Designing Participatory Workshops

Learning Module

Prepared by the UNHCR eCentre in collaboration with InterWorks, LLC

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Acknowledgements

This course is based on materials and information derived from eighteen years of personal experience with both good and bad workshops. It also draws on a wealth of workshop evaluation reports, previous training materials from UNHCR and the UNHCR eCentre and many other on-line resources. Colleagues at UNHCR, the UNHCR eCentre and InterWorks have provided valuable insights over the years into the development of participatory workshops for the international humanitarian community. The greatest influence on this work, however, has come from direct interactions with more than 2,000 participants who have attended workshops designed and facilitated by the author, Jim Good.

Cover photograph
UNHCR eCentre
Participants conduct an emergency response coordination role playing exercise at a UNHCR eCentre workshop on the basics of international humanitarian response in 2007.
# Table of Contents

Acknowledgements .................................................................................. ii  
Foreword .................................................................................................. v  
Welcome and Introduction ........................................................................ vii  

**Chapter 1: Do You Really Need a Workshop?**  .................................. 1  
1.1 Consider Your Options ...................................................................... 1  
1.2 When Is a Workshop the Right Choice? .......................................... 6  
1.3 Consider the Learners ....................................................................... 8  
1.4 Consider What Is to Be Learned ....................................................... 9  
1.5 Be Aware of Your Own Attitudes towards Workshops .................... 11  

**Chapter 2: Developing Workshop Goals and Objectives** ..................... 17  
2.1 Ask the Right Questions .................................................................... 17  
2.2 Consider Workshop Goals from the Participants’ Perspective ........ 19  
2.3 Writing Workshop Goal Statements .............................................. 21  
2.4 Write Clear and Concise Session Objectives ................................... 25  
2.5 Test Your Workshop Goals and Session Objectives ....................... 28  

**Chapter 3: Developing an Agenda into a Learning Experience** ............ 33  
3.1 Ordering Your Sessions into a Logical Agenda ............................... 33  
3.2 Develop Your Agenda into an Interesting Storyline ....................... 37  
3.3 Consider the Natural Rhythms of Workshop Life ......................... 37  
3.4 Build Learning Checkpoints into Your Workshop Agenda ............. 41  

**Chapter 4: Preparing Presenters and Presentations** ............................ 51  
4.1 Relating Presentation Time to Participation Time ............................ 51  
4.2 Basic Graphics and Text Guidelines .............................................. 52  
4.3 Keeping It Short—Exercise More and Lecture Less ....................... 53  
4.4 Managing Your Own and Others’ Time ........................................ 55  
4.5 Case Study Guidelines .................................................................... 58  
4.6 Preparing and Managing Invited Presenters .................................. 60  

**Chapter 5: Choosing and Using Short Workshop Exercises** .............. 65  
5.1 The “Experiential Learning Cycle” ................................................ 65  
5.2 Developing Exercise Game Mechanics ......................................... 71  
5.3 Thinking Through the Debriefing .................................................. 76  
5.4 Timing Issues for Short Exercises ................................................ 79  

**Chapter 6: Designing Role Plays and Skills Training Sessions** .......... 87  
6.1 Use Role Plays to Meet Learning Objectives ................................. 87  
6.2 Some Common Problems with Role Plays .................................... 79  
6.3 Debriefing the Role Play Exercise ................................................ 91  
6.4 Choosing Skills That Can Be Learned in Your Setting ................... 92  
6.5 Writing Skills Learning Objectives and Evaluating Skills Training .... 94
Chapter 7: Designing Tabletop Simulations ......................................................... 101
7.1 Evolution and Uses of the Tabletop Simulation ............................................. 101
7.2 Developing a Scenario .................................................................................... 103
7.3 Developing Timelines and Action Sequences ................................................. 106
7.4 Developing Player Roles .................................................................................. 109
7.5 Developing the Simulation Game Mechanisms ................................................. 109
7.6 Developing the Tools to Manage the Simulation ............................................ 112

Chapter 8: Designing Field Simulations ............................................................... 121
8.1 Advantages of Conducting Simulation Exercises in the Field ......................... 121
8.2 Consider Costs and Benefits of Taking the Exercise to the Field ................. 122
8.3 Working with the Field Site ........................................................................... 125
8.4 Working with Local Residents, Counterparts, Actors and Extras .................. 126
8.5 Conducting the Pre-Exercise Meeting On-Site .............................................. 129
8.6 Tools for Managing the Field Simulation On Exercise Day ............................ 131
8.7 Provide Adequate Safety Precautions ............................................................ 133
8.8 Make the Exercise Worthwhile to Everyone .................................................. 134

Chapter 9: Learning and Improving from Each Workshop ................................ 139
9.1 Planning Timelines for Workshop Events ...................................................... 139
9.2 Workshop Development and Piloting ............................................................ 144
9.3 Keeping Stakeholders in the Loop ................................................................. 144
9.4 Workshop Evaluation Sessions ...................................................................... 145
9.5 Learning the Right Lessons from Evaluation ................................................ 153
Foreword

Since the UNHCR eCentre opened its doors in 2000, organizing participatory training has been a cornerstone of its efforts to improve emergency preparedness and response in the Asia-Pacific region. Humanitarian responders from around the world have come to workshops to gain state of the art knowledge and skills of immediate practical benefit to their work, and have rarely left unsatisfied. At the same time, participants have frequently left with equally strong impressions about the way in which the learning was conducted. “How do you go about organizing such a realistic field simulation?” and “I want to arrange a workshop like that in my own organization” are comments often heard. Increasingly, participants have included not only field practitioners, but trainers seeking to add new methods to their learning repertoire.

