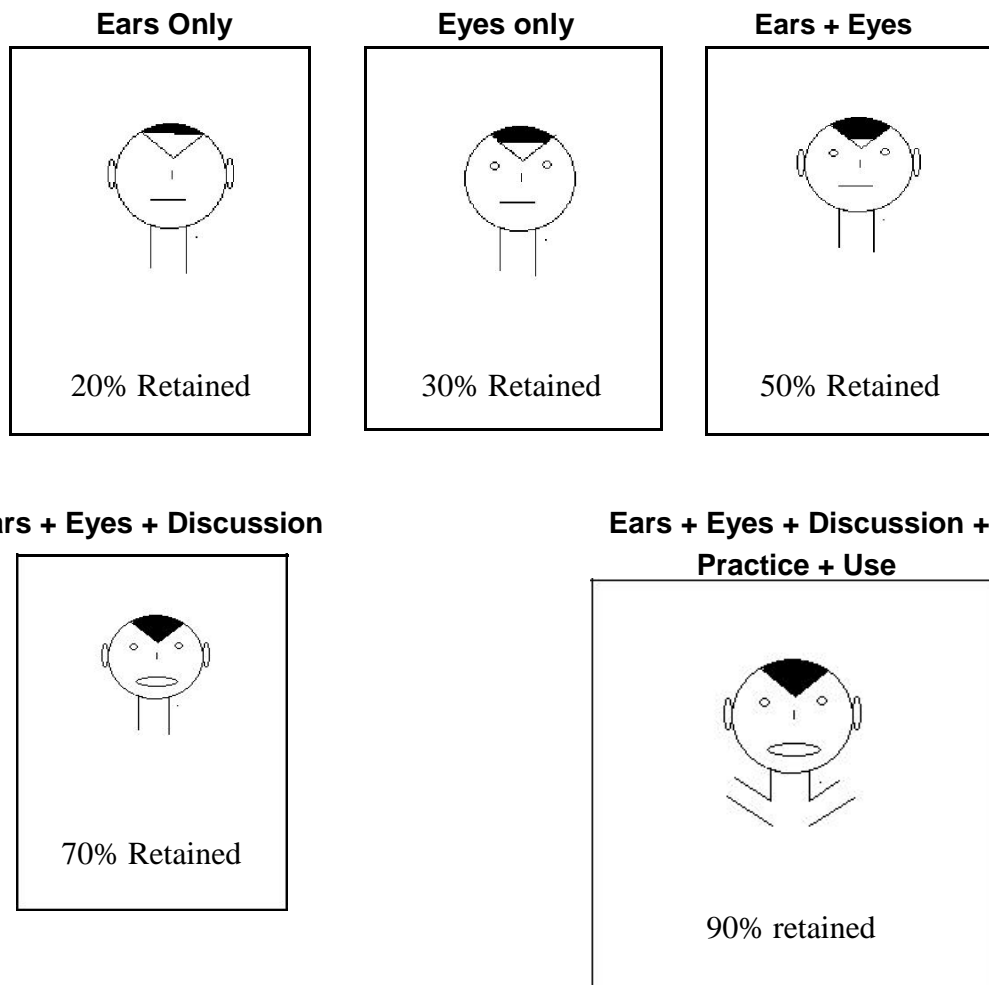
- Small groups, role plays, case studies, problems, simulations, independent thinking assignments.
- Mini-lectures are good for new information or for articulating a subject, but usually need follow-up.

E. Most adults are **action-oriented**. They learn better when teaching techniques have involvement built in.

- They like to try new things out in a “safe” atmosphere and get feedback.
- They like some challenge but the need a sense of accomplishment.
- Variety in teaching methods keeps them moving.

HOW LEARNERS RETAIN INFORMATION

Our senses play a large part in how much information we retain in a learning environment. Each individual has a preferred learning style, of course, but **when we apply the knowledge we have acquired we remember much more**. The following illustration depicts the impact of the senses on our ability to retain information.



MAKE LEARNING COMFORTABLE

Creating a learning environment that meets the needs of adult learners is a key element of successful adult education programs. The instructor should work to establish an atmosphere in which everyone feels free to participate, comment, question, react, and to learn and apply his or her learning. The initial task of the trainer is to “set the climate” so that it is conducive to participation and learning. The challenge is to create a non-threatening atmosphere in which adults have permission and are expected to share in the responsibility for their learning. The following are some strategies for accomplishing this:

Establish Adult-to-Adult Rapport. Use positive nonverbal communication, deal with the whole person, address learners as equals, share authority, and employ informal room arrangements such as placing all the chairs in a circle, in a “U”, or around a table. Adult students also appreciate instructors who share appropriate information about themselves and who are approachable and accessible.

Create a Participatory Environment. Involve the learners in deciding on course content and establishing class management guidelines, having learners serve as instructional resources, and monitoring learner satisfaction throughout the activity. Providing multiple learning options, which enables learners to choose those methods and materials best suited to their needs, will also encourage participation.

Facilitate Adult Independence. Encourage them to learn on their own, serving as a role model of an independent adult learner, and teaching decision-making and problem-solving techniques.

Provide for Individual Differences. Use a variety of instructional techniques, providing appropriate and varied instructional materials, relating instruction to learners’ experience, and adjusting for physiological and psychological differences.

Climate setting activities require time out of the program. This time is best used when the activities assist the participants to learn and apply their learning to their home situations.

You and Your Students – Tips to Enhance your Teaching Session

1. **Match your program design to your audience.**
2. **Vary your style and method of presentation.** Use visuals, exercises, guest speakers and group participation as alternatives to the standard lecture or discussion but remember to make changes on a regular basis; too much of even a good thing can get tiring.
3. **Encourage interaction.** Adults learn more effectively when they have opportunities to interact and, when appropriate, to contribute input to the training outcome.
4. **Eliminate the podium.** Unless you have a very good reason not to. A podium can be intimidating to many adult learners and may inhibit interaction.
5. **Provide examples from the “real world”** as opposed to ones that are unrealistic and difficult to relate to.
6. **Design your training set-up to facilitate your presentation.** Room layouts and facilities can play an important role in setting the atmosphere for your program.

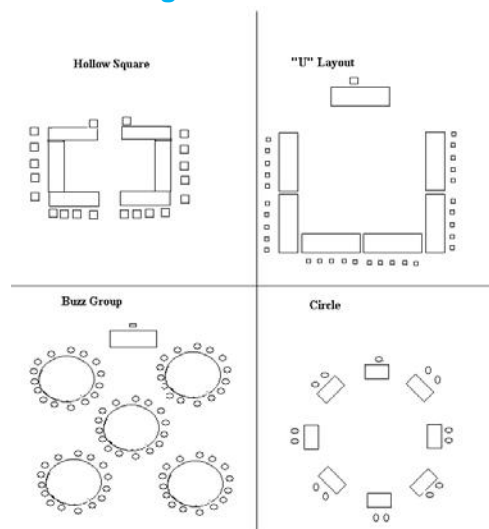
7. **Keep the session moving.** Don't allow yourself to be drawn far away from the subject and the training goals.
8. **Learn to read your audience.** Recognize when it's time to move on or take a break. Look for signs – gestures, facial expressions, body language – that indicate whether participants are tired, hungry, bored, anxious, etc.

The Physical Setting Impacts Learning

The physical setting which education takes place can stimulate learning or block it. The importance of the physical environment is often overlooked by instructors because they feel that they have little or no control over it, or they don't realize its impact on teaching/learning. Here are several suggestions that will make your group comfortable and will create a physical climate conducive to learning.