The present learning module is the result of these trends. In the pages that follow you will find an exposition of the eCentre’s highly successful formula for designing and conducting participatory training. Each chapter will take you step by step through the process, from initial assessment of training needs and alternatives to monitoring and evaluating results. As effective learning entails seeing, hearing and doing, a major focus is interactive methodologies such as table-top exercises and field simulations. Above all, a core tenet of the eCentre’s philosophy is that people learn best when they are stimulated, engaged and enjoying themselves; this learning module will help you achieve these results in your training.

I should like to thank InterWorks LLC, principle collaborators in the development of this learning module and one of the driving forces behind the eCentre’s successful training since its inception.

I am confident that this newest addition to the eCentre’s learning library will prove useful in stimulating new ideas in how to transmit knowledge, skills and attitudes more effectively within your organization. Above all, I hope that better training of humanitarian staff will, in turn, lead to more concerted response on the ground that yields tangible benefits for people in need.

Arnaud Akoujenou
Director
Division of Operational Services
Welcome and Introduction

Welcome to this self-study learning module on designing participatory workshops. It is designed for learners who have some experience facilitating or leading workshops and who are looking for ways to make them more engaging and effective. This learning module will provide you with in-depth insight and many practical tips for designing, organizing and managing workshops that will engage your participants in a more participatory way. Following the guidance in this module will help you run more effective trainings in which your workshop participants will achieve their learning objectives while enjoying the process more.

Learning Objectives for this Course

After successfully completing this learning module, you should be able to:

• Choose the best training options to achieve specific learning needs and determine when a workshop is the best option.
• Write better and clearer workshop goals and session learning objectives.
• Organize topics into sessions, and sessions into an integrated and logical overall workshop experience.
• Prepare and manage other trainers and experts to unify their sessions and presentations into a meaningful and cohesive workshop experience.
• Choose and use exercises better—from simple role plays to full-scale field exercises—and with more confidence so that you can lecture less and help your participants learn more.
• Evaluate workshops more critically so that you can learn appropriate lessons for the improvement of ongoing workshops and for your own professional development.

Although there is an international and inter-agency focus to this course, the core information will be appropriate for anyone who needs to design a training workshop, for almost any audience.

Organization of this Course

This course is divided into nine chapters, each one based on a different aspect of workshop design. The text is designed to be read from beginning to end, and a reasonably good understanding of the material presented in any chapter is required to fully appreciate the next. For the casual reader who only wants to review chapters of most interest, however, references to important points in previous sections are included where required for full understanding.
Chapter 1: Do You Really Need a Workshop? guides you through the options and decision-making process for choosing the right training approach to meet your learning needs.

Chapter 2: Developing Workshop Goals and Objectives presents a strategy for developing and sharing clear workshop goals and session objectives so that your workshop is relevant and can be evaluated properly once it has been implemented.

Chapter 3: Developing an Agenda into a Learning Experience shows you how to organize your individual sessions into a logically unified whole that relates all of the workshop elements in a meaningful way. It also provides several tips for ordering your agenda in ways that respect human nature and the natural rhythms of the workshop experience.

Chapter 4: Preparing Presenters and Presentations provides advice for preparing and managing visiting presenters, experts and other trainers so that every workshop session contributes to the overall success of the workshop.

Chapter 5: Choosing and Using Short Workshop Exercises introduces the concept of “experiential learning” and illustrates how an understanding of this process provides the basis for preparing and successfully running any type of exercise. The chapter also provides an overview of many short exercise types that are appropriate for use in workshops.

Chapter 6: Designing Role Plays and Skills Training Sessions explains the basics of designing and using role plays and skills-building exercises in an effective way, while avoiding several common problems associated with these types of exercises.

Chapter 7: Designing Tabletop Simulations provides an overview of simulation exercises that can be implemented in the workshop training room. It illustrates their uses and provides advice on how to design and run them in the workshop setting.

Chapter 8: Designing Field Simulations explains the advantages of field simulations over other exercise types and lays out the steps for their design, development and implementation. Many tips and tools are provided to help you efficiently organize and manage your own field exercise.

Chapter 9: Learning and Improving from Each Workshop emphasizes the importance of taking the time to develop workshops properly and then to evaluate every workshop event. Advice on designing workshop evaluations is provided along with some insights into the interpretation of workshop evaluations.
How to Use this Course

Self-study is more demanding than traditional classroom instruction in that each learner has to provide her or his own framework for study instead of having it imposed by the course or workshop timetable. One of the problems with self-study courses is that people begin with great enthusiasm at a pace that they cannot sustain. The best way to undertake this learning module is to plan your own study schedule over a pre-set period by thinking ahead and making your own schedule for study.

The course is designed to take approximately 20 hours to complete. This includes the time for reading, reflecting, answering the questions in the text, completing the exercises provided and filling out the evaluation form at the end. This module is provided for professional and personal development. There is no final test, exam or academic accreditation of any kind.

Pre-test

The pre-test included at the beginning of this course allows you to test your general knowledge of designing participatory workshops. This test consists of 30 true/false questions. Taking this test before beginning the course should stimulate you to compare your own thoughts about workshops and workshop design to those presented in the text.

Also, the pre-test allows you to determine quickly how much you already know about the ideas presented here and will help you to see which parts of the course you can move through more quickly and those on which you may need to spend more time. If you score very well on the pre-test it is likely that you do not need to take this course for the purpose of learning new information, although it may still be a useful review.