1. A **room with movable chairs and tables** is important so they can be grouped or placed around in a circle or "U" shape. Fixed auditorium seats are not the ideal for educational programs but labor educators often have no choice. If this is the situation, be creative and have participants turn around to face in each for short group activities or use pairs and triads.
2. **Plenty of light and ventilation** in the room is important.
3. For each session, you should have a **blackboard, chalk and eraser; a flip chart and markers; or an overhead projector and screen.** Whatever "tool" you decide to use, make sure that it can be seen by all and read easily.
4. Avoid being glued to the "head table" or podium because it can create unnecessary barriers. **Move out into the group** whenever possible to encourage active participation.
5. **Check the location of clocks, windows, columns and any other room fixtures** that may be distracting.
6. **Speak loud enough and clearly** so that everyone can hear you without straining. If a microphone is necessary to accomplish this, use it.
7. Time use is important. **Allow enough time for breaks, meals, socializing** when participants can move.

Room Layouts that Improve Learning



CHECKLIST ON EFFECTIVE TEACHING SKILLS

It is difficult to tell someone how to teach. Two good instructors do not use the same approach. Personalities, amount of information and viewpoints are never identical. But there are some ideas about teaching that should be considered by any teacher. Some would say that all you need to remember is to prepare adequately and then don't talk too much. In most cases, however, a little more is necessary, thus the following suggestions.

1. Why are they here?
 - Were they sent by someone else because the other people thought the program was important?
 - Did they come because they strongly desire to learn what you are teaching?
 - Are they here out of curiosity?
2. Do they know what the class will consist of? If not, they will be happy to have an overview of the course.
3. What would be a good introduction to the course?
4. Do the students think of it as their class or yours? If they think of it as yours, they are likely to let you do all the talking while they take a passive role. How can you help them think of the class as theirs?
5. If they have been away from school a long time, they will not be at ease in a classroom, especially during the first class. What are some ways of putting them at ease?

Students must do something in class occasionally. Other wise it will remain your class rather than theirs.

There is much less chance that they will be bored if they occasionally have to write the answer to a question, copy something from the blackboard, solve a problem, make suggestions, or answer a question verbally.

There is a big gap between:

DOING and **SITTING**

This gap can be partially bridged: e.g.

Teacher A says that beans will grow successfully if they have rain and warm sun.

Teacher B helps students plan the best place for a garden; has them plant beans; students periodically check the growth of the bean plants

SETTING THE STAGE FOR EACH CLASS:

Setting the stage before each class is a critical function for the instructor. Setting the stage creates and maintains both instructor and student expectations – minimize the guess work of students who may not know what to expect if you do not set the stage. Instructors should prepare by following the suggestions below

- A brief review of the previous session is valuable in orienting the students, e.g., "Last week we discussed some of the major problems involved in organizing a plant. Some of these were..."

- Briefly state what we are going to do today, e.g., “Today we are going to concentrate on methods of organizing a small plant.”
- During the last few minutes of class you may wish to briefly summarize the main points of today’s class, e.g., “Today we have seen that it is important to study the community where employees live, to contact employees entering and leaving the plant, and above all, to visit employees in their homes.
- Whenever possible, the students should be given something to prepare for the next class. The assignment need not be a long or complicated one. Its main purpose is to get the students to think about the issues being covered in class. It helps to head off the problem of students coming into class “cold.” Examples of materials students can work on between classes: five true or false statements to analyze; a specific problem to solve; a brief reading assignment; a case study that has no definite best answer.

Sometimes you will sense that a class is falling flat. It will be difficult to reverse the trend. There are, however, some ways to change the class pattern.

- A short break will give you a chance to make a fresh start.
- Give the class five minutes to solve a problem you have previously prepared.
- Raise a controversial point or present a paradox.
- Give a very short quiz consisting of five or ten statement on which they must agree or disagree. (This has to be prepared before class.)
- Hand out a very short article for them to read, analyze and comment on.

You must really be prepared for class. Experienced teachers say that when you teach a class without thorough preparation you are simply hoping for the best. Classes will often be dull and students will not return. An added dividend to be gained from thorough preparation is the feeling of confidence you take to the classroom.

Hints on Teaching

- How do you know they are receiving you if you do not sound them out frequently?
- Attention span is very short – thus variety in methods becomes important.
- We tend to try to cover too much! You can cover ten hours of material in five by talking fast – but nothing would be learned.
- Sometimes lecture overpowers or simply entertains. Remember learning is a two-way process.
- Occasionally tell a story to illustrate a point.
- Never reject outright what students can offer. Ask them to put it in other words. Ask a leading question to get them back to the point.
- Occasionally use a personal experience to illustrate a point.
- Buzzing in the background must be stopped. Class falls apart if students are permitted to talk freely while the class is in progress. “*Can’t hear what Tom has to say,*” is better than “*Be quiet.*”
- Give students a chance to come up with answers – don’t give them all yourself. Throw questions back at the group sometimes.
- Over a period of time you should direct questions toward each student remembering that the more difficult questions may embarrass the student

who knows little about the subject. You will find that some people simply want to listen. Leave them alone.

After Class, Ask Yourself...

1. In general, how did you feel the class went?
2. How did you feel (about yourself) while teaching today's class?
3. How did you feel about the students in today's class?
4. Is there anything that worked well for you in class today – that you particularly like? Does that usually go well?
5. Is there anything that did not work well – that you disliked about the class? Is that typically a problem area for you?
6. What were your teaching strengths? Did you notice anything you improved on or any personal goals you met?
7. What were your teaching problems – areas that still need improvement?
8. What teaching problem will you focus on for the next class? Do you have any suggestions or strategies for change?

GIVING AND RECEIVING FEEDBACK

When you are learning to do something new – whether it's riding a bike or making a speech – you need **FEEDBACK**. You need to know what you did well and how you can improve.

Giving Feedback:

Feedback can come from a friend or a teacher. When you are the person giving feedback, your goal is to help the other person learn and develop. Good feedback requires a helpful spirit, not lengthy critical analysis.

Start by asking the person how they felt. Often they are more critical of themselves than you are. Sometimes they have questions – “Did I talk loud enough?” or “What should I do when...?”

Follow these guidelines...

1. **Be Positive.** Tell the person exactly what you thought they did well. “I liked your introduction. It made me see why this topic is important.”
2. **Be Specific.** “It's great” is okay, but not of much help. Better is, “I thought you used the flip chart well to list the main points.”
3. **Phrase critical comments carefully.**
 - A. Suggest another way of doing it.

“Your talk would be more interesting if you gave examples.”

“When the discussion got off track, perhaps you could have asked another question to bring it back.”

B. Avoid saying “*You should...*” or “*You shouldn’t...*” Give your personal reaction – how you felt.

“When Joe made the point that..., I felt you ignored it (changed the subject, etc.)”

4. **Make the feedback suit the person’s knowledge or skill.** Is he or she a beginner or a pro?

For Example:

A person learning to swim can work on their arm stroke or their leg kick but not both at the same time.

Similarly, a person learning to teach cannot guide discussion as well as an experienced instructor. Feedback will help most if only two or three suggestions are given at any one time.

RECEIVING FEEDBACK

Receiving feedback takes trust. Try to listen to what is said and see what the person is getting at.

1. **Hear feedback as someone being helpful and helping you learn.** Try not to be defensive.
2. **If you want feedback on a particular point, ask for it.**
3. **Show that you appreciate the comments being offered.** “Thank you” or “What would have been more effective?” are responses you might make.
4. **Listen carefully** and check to make sure that what you heard is what the other person was saying.
5. **If you have had enough, say so.** “I want to think about that later” or “That’s all for now.”

FEEDBACK FORM

This is a checklist to help you evaluate some of the basic elements in the presentation of student instructors to aid you in giving **constructive** feedback

POINTS TO WATCH	OBSERVATIONS
Goal of Lesson Clear? Achieved?	
Techniques Used Effectively Used?	
Introduction Interesting? Clear?	
Use of Lecture Questions? Organized	
Use of Audio-Visuals Introduction? Follow-up? Summary?	
Use of Discussion Kinds of questions? Response to comments?	
Class Participation Involvement of group?	
Teaching Style Lively, Sincere, Eye Contact, Mannerisms, Voice?	