Instant Feedback: Self-Assessment Questions and Exercises

One drawback to a self-study text like this one is that instant feedback from the instructor or your colleagues is not possible. To address the need for feedback, each chapter has five true-false questions and five multiple-choice questions. The answers are provided at the end of each chapter. Other questions and exercises of a more reflective nature are found throughout the chapters to help you get the most from the materials. You are encouraged to take the time to actually write your answers out in the spaces provided as this will increase your mental engagement with the material and will aid in retention of new ideas presented. Each chapter concludes with a summary of key points as a review.
Course Pretest
Designing Participatory Workshops

1. In general, almost everyone learns and prefers to learn things in the same way—through trial and error.  
2. Things that can be trained (learning domains) are usually classified into two categories—either knowledge or skills.  
3. Self-study is the most effective way for an organization to train its staff.  
4. Potential workshop participants can always provide useful advice on their own learning needs.  
5. A well-written workshop goal statement will help you design the workshop, and will help potential participants decide whether or not they should attend.  
6. The fact that staff are not carrying out a particular function or approach proves that they need training in that area.  
7. Office staff members are so used to sitting at their desks for most of the day that sitting in a workshop environment comfortably for a full-day comes naturally.  
8. Saving the priority content sessions for the last day of a five-day workshop is generally a good strategy since participants will remember whatever they heard last.  
9. Open forum sessions are generally appropriate to offer in the morning of the first day of the workshop while participants are still fresh.  
10. When using PowerPoint slides, the general rule for readability is “if it looks good on your computer screen, it will look good on the big screen in the training room.”  
11. For participatory workshops, the basic philosophy should be “lecture first, then do a fun exercise.”  
12. Time management is an important factor to consider in the success or failure of your workshop.  
13. The best way to end sessions on time is basically the same regardless of the reason for the time overrun—intervene in a strong way and do not tolerate divergence from the established schedule.
14. Everyone learns best from his/her own direct experiences so talking about one's experiences, analyzing them and trying to draw up theoretical models about them usually do not affect learning.

15. Using several different training methods will help engage more people in the workshop activities, as the participant group will likely include people with different learning preferences.

16. Good listeners interrupt the speaker frequently to compare their own ideas to what the speaker is saying.

17. One problem of role play exercises is that they can sometimes simply reinforce already-held stereotypes of the roles being played.

18. The “precision” level of the skills learning domain requires that learners can execute skills reliably and independent of help.

19. The only purpose of conducting a role play in a workshop is to illustrate a scene or situation to those who have not experienced such a situation themselves.

20. Exercise scenarios should be developed from the overall purpose and learning objectives of the exercise.

21. Compressing the timeline of events in a tabletop exercise will have the effect of adding time pressure to decisions and actions of the participants.

22. Tabletop exercises generally do not require any maps, diagrams or other printed props to support the scenario.

23. Tabletop exercises and simulations, functional exercises, drills and full scale exercise are all different names for the same kind of exercise.

24. On-site signage and site mapping are important aspects of designing and managing field exercises.

25. Auditions for screening field exercise extras and role players are so time consuming and unreliable that they are of little value in preparing for complex field simulations.

26. Even experienced soldiers, police and others with similar training should be briefed about the limits they should respect in terms of acting aggressively towards the exercise participants.

27. Firing blank ammunition, which is sometimes done to add realism to field simulations, is completely harmless.

28. Designating an initial workshop as a pilot event can subtly change both expectations as well as the training audience for the workshop.

29. Kirkpatrick’s four levels of training evaluation relate directly to the four learning styles proposed by Honey & Mumford.

30. The end-of-workshop written evaluation form is the only evaluation mechanism that truly reflects the impact of the training.
People are different, so why put them all in the same workshop room and expect them to learn the same thing, in the same way? Do you really need a workshop for your next training initiative? The things people need to learn are different as well. Is a workshop the right option for what your trainees need? Sometimes learners simply need to be put into contact with the necessary information, which may be readily available in books or on the internet. In other situations they may need new or improved skills to carry out their daily tasks more efficiently. Sometimes people simply need to be reminded of what’s important, and to be convinced and encouraged to continue. Different techniques are needed to effectively support these different types of learning. So why choose to hold a workshop?

This chapter will challenge you to:

- Consider available training options and match learning needs to appropriate training strategies before committing resources to conducting a workshop.
- Determine when a workshop is the right choice, considering the full potential as well as the practical limits of workshop learning.
- Consider the different ways people prefer to learn.
- Consider different types of learning that may be needed.
- Consider your own biases about workshops.

1.1 Consider Your Options

Regardless of the topic or the target audience, you should consider available options for meeting your objectives, and choose those that most effectively meet your training needs. There are several commonly used training approaches to consider.

**Self-study** is learner-motivated and learner-paced. The typical pre-internet version of self-study is a book or manual. The self-study material usually includes pre-designed questions and answers with which the learner can monitor his or her own progress. The major advantage of this type of study (as you are now experiencing) is that each individual learner can set the pace as wanted or needed in relation to other ongoing work and tasks. For many people this is an excellent way to learn just what is needed, just when needed and when most convenient.
One improvement in this type of study is the use of interactive CD-ROM, or internet-based programmes (for example the UN Security Training Course and Certificate now required for travel and work in insecure countries). These self-study programmes break the learning content down into readily accessible sections and then test the learner on each one before allowing progress to the next section. They are very effective in helping the learners to evaluate their own success in attaining basic knowledge.

**OJT** is a common training acronym that simply means **On the Job Training**. OJT is possibly the most direct, practical (in many, but not all instances) and directly accessible training available. Trainees go to work, and are instructed on how to:

- Improve required skills for the job at hand
- Use equipment properly
- Follow regulations, policies and rules
- Allocate time to tasks to meet performance objectives
- Keep safe while accomplishing required tasks
- Satisfactorily meet management concerns or benchmarks

OJT requires some face-to-face mentoring or advising along with any combination of other methods appropriate for the work place and the type of job to be learned. These other methods may include reading manuals, policy and procedure guidelines, rule books or on-line resources; skills practice; performance reviews etc. OJT is widely used today and a “best” solution for many training needs. Since the training occurs on the job, it is absolutely realistic and no transfer or application of learning to the actual situation is required. “Trainers” are usually more senior staff, who both train and evaluate the learner.

OJT is relatively inexpensive in some aspects as no training specialist or special equipment is needed other than what is normally used on the job. However, the training does have other costs, such as the expertise of another skilled worker who will work less while training the new recruit. There may also be damage or excessive wear on tools, equipment, or systems that may be used inappropriately by learners.

OJT is not appropriate in situations where the expertise or information needed cannot be found “on the job”, or where the failure to perform at a high level of skill may result in accidents, injury or even death. Pilots for example spend many hours in front of a simulated cockpit before trying out their skills “on the job”.

**Mentoring** is the venerable system of having those who know explain it to those who don’t—directly, and individually. The system of apprentices and experts exemplifies this strategy. The mentor may be a long-term senior staff member to whom the learner can always go for advice whenever needed, or in relation to specific areas or skills. While this system is informally used in most organizations, in some cases it has been highly formalized and made a structural part of the organizational culture.

The key characteristic of this system is that many mentors are needed to reach a large number of learners since the primary method of training is direct and individual between two people only. If the mentors are also required to carry out other day to day tasks, the time available for mentoring may be very constrained.

**Workshops** are used for groups of people and require them to be in the same place at the same time, to share the same learning experience. This can be an efficient system where expertise is limited and need is great. It divides the cost of the training among many participants and is therefore less costly and faster in terms of the cost and use of the trainer’s time. If participants must travel to attend the workshop, those associated costs should also be considered. Workshops can last a few
hours, several days or even weeks, depending on the learning objectives for the event. The various methods and approaches used in workshops are quite varied and will be treated in much greater depth throughout the rest of this text.

Seminars and workshops are similar in that they both bring people together in the same place at the same time in order to learn something. The main difference is that seminars tend to be academic, and depend on experts delivering lectures to others, while in workshops there is an expectation that participants do something (the work in the term workshop) more than simply listen and talk to instructors. The word seminar comes from the Latin word seminarium, which means “seed plot”, presumably the place where experts plant the seeds of their wisdom in the minds of their students. It is important to note, however, that there are wide variations in common usage as to what is called a lecture, seminar, or workshop.

Seminars offered by some universities, colleges, or professional organizations for example, may be very informal and interactive. Some of these institutions distinguish seminars from more traditional lectures while others do not. There may be lively discussions, where all participants are required to be knowledgeable about the topic, complete pre-reading assignments, or even present and defend opposing theories for discussion. In any case, there is generally an academic or professional feeling to the term seminar, and seminars are almost always designed for senior or advanced scholars or practitioners, and are of relatively short duration.

Web-based training has significant cost advantages for large training audiences. Web-based training allows senior organizational experts to remain in the office rather than traveling to distant seminar or workshop locations. They can train from their own locations and at times that are convenient. The cost of hotels, airlines and meals are also avoided. The numbers and types of technologies are growing and are becoming more accessible and less costly. A few of the more common web-based strategies and tools are:

Synchronous training by instructor via internet This type of online training requires everyone involved to be on-line at the same time. The training can be supported by live video, graphic presentation (usually PowerPoint), and question and answer sessions either by voice or typing in text.

Asynchronous online training Training materials are posted online, and then discussion among the participants and trainers is conducted using “threaded conversations”, electronic bulletin boards and web postings. A threaded discussion is simply an electronic discussion (such as one via e-mail, e-mail list, bulletin board, newsgroup, or Internet forum) in which each statement or question appears as a short text message. These threads must then be grouped in some usable way in order to be managed and used efficiently. A set of threaded messages grouped in this way is called a topic thread or simply “thread”.

e-Learning courses These online courses are based on the traditional self-study model in which course materials are offered online and participants show that they have understood the materials by taking small tests. The benefit is that the testing shows both the learner as well as the organization the progress that is being made. Sophisticated and graphically enhanced testing can be provided in many different formats, some even offering interactive and entertaining games as options to both practice and evaluate the learning accomplished. Many of these programmes are also linked to organizationally-specific learning tracking programmes so that each learner’s achievements are easily reviewed by senior managers.

Video conferencing As the name suggests, this is a conference in which participants communicate with one another by video and audio link, but may be located anywhere in the world. They must be online at the same time, however. This format may support lectures, seminars and even workshops if the users all have the required equipment and access to the internet with suitable bandwidth.
**Blended learning** (BL) is a widely used term that encompasses almost any possible combination of training strategies; online and face-to-face, mentoring and self-study, self-study, online together with self-study and workshops, to name a few. The main idea is that a particular skill set, knowledge base or set of attitudes is brought to the learner in various ways that reinforce one another or efficiently allocate time and resources to different aspects of the learner’s experience. This is a very logical and integrated approach that helps learners accomplish their learning objectives using mixed strategies that are matched to a particular part of their learning program.

UNHCR offers many **Learning Programmes** that are good examples of blended learning. The general format of these programmes matches learning strategies with specific sub-objectives for the programme. For example, a learning programme about improving management or teamwork for office managers might include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-reading assignments</th>
<th>➡</th>
<th>To build or reinforce basic knowledge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On-line resources and references</td>
<td>➡</td>
<td>To expand or clarify information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case study development</td>
<td>➡</td>
<td>To analyze and apply approaches/theory to real life situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshop</td>
<td>➡</td>
<td>To share experiences, discuss problems and dilemmas with experts and co-learners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post workshop OJT or mentoring</td>
<td>➡</td>
<td>To apply theories or approaches to the job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer or self-evaluation</td>
<td>➡</td>
<td>To evaluate personal and program success</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the example above shows, a blended learning approach or integrated learning program is useful in that it does not rely on any one particular learning strategy. By using several methods, each helps to maximize the efficiency of the other methods used to achieve the overall learning objectives.