SELF EVALUATION CHECKLIST

	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
My evaluation skills (especially the informal techniques) are:				
My ability to handle difficult classroom situations is:				
My ability to identify and utilize visual aids (flip charts, handouts, etc.) is:				
My feedback skills in communicating information, opinions, observations and conclusions so that they are understood and can be acted upon are:				
My ability to identify and utilize visual aids ((flip charts, handouts, etc.) is:				
My ability to use questioning skills to gather information, opinions, observations and conclusions so that they are understood and can be acted upon are:				
My ability to use group process skills and see how they influence groups to both accomplish tasks and fulfill the needs of their employees is:				
My Understanding of the difference between a learning need and a learning objective is:				
My ability to effectively use warm-ups or icebreakers is:				
My ability to know how adults acquire and use knowledge, skills, and attitudes and to understand individual differences in learning is:				

PROGRAM EVALUATION

You've just finished a training session, you feel it went well, the participants seemed satisfied, but you're just not sure it if was really successful. You wish there was a way to know if anything needed to be changed, if you were able to meet the students' learning needs, if the program was effective, etc.

A program evaluation can to give you insight into these areas. By evaluation, we mean the various techniques and activities which:

- Help the instructor, as well as the participants, measure the amount and kind of learning which has occurred;
- Help the instructor receive input on the effectiveness of the content, environment and facilities, techniques, aids, etc.;
- Help the instructor receive constructive feedback on his/her own performance.

WHY Evaluate?

Labor education begins with the identification of learning needs. Based on these needs, learning objectives are formulated. The rest of the program planning and course preparation is directed to the eventual delivery of a learning program designed to meet these objectives.

It is, therefore, of critical importance that instructors be able to answer certain questions about a program, such as: Have the learning objectives been met? Has the desired change in skill, knowledge or attitude actually occurred? Etc. None of these questions can be answered unless we evaluate.

There are other reasons why evaluation is important. Unless the opportunity for self-evaluation is systematically built into learning programs, it is very difficult for participants to assess their own progress. Since each participant must ultimately be relied upon to apply new knowledge, this personal assessment (usually called “self-evaluation”) must occur.

WHAT to Evaluate

The Various things that should be measured through evaluation include:

1. The **learner’s own sense of progress** towards the objectives of the program.
2. The **degree of change in knowledge, awareness, attitude or skill**, based on the stated objectives of the program.
3. The appropriateness and usefulness of various environmental considerations such as **location, physical setting, schedule, meals**, etc.
4. The effectiveness of the various **techniques used** – group discussion, lecture, role playing, etc.
5. The usefulness of the various **aids used** – group discussion, lecture, role playing, etc.
6. The appropriateness and the level of the **course content**.
7. The performance, in terms of effectiveness, of **the instructor**.

HOW to Evaluate

There is not a single best way to evaluate. In fact, regardless of the kind of educational program involved, it is advisable to use a variety of approaches. The specific approaches used will depend on such considerations as the style of the instructor, the level of the participants, the amount of time available, and most importantly, the nature of the learning objectives.

Basic evaluation approaches include: observation, practice, questionnaires, and follow-up surveys.

1. **Observation**

Observation is the instructor just being alerted to what is happening in the classroom. While observation does not fall into the category of hard data gathering and should never be exclusively relied upon, it is an important source of information that should be considered part of our overall evaluation package. This is especially true because it is one of the few avenues for ongoing or continuous evaluation.

If participants are arriving late for sessions, obviously not paying attention, rarely asking questions, etc., something is wrong. If the room is too small or poorly ventilated – that will become obvious long before participants get around to filling out a formal/written evaluation. These and other matters can often be dealt with “on the spot.”

2. **Practice**

Chairing a meeting; moving an amendment to a main question; delivering a five-minute report on the finances of the local union; a topic; interviewing a grievant another employee in order to get the facts; drafting a budget; etc. These are learning applications that can be built into the program format and evaluated by both the instructor and the participants as to skills acquired.

3. **Questionnaires**

Questionnaires are probably the most common form of evaluation in labor Adult education programs. They are usually distributed at the end of the session or program. Questionnaires are useful for a number of reasons, but two notable benefits are: the questionnaire can provide a source of measuring any differences from one program to another (this allows the instructor to better gauge the impact of any changes made in the program); and the questionnaire can provide a format for participants who prefer to write their comments anonymously.

4. **Follow-up Surveys**

Follow-up surveys are those sent out to participants some time after completion of the program. They are especially useful for obtaining input regarding the effect the learning program has had on their day-to-day performance. It can also give people the chance to express ideas that occur to them after they have had an opportunity to reflect on their experiences.

In summary, evaluations need to be conducted primarily to determine whether the program accomplished what it started out to do. Did it meet its objectives? If this thought is constantly at the front of the instructor’s mind, the class will not only stay on target, but even more importantly will contribute to better and more effective training programs in the future.

TIPS FOR WRITTEN EVALUATIONS

- **Always give participants enough time to complete evaluation forms in class.** “Take-home” forms usually stay there. If you only save the last few minutes of the session for evaluation, the forms will show tell-tale sign of the time crunch: hurried and incomplete responses. Before the wrap-up segment of the program, put aside some time to review the program and answer questions about the evaluation forms.

- **To get a comprehensive picture of your program, try to ask the same number of questions about both strengths and weaknesses.** A “mixed review” can be more accurate and helpful than overly positive or negative responses.
- **Evaluate more than one time during the training if possible.** An eight hour workshop can be evaluated at mid-point and improved for the remaining half. If you only evaluate at the end, you won't be able to share comments, use suggestions, or follow up for additional information.
- **When it isn't feasible to stop and evaluate the program at different points, use a method of ongoing evaluation, such as observation.** Instead of evaluating only at the end of the program (during long programs it can be difficult to remember important details), hand out evaluation forms at the beginning and instruct learners when and how to fill them out. Give them a few minutes after each session to evaluate the material, presentation, and presenter.
- **Share responses with the group.** Express your interest in their opinions and ideas by preparing a summary of the written evaluations and send them out to participants. This will give individuals a sense of how others responded and how their own reactions compare with the overall group response.
- **Hold on to your evaluations.** Use the ideas and suggestions to improve your performance and programs and to measure your development of skills.

SECTION II

TEACHING TECHNIQUES

LABOR EDUCATION TECHNIQUES

“When to Use Which Technique?” –That is the question.

Presentation Techniques

1. If you want people to...

- Get new facts or information they don't have
- Get an overview of a problem or issue
- Hear a logical point of view presented clearly

Use Presentation Techniques

- Lecture
- Panel
- Films, Videotapes
- Readings

To work well...

Presentation techniques should be followed up with techniques that involve the participants. The instructor must use discussion or “do it” techniques that get participants active and involved.

For example ...

A videotape should always be followed by a discussion on the major facts or ideas presented in the videotapes.

Discussion Techniques

2. If you want people to...

- Understand a new idea or approach in depth
- Relate an idea or approach to their own experiences or situation
- Accept a controversial or complex idea

Use Discussion Techniques

- Group Discussion
- Buzz Groups
- Case Studies
- Team Projects
- Role Plays
- Questionnaire
- Brainstorming

To work well ...

Discussion techniques require careful organization and guidance by the instructor. Summary and focus must be provided— *“What did we learn from this?”*

For example ...

Discussion on any subject needs to be guided through the main aspects of that subject by the instructor's questions. It is up to the instructor to keep the discussion on track and to move it on when one aspect has been covered.