**Comparison of Training Methods**

This comparative table gives a quick overview of some of the key advantages and disadvantages of the general types of training alternatives discussed above.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TRAINING STRATEGY</th>
<th>PROS</th>
<th>CONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-study</td>
<td>Learners study at their own place, pace, and convenience.</td>
<td>No interaction; many questions will go unanswered; may not gain proper understanding of the material.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Can give the lowest cost to provide training opportunities to a large number of people.</td>
<td>Some people lack the motivation for self-study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Even if low cost, may not be effective if staff do not engage with the material or fail to accomplish the learning objectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On the job training (OJT)</td>
<td>Can use real training examples and offer practical solutions that are job specific.</td>
<td>For some situations may be too costly in terms of expertise and time required by senior staff to spend in training instead of pursuing other work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Application of learning is evident.</td>
<td>For very dangerous or important work, the workplace is too important or sensitive to allow errors that may result from OJT.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRAINING STRATEGY (cont')</td>
<td>PROS</td>
<td>CONS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring</td>
<td>Direct and ongoing access to senior expertise who can provide both technical as well as “political” insights into working in the organization.</td>
<td>For some situations may be too costly in terms of expertise and time required by senior staff to spend in mentoring instead of pursuing other work. For new concepts or approaches, there may not be individuals with the proper expertise available at the workplace to serve as mentors. Also mentoring is highly personalized, depending on the personal wisdom of the mentor, so is not ideal for uniform delivery of new approaches or ideas across the entire organization. In some cases the mentor may not give adequate time or energy to the task to make it effective as a training strategy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshops</td>
<td>Brings learners together for discussion, information exchange, and “networking”. Participants can get individual as well as group attention.</td>
<td>Can be expensive, particularly when participants must travel long distances. It may be difficult to allocate adequate time away from work to attend the workshop.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seminars</td>
<td>Experts can reach many people at once. Advanced learners can compare ideas and question experts and colleagues.</td>
<td>For some, the traditional lecture format can be boring. For more interactive seminars for advanced learners, it may be difficult to get more senior staff to attend the seminar at the same time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet-based training</td>
<td>Low per capita costs for large audiences. Provides options for more interactivity than traditional self-study courses.</td>
<td>Requires technical expertise and equipment. Some locations may not have adequate access or bandwidth to use these techniques efficiently.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blended learning (BL) programmes</td>
<td>Uses the best of each strategy to meet learning needs.</td>
<td>Does require longer term management and administration of the learning process. In cases where longer term support and ongoing commitments are not met, participants may feel disenfranchised.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.2 When Is a Workshop the Right Choice?

It is clear from the preceding section that there are many alternatives to accomplishing your training objectives. You must question which strategy is best for your own training needs. Given so many options and alternatives, why and when would you choose to hold a workshop?

What, if anything, are the specific aspects of workshop training that make it any different from the other approaches described?

For what kinds of training would the workshop be an appropriate choice?

The fundamental feature of training workshops is that they bring people together to focus on an issue or topic at the same time and in the same place. The main features of this are open and transparent communication among many people and the ability of those conducting the training to monitor and react to learners’ responses. The general advantage of workshops over on-line, or other self-study options (even this course) is that designers can better understand how the message is being received and understood “on the spot” and can work to make corrections as needed. Some of the more important inherent opportunities and “best uses” of workshops are listed below.

- Introduction of new concepts, policies and technologies to a large number of people
- Testing and building confidence in policies or approaches
- Forum for debate and a chance for participants as well as trainers “to be heard”
- Updating on changing or unclear policies, approaches and norms
- Basic and introductory skills training (where necessary tools or equipment required is available at a reasonable cost)
- Encouragement of staff or partners or rekindling of mission mandate, etc.

There has also been a reliance on workshops by many organizations as a “tried and true” method. They are well understood, can be budgeted for by using standard budget lines and terminology, and do not require long-term administrative support, or up-front development or purchasing of new technology or equipment. Arguably the most important aspect of all, from the organizational development perspective, is that workshops are ideal for ideas and new approaches that are wanted, and seen to be needed, but for whatever reason are not yet ready to be made into official
policy. Workshops are ideal for getting new, and often still developing information out to the
staff and partners in a way that is at once highlighted as important, while still being open to
discussion, response, and critique. Some common organizational reasons, from the viewpoint of
senior management, about why a workshop might be used for training are:

- Something is lacking at the organizational level that needs to be addressed in an
  open, public, and transparent way, and brought to a large number of people quickly.
- There is an emerging and obvious need for training that hasn’t been developed along
  with the rest of the organization's activities and which now needs a “fast track”
  solution to quickly bring staff to the same appreciation, knowledge, or skill level.
- Managers want to change the “culture” of the organization.
- Managers want to make sure that new policies are clearly understood and
  put into use as intended.
- Managers want to underscore their commitment to new policies.
- Specific managerial skills are seen as lacking, and middle managers have not
  been positively influenced by self-study, or other approaches.
- One unit, bureau, or agency wants to share (and showcase) its expertise or
  interests with others in the organization or the wider community of stakeholders.
- Other training strategies have not worked, or are presumed to not work-
  “We sent everyone the memo, but no one has done anything differently!”
- The policies, training materials or information package are not yet fully
developed, so workshops are used to “test” the new policies.

Limits of Workshops

While the benefits and reasons listed above can be enticing, there are real limits to what can be
achieved in a workshop setting as well. Using workshops for things that cannot effectively be
accomplished is both wasteful and frustrating. Consider the following limits as well as the benefits
above before choosing to launch a workshop.

Workshops can be costly, particularly when participants are required to travel long distances and
stay in hotels or other expensive lodgings. Trainers, consultants, administrators and others required
to run the event can also be expensive. Also many people cannot afford long periods of time to
attend workshops away from their day-to-day work. Due to these considerations and other
constraints the types of trainings listed below may not be well-suited to a workshop solution.

High-level skills development that requires long time periods and many cycles of repetition
(music practice, language, physical training, operation of sophisticated equipment, etc.)

- Transfer of very deep or heavy information such as dense technical manuals
  for which different individual learners require very different timelines or
  “learning curves” for efficient learning.
- Information that is relatively simple and clear, and which would not
  normally require monitoring of learners’ understanding in person.
- Subjects or topics that are so highly personal or individual that group or
  public discussion will be highly constrained or rejected by the participants.
1.3 Consider the Learners

In the preceding sections of this chapter we have looked at organizational training options and their relative pros and cons in helping staff and partners learn. This section is about the learners themselves. Learners are people. We are all similar in many ways; we all need to eat, sleep, and learn if we are to survive. We are also all different in some degree. Culture, gender, background, habit, and complex biochemistry divide people as a general group into countless groups and subgroups. We speak different languages. We have different life experiences and traditions and wide ranging social values. We even learn differently, or more precisely, we have different preferences or styles that we depend on for personal learning.

One of the most influential conceptual approaches to understanding the different ways that adults prefer to learn was written by David A. Kolb in 1984. While Kolb (and his associate Roger Fry) are most often cited for this work, they drew heavily on the research and work of several others. Kolb's Learning Style Inventory (Kolb, D. A. 1984) for example, is based on John Dewey's emphasis on the need for learning to be grounded in experience, Kurt Lewin's work that stressed the importance of a person's being active in learning, and Jean Piaget's theory on intelligence as the result of the interaction of the person and the environment. Many other authors and educators (notably Peter Honey and Alan Mumford) have further developed this work into highly defined fields of study aimed at helping individuals and organizations better understand individual learning styles.

One of the most popular learning styles inventory tools in use today (a self-evaluation survey) was developed by Honey and Mumford. Based on Kolb's work, Honey and Mumford arrived at a set of four basic learning styles that they called; Activists, Reflectors, Theorists, and Pragmatists. Each one is related to one of the experiential learning phases and is briefly described below.

**Activists** involve themselves fully and without strong preferences in new situations. They enjoy new and immediate experiences. They are open-minded, not skeptical. This tends to make them enthusiastic about anything new. Their philosophy is: "I'll try anything once." They tend to act first and consider the consequences afterwards.

**Reflectors** like to stand back and ponder experiences and observe them from many different perspectives. They collect data, both first hand and from others, and prefer to think about it thoroughly before coming to any conclusion. Their philosophy is to be cautious. They are thoughtful people who like to consider all possible angles and implications before making a move. They enjoy observing and listening to other people.

**Theorists** adapt and integrate observations into complex but logically sound theories. They think problems through in a vertical, step by step, logical way. They assimilate disparate facts into coherent theories. They like to analyze and synthesize. They are keen on basic assumptions, principles, theories, models and systems thinking.

**Pragmatists** are interested in experimenting with ideas, theories and concepts to see if they really work in practice. They proactively search out new ideas and take the first opportunity to experiment with real-world applications. They are the sort of people who return from training courses brimming with new ideas that they want to try out in practice. They are essentially practical people who like making practical decisions and solving problems.

Many factors lead people to prioritize one or the other of the learning styles above. These factors include their education, professional career, current job role, and personality. The balance of these forces may act to shift individuals between learning styles but the importance of previous choices in terms of education, career etc. will tend to leave people with a clear learning style preference or bias.
People can learn from all four of these learning styles, but one of the four will typically be a favorite and will be much more immediately useful to the individual. In fact, elements of each style are useful to describe the overall learning experience, sometimes called the learning cycle which will be described in greater detail in Chapter 5, Choosing and Using Workshop Exercises.

**Question**

People are different and have individual preferences in the ways they learn. How does this knowledge affect your decision on how to implement your next training initiative?

1.4 Consider What Is to Be Learned

Not only are personal preferences about learning different, but there are also different things to be learned which may require different strategies. Physical skills, for example, are learned and perfected through practice. Different kinds of knowledge (facts, details, theories) can be learned through reading, viewing, or listening to those who have the needed information. Attitude, appreciation, deeper understanding or faith in a principle or approach may be developed through experience, analysis, application and reflection.

A famous (and simple) description of various types of learning and a measure to assess them is Benjamin Bloom’s Taxonomy of Learning Domains. Bloom described the different areas of learning as *domains*. He classified these into three main domains that he called the **Cognitive, Affective**, and **Psychomotor** domains. In simpler terms these are also commonly known as:

- Knowledge (thinking)
- Attitude (feeling)
- Skill (doing)

**Knowledge (thinking)**

This domain is generally about learning *information*, and includes everything from introductory or induction course topics that explain the role, mandate and activities of an organization to updates on latest policy developments and the ability to analyse and use this information in real-life situations. At the most basic level, this kind of learning can be facilitated simply by distributing the information and requiring learners to read it. This has been found to be an imperfect system in many instances, however, because many people may misinterpret what is read or simply do not read what they have been instructed to read.

Further improvements include distributing videos that are easier and more interesting ways for some learners to absorb the knowledge being sent. The important aspect of this domain is the importance of the information itself and whether or not the learner has learned it, which is something quite different from asking whether or not the learner has been convinced of the information’s importance, or whether or not they will change their attitudes or actions in the
workplace based on this knowledge. The basic levels of learning in this domain are generally tested or proved by asking the learner to recite or write back what they have learned. Either they know the answers or they don’t. For many training issues this is an adequate and practical approach.

Things become a bit more complex as higher levels of learning in this domain are attempted. The general steps “up the ladder” of development in this learning domain are: simply recalling the information, understanding it, applying it to problems or situations, analysis, synthesis of new systems or methods based on the information, and evaluation of the information and its usefulness. More will be presented on the levels and objectives for each level of these three learning domains in Chapter 9, Learning and Improving from Each Workshop.