“Do It” Techniques

3. If you want people to...

- Build skills
- Put their learning to work
- Experience “doing it”

Use “Do It” (hands on) Techniques

- Practice
- Projects
- Exercises
- Role Plays
- Videotape with Playback

To work well ...

“Do it” techniques need introductory guidelines and plenty of feedback from the instructor.

For example ...

In teaching public speaking, each student should make a speech and the instructor should give feedback on the good points as well as make suggestions on how to improve.

Group-Building Techniques

4. If you want people to...

- Get to know one another
- Feel part of a group—build solidarity
- Share ideas and experiences freely

Use Group-Building Techniques

- Icebreakers
- Pairs
- Buzz Groups
- Team Projects
- Group Discussion
- Brainstorming

To work well...

An instructor who is using these techniques should tell the group “up front” that they will learn more and work together better if they know one another.

For example ...

The instructor can count off buzz groups of four so as to mix people from different organizations or different cities. The instructor should tell them that the purpose for doing this is to get participants acquainted.

MAKING LECTURES EFFECTIVE

Description

A lecture is a presentation technique whereby the instructor presents facts and ideas to a group and they listen (hopefully). It is a presentation technique.

The effective instructor works to...

- Keep lectures short (10-15 minutes);
- Make lectures easy to understand

WHEN are Lectures a useful teaching technique?

Use lectures to...

- Give people information they don't have. For example, educators often lecture on one specific part of a law like Taft Hartley or Landrum Griffin.
- Provide an overview of a topic. For example, you might talk on the structure of your union **company's fall protection program** for 10 minutes (then hold a discussion).
- Save time. Lectures can cover a topic rapidly but people often tune out and you can't be sure they understand you.

To be effective as an education technique, a good lecture needs to be followed up with a participatory activity such as having participants fill out a questionnaire, participate in a buzz group, discuss open-ended questions, observe and analyze a role play, etc.

HOW to prepare for a lecture

1. **Make a detailed outline of you subject:** two or three major points are enough for 15 minutes.
2. As you write, **ask yourself** "*Is this clear?*" "*Is it easy to understand?*"
 - a. Use an example, a story, a comparison or an experience to illustrate a point.
 - b. Use the flip chart or overhead to reinforce major points.
 - c. Use a handout (cartoon, map, diagram) to attract and focus participants' attention
3. **Ask yourself** "*How can I get the participants into the act?*"
 - Ask them to raise hands to answer a question that may have been posed earlier.
 - Set up a buzz group to discuss a major point.
 - Ask an open-ended question, then facilitate a mini-discussion
4. **Organize your material.** The introduction outlines areas you intend to cover; body discusses these key areas; and the closing summarizes the main points.

Presentation skills to enhance your lecture

1. **Make eye contact** with the participants. Staring over the heads of the participants or down at your notes distracts your audience.

2. **Stop to look at your notes as necessary.** Pauses are OK. Be careful not to read your notes. This is a definite turn-off to the participants.
3. **Move around the room** if possible varying your gestures and voice.
4. **Use visual aids** (flipcharts, overhead transparencies, slides or handouts) to provide variety in your lecture.
5. **Try to avoid:**
 - a. Language that might offend someone
 - b. Complicated terminology, acronyms
 - c. Inappropriate jokes
 - d. Use of tag questions at the end of sentences such as – “Okay” “all right”
 - e. Modifiers – “sort of” “kind of”

VISUAL AIDS TO ENHANCE LEARNING

Visual aids are used to facilitate, enhance or bring more clarity to the learning experience. Usually they play a supportive role in the learning process to the main teaching technique that is being implemented. Visual aids improve “retention”.

Criteria for the Effective Selection and Use of Visual Aids

1. Aids should be simple, clear and concise
2. Aids should be geared to the experience of the learners.
3. Aids should be consistent with learning objectives and other program constraints – e.g. time, facilities.
4. Aids must be well prepared. This includes previewing materials that the instructor has not used previously.
5. Aids should suit the techniques(s) being used.
6. Aids should encourage more active learner participation

The most common visual aid is the flip chart:

Flip Charts

Flip charts are pads of paper supported by an easel. Flip charts can be utilized in a variety of ways. The instructor can: prepare them in advance to serve as an outline or guide for the session; write on them during the session as ideas are generated; refer back to them as needed; post them on walls for reinforcement; and use them to facilitate group reporting. Flip charts help reinforce learning because students can see, as well as hear, what is being talked about.

WHEN

Use flip charts to...

- Focus on the major points
- Present questions
- Convey new words or definitions
- Present dates, statistics or other detailed information

- Record answers in group discussions
- Show diagrams, charts or other visuals

Tips for Using the Flip Chart

1. **Use only dark marker colors** when writing on the flip chart paper. Black, dark brown, or dark blue are the most legible. Avoid using lighter colors like yellow or orange, except for highlighting. Surprisingly, red is also a very difficult color to read and should be avoided for text. You can use up to two or three different colors on a flip chart. The contrast will catch your audience's eye.
2. **Print – don't use script.** Printing in block letters on the flip chart paper is much easier to read from the back of the room.
3. **Be sure not to crowd the flip chart** with too much information (four or five lines to a page). If necessary, remove the sheet, tape it to the wall, and continue writing on another sheet. Or, you may wish to have two flip charts set up side by side.
4. Many instructors **prepare flip charts in advance.** (It's easier to write well when you aren't in a hurry.) Be sure to proof read any flip charts you have prepared in advance. When writing "on the spot" spelling errors are more understandable.
5. **Keep your prepared flip chart covered with a blank page** until you are ready for the class to see it. When you have finished reference to that information, "flip" it over, unless you want the class to be reminded of the information. In that case, you may wish to tape it on a side wall
6. When preparing a flip chart in advance, be sure to **write on every other page,** leaving one or two blank pages in between.
7. If possible, **obtain flip chart paper with light, preprinted "grid" lines.** This will help make your printing more legible, and will look more professional.
8. **Don't turn your back on the class and "talk to the flip chart."** Write down what you need, and then turn back to the class. A few moments of silence are okay.
9. **Don't block your audience's view of the chart.** Stand to the side of the chart and point to the key words or ideas.
10. You can, in advance, lightly **pencil in reminder notes** to yourself on the flip chart.
11. Use **paper clips to mark the location of flip chart sheets** prepared in advance to avoid searching through the pad of paper.

PANELS

Description

Panel employees deliver a series of mini-lectures on a topic and respond to questions from the audience.

WHEN is it a useful technique

Use panels to...

- Get across a lot of information by having several people present different parts of the subject
- Allow learners to see and hear several experts in a short time
- Provide learners with many different sides of an issue

HOW to prepare and conduct a panel:

1. Plan the Panel:

Ensure that the topic lends itself to effective coverage by a panel and that the topic is important to your audience.

- **Talk with potential panelists to determine their suitability.** Try to choose panelists with diverse viewpoints or experiences. Look for panelists who have the following characteristics: comfortable with formally presenting a viewpoint and answering questions; able to crystallize thoughts and present complex ideas clearly; and able to prepare adequately for the panel, given the time constraints.
- **Decide how many panelists to invite.** Three or four panelists are plenty.
- **Set time frames for speeches.** How much time does each panelist need to present his or her remarks? Ten to twenty minutes per panelist is enough. Make sure panel employees know the time limits you set.
- **Phone each panelist, and then follow up with a letter.** Tell each panel member the topic, date, time, place and description of audience. Panelists may want to talk with one another about their speeches to avoid overlap. Tell each potential panelist what piece of the overall topic you'd like him or her to speak about and what the other panelists will speak about. Ask potential panelists to respond to your invitation by a specific date.