**Attitude (feeling)**

The importance of this learning domain naturally follows from the discussion above. In many instances simply knowing something, or even being able to demonstrate real understanding and application is not enough. Have the learners not only read the new policy and proved their knowledge of it by reciting the key points, but do they believe in its importance and will they carry it out? This domain is truly about changing the learner’s attitudes about their work, life, or habits. In many ways, this domain of attitudes and beliefs are generally held to be the most important in terms of organizational development and management. It can also be called simply **motivation**.

Evaluating a learner’s change in attitude or motivation is much more difficult than evaluating their knowledge. Some of the example learning objectives in this domain proposed by Bloom are based on whether or not the learner can:

- be open to and willing to hear the presentation or discussion
- react actively and participate in discussion
- attach values and express personal opinions
- develop a value system
- adopt belief system and philosophy and change their behavior

**Skill (doing)**

This domain of learning is basic and easily understood and measured. Learning to walk, learning to eat with chopsticks, learning to speak a language, or learning to use a computer and new software program are all examples of skills learning. Skills are generally taught through actual practice, and repetition, until the body and mind become comfortable enough with the skill to do it smoothly without excessive hesitation or error.

Of course, simple knowledge of these skills, and motivation to learn them are also important, but the actual skill development is a very different learning domain from the other two and has a very different set of measurable objectives. For example, can the learner repeat the action or skill that the instructor illustrates? Can the learner do this on his or her own, without an instructor giving advice? Can the learner perform the skill adeptly without making errors?

Each of these three domains will have different types of learning objectives and may require different methods of instruction to achieve them. As you review your next training initiative, think carefully about which learning domains you are interested in affecting and the objectives you need to accomplish in each. Will a workshop provide you with the right time, tools, and resources to accomplish the objectives you have set in each domain?
Some useful Internet keyword search terms for more background on key tenets of modern adult education theories and principles discussed in this section are:

- Benjamin Bloom
- Bloom's Taxonomy
- David A. Kolb
- Experiential Learning
- Jean Piaget
- John Dewey
- Kurt Lewin
- Learning Styles
- Peter Honey and Alan Mumford

A few selected websites available at the time of this printing that you may find interesting (there are many more) in these areas are:

- **www.learning-styles-online.com/inventory/**
  An interesting and no-cost learning styles survey that looks at seven different aspects of one’s individual learning preferences—a rather different approach from Kolb.

- **www.infed.org/biblio/b-explrn.htm**
  A clear and concise description of Kolb’s ideas and learning styles inventory.

- **www.haygroup.com**
  Official distributor of the Kolb learning styles inventory survey tool.

- **www.peterhoney.com**
  Official distributor of the Honey & Mumford learning styles inventory survey tool described in this text.

- **www.businessballs.com**
  Very informative site with concise articles on almost everything related to learning theory, adult learning, career development and organizational development.

### 1.5 Be Aware of Your Own Attitudes Towards Workshops

Think about your own experience attending workshops in the past, whether as a trainer, facilitator, or participant and your own current biases or preferences for different training methods. How many of the statements below, in general terms, sound like your own thoughts? Put a check in each box that sounds like something you would say or think, based on your overall experience in past workshops you have attended as a participant.

**In workshops I usually get the opportunity to:**

1. Listen to and talk with interesting topic experts.
2. Ask specific questions that I have but which are not addressed in the policies or guidelines.
3. Share my own experience on the topic with other learners.
4. Get away from day-to-day work pressures (at least temporarily) to actually think about serious issues or concerns.
5. Meet and network with other people in similar situations to “compare notes” with colleagues.
6. Have fun interacting with others.
7. Let someone else be in charge for a while.
8. Be an active participant and apply elements of the training to real or realistic situations to see how well they might work in practice.
9. Test ideas that I am unsure about with other people I respect and develop ideas into practical ways of looking at problems.
10. Ask questions that I would be embarrassed or otherwise feel constrained to ask my colleagues in the office.

**Positive points** For each statement above that you agreed with based on your own experience in workshops, give yourself a point. **Maximum: +10 points.**
Now read the statements below and check the box for each statement that sounds like your own words or thoughts based on your general experience in attending workshops.

**In workshops I usually have to:**

- [ ] 1. Follow the schedule that is set by the administrator—wake up, eat, and sit in the lecture room at the same time and in the same way every day.
- [ ] 2. Listen to academic arguments or ideas that may or may not have any direct application to my own work.
- [ ] 3. Listen to long lectures.
- [ ] 4. Play silly games.
- [ ] 5. Listen to poorly-prepared or off-of-the-point presentations from other participants.
- [ ] 6. Watch/read wordy PowerPoint slide presentations.
- [ ] 7. Drink a lot of coffee and/or eat too many snacks.
- [ ] 8. Pretend to be interested in the topics.
- [ ] 9. Leave important work in the office unattended.
- [ ] 10. Sit for long periods of time.

**Negative points**  For each statement above that you agreed with based on your own experience in workshops, give yourself a point. Maximum: –10 points.

**TOTAL points**  Add your negative points to your positive points.
Your answer may be positive, zero, or negative.

If your total score is positive you have probably been exposed to some very good workshop experiences and can use the rest of this course to understand better how good workshops are designed and implemented.

If your total score is zero or negative you have probably experienced many workshops, a few good, some bad, and many boring ones. You will most likely benefit from this course by avoiding many of the design and planning mistakes that have shaped your negative opinion of the workshops you have attended.
Summary

There are many training options available to you. Take care to match learning needs to appropriate training strategies before committing resources to conducting a workshop. At a minimum consider the following alternatives:

- self-study
- on the job training (OJT)
- mentoring
- workshops
- seminars
- internet-based strategies
- blended learning (BL)

Remember that while workshops provide great opportunities for group discussion and “on the spot” clarification of issues, there are also real limits about what is possible in a workshop setting due to constraints of time, money, and group dynamics.