2. Conduct the Panel:

- **Set up the room for the panel.** Have a front table for panelists and make sure all the audience employees will have a good view. Provide panelists with microphones if the room and group are large. Tell panel employees to stand up, so they can be seen.
- **Moderate the panel.** Introduce the panelists before the panel begins or at the beginning of individual speeches. Keep time. Smoothly intervene if a panelist goes over the allotted time. Underplay your role as moderator. Your role is to facilitate, direct questions, and keep the panel running smoothly.
- **Open up the discussion.** After panelists deliver their remarks, open the discussion for audience questions. Ask the first question, if no one else does, to get the ball rolling. Ask for more information on vague questions or answers. Point out divergent viewpoints to spur additional discussion and debate. Intervene if the discussion becomes heated, or if participants ask hostile questions.
- **Close the panel.** Provide wrap-up comments and an appropriate closing statement.

USING FILMS AND VIDEOTAPES

Description:

Showing a film/videotape to a class may be used to introduce, supplement or reinforce a topic. This is basically a presentation technique so it must be followed with a discussion or “do it” technique in order to be most effective for teaching.

WHEN is it a useful teaching technique?

Use a film/videotape to...

- Set a mood at the beginning of a class
- Visually reinforce agenda topics
- Provide a common experience to launch a group discussion
- Provide new information
- Teach a skill (for example, “how to” tapes)
- Motivate the learner
- Focus attention on a specific problem

HOW to use a film/videotape:

Films and videotapes must be chosen carefully depending on your program objective.

In selecting a film/videotape, consider these factors:

- Will it help reach your learning goal for the class?
- Is it the right length?
- Will there be enough time for discussion?
- Where will it fit into the program?
- Who will introduce it and lead the discussion?

1. **Preview the film/videotape.** Previewing is always essential to prepare for discussion. Look at the film/videotape as early and often as possible. Take notes. Consider these questions: (a) Does the film/videotape cover the area you want to discuss? (b) Is the information current? (c) What information must be updated or supplemented? (d) Does it prepare the group for the discussion? If the film/videotape meets your needs, prepare a discussion outline that you will use to focus the class
2. **Check your equipment before the class.** Before the session (e.g. lunch, breaks, etc.) make sure you check the quality of the film/videotape you are planning to show; if it's a videotape check that the size of the television monitor is appropriate for the size of your audience; make any necessary adjustments to the tracking and focus; advance the film/videotape to the actual start of the program; set the volume.
3. **Introduce the film or videotape.** Prepare the group as you would for any learning experience. Briefly tell why you are showing the film/videotape and how it ties in with the subject under discussion. Describe the film/videotape revealing only enough information to build interest and focus attention on the subject. Prepare the group for discussion following the showing by asking them to watch for certain points. Keep the introduction brief – not more than five minutes.
4. **Show the film/videotape.** Make sure that it can be seen and heard clearly by all or as participants to move to where they are comfortable for the viewing. In the case of a film, you will need to darken the room. For showing a videotape, in

most instances, you can leave the lights on. This will allow participants to take notes if they want to.

5. **Lead the discussion.** Arrange the room so that the group can easily see and hear each other in an atmosphere conducive to discussion. If the group is large, you may wish to break up into buzz groups and give each group several questions to discuss. Discussion will not develop spontaneously. The instructor must initiate it and guide it according to your program goals. Begin with an easy question, one that most people will have an opinion on and one that moves the discussion in the direction you want it to go. If there is no immediate response to the question, try rephrasing it. Give them time to think about it. Follow up on the points you asked them to look for when you introduced the film/videotape.

Discussion might move away from the topic of the film/videotape, so make sure to bring the focus back to the main theme that you want to cover in this teaching session. Summarize the discussion from time to time and again at the end of the session.

Keep in mind that no film/videotape will accomplish everything you want; that every film/videotape has its own point of view; that it may deal with some aspects of a problem and leave out others that you may find some areas are inadequately stressed or dated. It's up to the instructor to supplement the film/videotape with a good introduction and discussion.

HOW TO USE GROUP DISCUSSION

Description:

Group discussion is an exchange of ideas among employees of a group facilitated by the discussion leader. The whole group participates in examining a problem or a concept and discovers the answer together as a group.

WHEN is it a useful teaching technique?

Use discussion to . . .

- **Build understanding.** By using discussion you can tell if the group really understands, absorbs information.
- **Exchange information and experiences.** Adults bring a lot of knowledge to the class (as well as some misinformation). Discussion allows participants to share what they know/don't know about the subject.
- **Study and solve problems.** The group can look at the cause of a problem, examine facts, and arrive at solutions. For example, the rising cost of health care, image of the union **Company**, etc. lend themselves to discussion.
- **Change attitudes.** If the purpose of the session is to broaden or change attitudes, discussion can be particularly valuable. Subjects such as the role of the **union's** in politics, sexual harassment, civil rights, etc. can be effectively handled through discussion.
- **Determine the participants' needs.** At the beginning of a session the instructor may use discussion to hear why students are attending a session or what they hope to get out of a particular class.

HOW to prepare for discussion

1. **Make a teaching outline of the main points** you want to cover. Define the subject. Briefly introduce the subject with some background information and indicate why the subject is important to the group.
2. **Decide how you are going to start the discussion**. You could use a film or videotape, a questionnaire, a mini-lecture, or just a provocative question.
3. **Write out your discussion questions** (and back-up questions) – phrase them carefully.

HOW to lead a discussion

A good discussion is also depended on the ability of the discussion leader to assist the group in doing its job. The discussion leader should . . .

- Make it clear that this session is going to be a group discussion in which everyone's views are welcome. It is not a lecture.
- Start the discussion and see that the group follows the "ground rules" indicated in the box.
- Lead the discussion by keeping thing on track and by presenting new question to move the group on.
- Encourage wide participation from the group. Make sure that one person does not dominate.
- Clarify and summarize points made by employees of the group that may not be entirely clear to others. The discussion leader can help clarify the issue by restating a point or by adding an illustration that will help point out what the person is saying

Ground Rules for Discussion:

- Discussion is a team effort. To be effective, there are certain rules that need to be adhered to by everyone if the discussion is to be productive.
- One person talks at a time.
- Everyone LISTENS.
- Look at the person who is talking and try to understand their point – don't argue mentally.
- Contribute your ideas – don't hang back.
- Deal with one subject at a time – stick to the point.

THE ART OF ASKING QUESTIONS

The question is not only a useful tool, it is highly versatile. A good instructor tries to talk as little as possible and makes the student do the talking. This is achieved by asking the right kinds of question. Questions can help you:

1. **Begin a discussion**. The fastest way of getting a discussion under way is to ask a thought-provoking question.

2. **Arouse interest in the subject matter under discussion.** A question containing an element of controversy is most likely to achieve this.
3. **Direct the thinking of the group.** Suppose your lesson deals with the problem of how to get employees to attend union meetings, **Free training classes** and you wish to direct their attention to the fact that the apathy of the employees might be the fault of the leaders. You do that by asking, *“To what extent, in your view, is apathy the fault of the leadership?”*
4. **Determine the students’ understanding or knowledge.** You have taught the concept of inflation and now you wish to know whether they know what inflation is. Simply ask them, *“What do we mean by inflation?”* will let you know whether they have the idea or not. If you wish to test their understanding, all you need do is ask this question: *“How can one tell whether there is inflation?”*
5. **Get participation from a particular student.** You can call a student's name and ask him or her the question directly. A word of caution. If you use this approach make sure they you have established a climate in which the participants do not feel put on the spot or embarrassed.
6. **Obtain information or opinions.** *“What does the contract say about overtime?”* or *“In your experience, why do people fail to vote in nation elections?”*

Types of Questions:

1. **Closed questions** are used to direct or guide discussions, and are normally answered with a “yes” or “no”. For example, *“Do you...?”*, *“Have you...?”*, *“Are you...?”*, *“Would you...?”*
2. **Open questions** are used to gain more information, and are not normally answered with a “yes” or “no”. Open questions that yield the most information usually start with “what” or “how”
3. **Mirror statements** (sometimes called “paraphrasing”) are used in place of open questions to gain more information. This technique forces you to listen extremely carefully, since you know that when the participant is finished speaking, you will need to repeat to him or her what was said. For example, “Joe, what I heard you say is . . . *“Did I understand you correctly?”*
4. **Guided questions** are used to direct the discussion to either the positive or negative side of an issue. For example, if a participant says, *“I like that communications model, but I’m not sure it will work with my people,”* you can guide the discussion to either side of the participant’s statement by asking an appropriate question: *“What do you like about this particular communications model?”* or *“What are your major concerns about using this communications model with your people?”*

The least desirable question seems to be the personal “WHY” question – as in *“Why did YOU do it that way?”* The “why” combined with the “you” can produce defensive behavior, since it questions personal motives. However, a *“Why did THEY do it that way?”* is less challenging, since it asks a person for an opinion about others.

Techniques for Asking Questions

For maximum effect, the manner, as well as the right question, is important. Here are suggestions which you might consider:

1. **Vary** your questions. You'll get more participation if you ask "open-ended" questions for which there is no single "right" or "wrong" answer, but several possible responses.
2. **Speak Distinctly** so everyone can hear the questions. Wait a few seconds for a reply.
3. **Listen** carefully to the reply to your question. Tell the class they should listen to each other.
4. **Reword** a question if it's not clear and you are getting poor response. Give an example to clarify the meaning.
5. **Don't put a student down** if you don't like the answer they've given. A student who feels put down or criticized will stop talking and the rest of the class will be hesitant to offer any input.
6. **Encourage** students to ask question and repeat them to make sure that everyone was able to hear.

To help you begin a discussion, or to find out how much your participants know about a certain topic, it may be wise to put a series of questions into a "questionnaire" format. Such a questionnaire makes for direct participation by the participants and shifts attention from the instructor to the questions. It is particular useful if you are inclined to be nervous. (See section on questionnaires in this Manual).

HOW TO HANDLE DISCUSSION PROBLEMS

Student May Be:	Why:	What You Can Do About It:
Overly Talkative	He/she may be an "eager beaver" or a showoff. He/she may also be exceptionally well informed and anxious to share information or just naturally wordy.	Don't be embarrassing or sarcastic ... you may need his/her contributions later on. Slow him/her down with some difficult questions. Interrupt with: "That's an interesting point ... now let's see what the group thinks of it."
Highly Argumentative	Combat personality ... professional heckler Or May be normally good natured but upset by personal or job problems	Keep your own temper firmly in check ... don't let group get excited either. Honestly try to find merit in one of his/her points (or get the group to do so) ... then move on to something else. When he/she makes an obvious misstatement, too it to the group ... let them turn it down. As a last resort, talk to him/her privately to find out what's bothering the individual ... see if you can win his/her cooperation.

Student May Be:	Why:	What You Can Do About It:
Quickly Helpful	He/she is really trying to help. But he/she actually makes it difficult and keeps others out.	<p>Cut across him/her tactfully by questioning others.</p> <p>Thank him/her, suggest “we put others to work”.</p>
Rambler	<p>He/she talks about everything except the subject.</p> <p>Or</p> <p>Uses farfetched analogies, gets lost.</p>	<p>When he/she stops fir breath, thank him/her, refocus his/her attention by restating the relevant points, and move on.</p> <p>Grin, tell him/her that the point is interesting, point to the flip chart and in a friendly manner, indicate we are a bit off the subject.</p> <p>As a last resort, glance at your watch.</p>
Personality Clash	Two or more employees clash. (This can divide your group into factions.)	<p>Emphasize points of agreement; minimize points of disagreement (if possible).</p> <p>Draw attention to objectives. Cut across with direct questions on the topic.</p> <p>Bring a sound member into the discussion.</p> <p>Frankly ask that personalities be omitted.</p>
Obstinate	<p>Won't budge. Or</p> <p>Prejudiced. Or</p> <p>Hasn't seen your point.</p>	<p>Throw his/her view out to the group and have the group employees straighten him/her out.</p> <p>Tell him/her time is short, you'll be glad to discuss it later; ask him/her to accept the group viewpoint for the moment</p>
Wrong Subject	Not rambling, just off base.	Take the blame: “Something I said must have led you off the subject; this is what we should be discussing...” (Restate point).
Griper	<p>Has pet peeve, Or</p> <p>Professional griper Or</p> <p>Has legitimate complaint ... Point out that we can't change</p>	<p>Policy here, problem is to operate as best we can under the system.</p> <p>Indicate that you'll discuss the problem with him/her privately later.</p> <p>Have a member of the group answer him/her.</p> <p>Indicate time pressures.</p>

Student May Be:	Why:	What You Can Do About It:
Side Conversation	May or may not be related to the subject. (This can distract the class and you.)	<p>Don't embarrass the individual. Call on by name, ask him/her an easy question, or</p> <p>Call on by name, then restate last opinion expressed or last remark made by the group, and ask him/her opinion of it.</p> <p>If, during the program, you are in the habit of moving around the room, saunter over and stand casually behind employees who are talking. This should not be made obvious to the group.</p>
Inarticulate	<p>Lacks ability to put thoughts into proper words. Or</p> <p>He/she is getting the idea but can't convey it Or</p> <p>He/she needs help</p>	<p>Don't say "what you mean is this..." Say "Let me repeat that..." (Then put it in better language). Ask, "Is that a fair statement of your point?"</p>
Definitely Wrong	<p>Individual comes up with a comment that is obviously incorrect.</p>	<p>Say "I can see how you feel" or "that's one way of looking at it." Say, "I see your point, but can we reconcile that with the (true situation)?"</p>
Searching for your Opinion	<p>Trying to put you on the spot, Or</p> <p>Trying to have you support one view, Or</p> <p>May be simply looking for your advice</p>	<p>Generally, you should avoid solving their problems for them. Never take sides.</p> <p>Point out that your view is relatively unimportant, compared to the view of the people in the program. There are times when you must, and should, give a direct answer. Before you do so, try to determine their reason for asking your view. Say, "First, let's get some other opinions. Joe, how do you look upon this point?"</p>
Reluctant to Talk	<p>Bored, Or</p> <p>Indifferent, Or</p> <p>Feels Superior, Or</p> <p>Timid</p>	<p>Your action will depend upon what is motivating him/her.</p> <p>Arouse his/her interest by asking for his/her opinion.</p> <p>Draw out the person next to him/her, then ask the quiet student to say what he/she thinks of the view expressed. If he/she is the "superior" type, ask for his/her view after indicating the respect held for experience. (Don't overdo this. Group will resent it.)</p>

BUZZ GROUPS

Description:

Buzz groups are small discussion group composed of 3 to 6 people. These sub-groups are usually given a brief, task-oriented activity to perform and then report back to the larger group.

WHEN is it a useful teaching technique?

Use buzz groups to...

- Encourage participation from individual employees who do not like to talk in the large group.
- Help participants become acquainted with each other.
- Accustom participants to working in the “group mode” to reach solutions.

HOW to set up buzz groups:

1. First, **break up the class** into the desired number of buzz groups (depending on the size of the entire class).

There are many ways to divide up the class:

- a. Have the students count off by the desired number of groups. For example, if you want four groups, the students count off in four's;
- b. Indicate the desired groups by physically going around the room designating the individuals.
- c. If the room is arranged in rows, make each row a group; and so on.

These are just a few ideas. The mixing procedure is important so that each buzz group has a cross section of the opinions represented. It also helps to mix up individuals since, in many cases, friends sit with friends.

2. **Designate the physical area where each group is to meet**. Try to spread the groups out as much as possible so they will not interfere with one another. For example, “Group one in that corner, group two back by the door ...”
3. Tell each group to select **a chairperson or recorder** who will keep track of the discussion
4. **Give the assignment**, what the group is going to discuss. Give each group a specific question for discussion. It may be the same question or each or different ones. It is preferable that the question be in writing (either in a handout or flip chart) so each group knows exactly what is to be discussed.
5. The instructor should **set the time limit for discussion** (10-20 minutes).
6. The instructor should walk **around the room, listening** to make sure each group understands their question and is staying on the subject.
7. Give each group a **two-minute warning** as the time limit approaches so they can summarize before reconvening.
8. The chairperson or reporter of each group should be asked to **report** on their group's “answers”.
9. The instructor should **summarize** the finding and any conclusions reached.

Remember . . .

- It is sometimes hard to divide up a large group, but not impossible.

- Be prepared to help a buzz group that gets bogged down.
- Make sure you allow enough time to get reports from all the different groups. In general, reporting takes twice as long as the buzz group activity, often as much as 5 minutes per group.
- Summarize for the entire group so they feel they accomplished something.

THE USE OF CASES

Description

The case method presents a record of a realistic situation, complete with the problems that exist in it, but offers no conclusions. The case method requires the class to consider a problem, much as they would have to do in real life, and to use both facts and judgment in solving the problem.

WHEN is it a useful teaching technique?

Use the case method to...

- improve critical-thinking, problem-solving, and decision making skills
- solve an actual policy, administrative, or implementation problem
- get the group to think concretely about a problem situation.

Preparing a Case:

1. **Identify the session objectives.** What learning needs must the case address?
2. **Identify the central case situation.** Based on the learning needs of the participants, what should be the central case issue?
3. **Choose the case situation.** There are all kinds of cases, ranging from brief and simple problems to long and complicated situations. Usually in the briefer problem, the answer is more clear-cut than in the longer case since there are fewer factors to take into account. The following are characteristics of a good case:
 - It is specific as to detail, yet can be handled in several different ways.
 - It is interesting and realistic; any busy union officer **Person** could recognize this as a familiar situation.
 - It forces the class to take facts into account and exercise judgment in handling the problem.
 - It forces the class to talk about a common problem and guarantees that they will have the same set of facts and conditions in mind.
 - It requires the participants to put themselves in the union offer's **decision maker's** shoes and consider the case as if it were happening to them.
4. **Plan your case research.** Where will you find the information you need to develop a "true-to-life" situation.
5. **Conduct your case research.** Gather data through interviews, observation, and documentation.
6. **Write the case.** Describe the events, circumstances, and characters of the case situation. Write in the active voice, i.e. "*Bob Smith was on a break when...*"

Present the organizational background information that's relevant to the situation. Include dialogue between characters if you have actual quotes or information from which you can create quotes. Change the names of the people who went through the situation, and change them to names that could be either male or female (e.g. Lee, Pat, Terry). Cover the situation completely, but do not include unnecessary details.

HOW to conduct a session using a case

1. **Review the objectives of the case method** session: to improve communication and interaction skills, etc.
2. **Briefly describe the case method process:**
 - participants independently read the case, analyze the data, and develop possible solutions to the case issues.
 - participants consider and debate possible solutions in a group discussion.
 - instructor summarizes the discussion, asks participants to draw case conclusions, and highlights lessons learned.

USING QUESTIONNAIRES

WHAT is a questionnaire?:

A questionnaire is a series of written questions, whether open -ended or multiple choice, that is handed out to participants to be completed individually or discussed in a group. Questionnaires are a useful technique in employees' education because...

- Every class member has to read the question and answer them. (This increases participation.)
- A questionnaire structures the session clearly. Everyone stays on track as the instructor moves down the list of questions.

WHEN is it a useful teaching technique?

Use questionnaires to...

- Launch a broader discussion
- Help determine students' understanding
- Promote individual participation and arouse interest
- Focus attention on one topic at a time

Before you use a questionnaire state at the beginning that it is not a test and does not have to be handed in. If the material is difficult and new, the questionnaire can be used as a discussion guide without asking participants to individually answer the questions first.

OPEN questions make people think. They start discussion which the instructor must follow up:

For example: In your opinion, what are the main causes of high medical costs in our country? (list only three)

How does your local inform employees about issues or problems with management?

HOW to use a questionnaire with a group:

Once you have written the questionnaire, you have taken the first big step toward preparing your session. You have organized the subject matter and determined the order of the points you intend to teach.

Next, you must fill in the details on your teaching outline. Look at each question (or statement) and make notes for yourself on how you will handle it during the class.

Consider:

- Should you write the answer on the flip chart?
- Should you conduct a discussion around this particular point? (If so, prepare the discussion questions.)
- Should you give the class more information about this part of the subject? (If so, prepare a mini-lecture.)

While you are doing this, you will see how much TIME you are going to have to give each question.

Now that you're ready to use this technique, the questionnaire on the following page should provide you with some reminders.

Questionnaire

1. You should tell the class that "this is not a test" when you hand out a questionnaire because:

- A questionnaire looks like a test
- Many people were afraid of tests in school
- You don't expect people to know all the answers

2. Read a question aloud, before you ask for the answers because:

- This focuses the group on the question
- Some people can't read
- It stops side discussions on the previous question

3. Summarize the answer briefly after each question because:

- Some people don't listen
- It reinforces learning
- People may miss the point if there is a lot of discussion

BRAINSTORMING

Description:

Brainstorming is a situation where all employees of a group spontaneously offer ideas on a problem or question. The aim is to be creative and produce a lot of ideas.

WHEN is it a useful teaching technique?

Use brainstorming when you want to...

- Involve the entire group in the generation of ideas to solve a problem or address a particular situation
- Stimulate the creative thinking capabilities of the group
- Change pace – energize the group

HOW to conduct brainstorming:

1. The instructor needs to explain the **rules of brainstorming** to the group-
 - Respond in a few words
 - Any idea is okay
 - No evaluation is allowed- no one can say “*that’s a lousy idea*”
2. **Explain the question or problem** for the brainstorm. For example, when trying to uncover ideas to encourage more participation in union meetings you might ask: “*What activities, in one or two words, might encourage our employees to attend union meetings?*” *in voluntary training classes you might ask: “What*
3. *activities, in one or two words, might encourage our employees to voluntarily attend Training classes?”*
The group should respond quickly, one at a time, while the instructor records the ideas on a flip chart or blackboard. (The instructor usually does not contribute ideas in this process, but acts as the recorder and to summarize.) To keep up momentum, the instructor must be enthusiastic, “*great idea*”, “*let’s go*”,
4. Ask “*ready the for group the next to put one*”, **judgment etc. and evaluation temporally aside:**
 - No faultfinding is allowed. It stifles ideas, halts association. Acquire a “try anything” attitude.
 - Today’s criticism may kill future ideas.
 - All ideas are at least thought starters
5. Tell the group to **turn their imagination loose.**
 - The wilder the ideas the better.
 - Freewheeling is encouraged; ideas can be brought down to earth later.
 - A wild idea may be the only way to bring out another really good one.
6. Encourage participants to **think of as many ideas as they can:**
 - Quantity breeds quality.
 - The more ideas to choose from, the more chance of a good one.
 - There is always more than one good solution to any problem.
7. **Ideas can be combined and improved.**
 - The ideas don’t all have to be original.
 - Improve on the ideas of others.
 - Combine previously mentioned ideas.
 -
8. Brainstorming is a group activity. Take advantage of group association.

Once all ideas have been exhausted, the instructor may wish to **go back over the list** to provide an opportunity for any last minute thoughts.

9. **Evaluate the list** (either at the current session or plan for a future session.) The group can then:
- Prioritize the ideas- which are most important?
 - Combine ideas
 - Use the ideas as a basis for solving the original problem

ICEBREAKERS

Description:

Icebreakers- or warm-ups—are a way of getting people to know each other, relax and feel a part of the group, and prepare them for learning. They can also perform a valuable function in getting an afternoon or evening program off to a good start.

WHEN is it a useful teaching technique?

Use icebreakers to...

- acquaint participants with each other using non-threatening warm-up activities
- put participants at ease
- make a smooth start by introducing and focusing the program
- set the stage for the program
- introduce specific topics that may be developed in more detail later
- let participants know that they are responsible for their learning and that the trainer's job is to facilitate the learning
- revitalize a program that may have gone flat

HOW to conduct an icebreaker:

There are many different kinds of icebreakers. Most of them involve assigning the group a task which will require the employees of the group to interact with each other and get to know each other.

Some basic rules for icebreakers:

1. They should not be longer than 20 minutes or shorter than 5 minutes.
2. They should involve active participation of all of the group in giving information, performing a task, solving a problem or discussing an issue—perhaps brainstorming on an issue.
3. A good icebreaker is participant- centered, not instructor- centered
4. The icebreaker should be designed to involve everyone in an activity that helps them feel at ease through interacting, moving, talking and relating to each other.

Sample “Get Acquainted” Icebreaking

Techniques Name, Rank and Serial Number

In union terms, This means asking each person to get up and introduce her or himself. Tell them to give their name, union position, state where they're from, where they work, or whatever is relevant to the class.

Pairs

Pair people up with someone they don't know and give them 7 to 10 minutes to get acquainted. Then ask each person to introduce his or her partner to the entire group—

name, union, union position, **Position in the company**, plus one interesting fact you have specified (how long has this person been a union member **employed at the company?**, or what is their reason for attending the class?, etc.)

Walk-around

Give everyone a 5x7 card and ask them to write one fact in each of the four corners. Example: union position, **position in the company**, hobby, favorite sport, where would you most like to be right now? Have them pin the cards on their shoulder or lapel, then ask them to get up and circulate around the room, saying hello to each other and talking about the items on their cards. This takes about ten minutes.

Buzz Groups

Break up the class into buzz groups of 3 or 4 people they don't know. The groups can then have a discussion "task" set by the instructor. For example:

"Introduce yourselves and tell each other..."

- *How you happened to become a steward, or*
- *What's the most successful union event or activity that occurred in your local **the company** during the past year, or*
- *What's the main safety problem on your particular job, or*
- *What do you want to learn in this class, etc."*

Reporting back—have each group appoint a chairperson or recorder who gives a three-minute report to the entire group on what the buzz group discussed. If you have the buzz group summarize their discussion results on a piece of flip chart paper, they can post this up front and it will speed up their reports.

A MINI-GLOSSARY OF METHODS FOR TEACHING TECHNICAL TOPICS

Reflective techniques. This is an umbrella term for techniques that allow feedback from participants. Never immediately answer a technical question from a participant if the answer can be found in the manual, or if someone in the class knows the answer or if the questioner can reason it out. Exercise those options first.

Small group exercises. Assign two to five participants to groups and put them to work on solving common problems. Encourage technical participants to use their collective experience to reach an "Aha!"

Feedback loops. This technique elicits feedback from participants during class, but also ensures that participants understand what is being taught. Feedback loops can be built in simply by asking a question and requiring a show of hands for how many agree, disagree, or have a different answer. If the responses indicate participants are headed in the wrong direction, it will indicate that the point needs more or different explanation. A feedback loop might also be in the form of a questionnaire that can be used for discussion.

Action maze. These are paper games for small groups of participants that "branch" like a flow chart or a design for computer-based training. An action maze begins with a problem that has three optional solutions: one is right; one sounds right, but is wrong and leads to a circuitous journey through the maze; and one is okay, but leads to a

longer journey than the right answer. Each group determines which solution it would like to pursue and this subsequently determines the problems it is given to solve. The process continues until each group gets through the maze. Unlike a case study, which remains in the realm of theoretical discussion, an action maze forces the groups to see the consequences of their decisions.

Role Plays . The idea here is to let people walk in someone else's shoes for awhile. There is no need for any theatrics or staging, just the ability to empathize with another person's situation.

Case Studies. "The company just introduced a new computer system and several people are complaining of constant headaches. Management says the computers have nothing to do with the employees' discomforts. The employees maintain that the headaches are a direct consequence of the new system." That's a case. It can be more complicated, but it doesn't need to be. Individuals can decide on their solution to the situation, go into small groups to reach consensus and report back to the other groups.

TEACHING TECHNICAL TOPICS

The situation: highly technical topic, large amounts of information to be presented; qualified, but uniformed students; and a limited amount of time.

The solution: well-designed, well-delivered lecture studded with visuals.

Instructor results: all material covered; deadline met; satisfied lecturer; and poor ratings from students.

Student results: limited learning; vague awareness of much information; bored minds; tired bottoms; and a lingering need for relevant job knowledge.

Instructor's excuse: "*I have to lecture. The information is extremely technical and the class has limited knowledge of the subject. I can't get the trainees to participate and still meet the time frame for covering the information.*"

Is it hopeless? Is there really too much material to cover in any fashion other than lecture? Is the information burden so great that instructors cannot learn to change the design of technical training? No. It is tough. It takes time. But it can be done.

What Can Instructors Do?

In most technical instruction, the goal is to teach participants how to use the manuals, handbooks, manufacturers' guides and other data that is available to them back on the job. In fact, the word "cover" probably entered the vocabulary due to efforts to present, review and expound upon large quantities of data found in these various sources.

Participants shouldn't be expected to be able to recall huge amounts of information from memory. They should be able to use the manuals correctly to find solutions to problems. So, the solution usually lies in teaching participants how to find the information they need in the reference materials, not in trying to teach them everything in the material. It's simply a matter of putting together different techniques for presenting case studies and problems that require trips to the information source during class. Lecture becomes a tool that is used infrequently, and then only to clear up common problems in finding information or to give additional data that isn't in the manual.

Good instructors don't supply answers that can be found in technical reference materials. Use your imagination to find ways of working through indexes, content pages,

etc. The training will have given them extensive practice in doing exactly what they need to do on the job. Participants who complete a course taught this way probably wouldn't be calling the instructor back for help. What about when teaching new material that has no backup data? Must a lecture be used? Think about it, why not involve the audience by using reflective techniques, small group exercises and feedback loops of various kinds (see mini glossary.) There is a roomful of people who can understand technical inferences, take a little data and see where it's going. A good action maze is an ideal method for teaching technical problem solving. Participants have to do what they do back on the job: Live with their decisions and go on to the next action.

Another technique is to offer diagrams similar to the ones that will be used on the job, let small groups trace them out and find built-in problems, supplying only enough data to let them reason it out. They can work individually or in groups, in competition or against the clock, then present a portion of the material to the class—with strict time limits—to prevent student lecturing.

Case studies also help technical training work and easily lead into simple role-plays. An instructor can set up a situation in which a worker asks a safety and health director what to do with a certain chemical. Instead of the instructor providing the response, it would be opened up to the whole class for input into handling the situation—just like in real life.

Won't all of this take more time than just lecturing? The point to keep in mind is more time for what? It will take more time to cover the material. It will take less time to produce learning that can be used back on the job. Give your students a break. Give them practice in what they are expected to do on the job. Give them a break from lecturing.

Scintillate, scintillate globule aurific
Fain would I fathom thy nature specific
Loftily poised in the ether capacious
Strongly resembling a gem carbonaceous

Always give clear instructions and make sure the person you are talking to understands **exactly** what it is you are saying.

Example: Twinkle, twinkle little star
How I wonder what you are
Up above the world so high
Like a diamond in the sky.