People have different learning styles, understanding this and finding strategies to accommodate these different styles will improve the overall efficiency of your training initiatives. While there are several different approaches to describing different learning styles, the four learning styles introduced in this chapter were:

- activist
- reflector
- theorist
- pragmatist

There are three main domains of learning that should also be considered when designing a training programme or event — knowledge, attitudes, and skills. A clear analysis of what is actually needed in these domains will inform your training solution.

Everyone makes decisions based on their own previous experience. Your decisions about training design are also influenced by your experiences with different types of training programs. Be aware of your own biases about workshops, and read the rest of this text in full before concluding whether or not to use a workshop for your next training initiative.
Chapter 1
Self-Assessment Test

Check T or F to indicate whether a statement is True or False

1. In general, almost everyone learns and prefers to learn things in the same way—through trial and error.
   - T  
   - F

2. The kinds of things that can be trained (learning domains) are usually classified into only two categories—either knowledge or skills.
   - T  
   - F

3. Self-study is often the least expensive way for an organization to provide training opportunities for its staff.
   - T  
   - F

4. Self-study is the most effective way for an organization to train its staff.
   - T  
   - F

5. Blended learning programmes use several different strategies to meet learning objectives.
   - T  
   - F

Multiple choice. Mark ALL correct statements—more than one may apply.

6. The advantage of mentoring as a training approach is that it:
   - A  Is a good way for learners to compare progress and understanding with their peers.
   - B  Can provide the learner with a long-term personal advisor who can help with organizational culture and political issues as well as job skills and knowledge.
   - C  Is often appropriate for new approaches and strategies that are to be adopted by the entire organization.
   - D  Does not require much time or attention from senior staff members to be effective.

7. The advantage of the workshop as a training approach is that it:
   - A  Is a good way for learners to compare progress and understanding with their peers.
   - B  Can provide the learner with a long-term personal advisor who can help with organizational culture and political issues as well as job skills and knowledge.
   - C  Is often appropriate for new approaches and strategies that are to be adopted by the entire organization.
   - D  Both A and C above.
8. In simple terms, Benjamin Bloom’s taxonomy of learning domains includes:
   - A) Skills, Knowledge, and Application
   - B) Synthesis, Knowledge, and Application
   - C) Sensory, Kinesthetic, and Auditory
   - D) Knowledge, Skills, and Attitude

9. Which of the following descriptions best illustrates the Pragmatist learning style proposed by Honey & Mumford:
   - A) They enjoy observing and listening to other people.
   - B) They tend to act first and consider the consequences afterwards.
   - C) They like to analyze and synthesize.
   - D) They proactively search out new ideas and take the first opportunity to experiment with real-world applications.

10. Which of the following descriptions best illustrates the Reflector learning style proposed by Honey & Mumford:
    - A) They enjoy observing and listening to other people.
    - B) They tend to act first and consider the consequences afterwards.
    - C) They like to analyze and synthesize.
    - D) They proactively search out new ideas and take the first opportunity to experiment with real-world applications.
Designing Participatory Workshops

Chapter 1 Answer Key

1. F 6. B
2. F 7. D
3. T 8. D
4. F 9. D
5. T 10. A
Developing Workshop Goals and Objectives

After considering your training options and thinking about what people need to learn, you have decided (or have been asked) to design a workshop. One of the first steps is to develop your ideas further from a general workshop goal or goals into individual topics that can be addressed in the workshop. How many topics are there? How long should sessions last? What are participants expected to be able to do after the workshop? All of this will depend on the targeted participants, the different learning domain(s) you will address, and how deep you want to go. In short, you need to develop and share an idea of individual topics and the learning objectives of each session with stakeholders to clarify exactly what it is you are trying to accomplish and to find consensus.

2.1 Ask the Right Questions

“Doubt is not a pleasant condition, but certainty is absurd.”

– Voltaire, French author, humanist, rationalist, and satirist (1694-1778)

Even if you feel certain about the content of your next workshop, ask enough questions to be sure that you are heading in the right direction. Many technically good workshop designs have failed because key assumptions about the event, the learners, or the content were not clarified early on in the process. Particularly in designing workshops for an international audience with whom you may be unfamiliar, asking clear questions in order to establish viable workshop goals is a sign of wisdom rather than inexperience.

Do not hesitate to ask questions about the basic goal of the event. Set the tone of the design discussions in a positive and logical way by giving due importance to establishing the workshop goal or goals before designing the whole event. The design process often starts with a directive from managers...
expressing a felt (or objectively observed) need to conduct a workshop on a particular topic. “We want to run a workshop on teamwork (or leadership, security, protection, education, or other topic), and we need to get this done before the next budget cycle ends. How soon can we schedule the first event?”

How do you begin the workshop design process and what do you really want to know before you begin?

Asking questions of your superiors or partners about the underlying reasons for developing a workshop can be awkward, since not everyone shares Voltaire's appreciation of uncertainty, particularly when budgets, calendars and other pressures are being felt. It is important to achieve a sense of agreement and clarity about the purpose and limits of the workshop content before getting caught up in the details of how the event will be accomplished.

If you are tasked to develop a workshop, consider asking the questions below as a starting point. Together, these questions constitute a very useful tool for initiating your design process. Ask them for each new training initiative you undertake. In the table below the questions are shown on the left and the reasons for asking them on the right.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUESTIONS TO ASK</th>
<th>REASONS FOR ASKING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Why is this workshop being asked for at this time?</td>
<td>Honest answers to these questions will often include information about the organizational politics behind the event.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOTE — this is an important question, but try to avoid sounding too critical when asking it. Many people take the question “why” as an accusation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are the underlying goals, or desired outcomes, of the workshop?</td>
<td>Is the workshop actually a relationship building exercise first, and a content-training exercise second? Many workshop events are not limited in their purpose to the stated training objectives. Knowing this can help you achieve the multiple objectives in a way that satisfies all stakeholders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who needs to be trained?</td>
<td>To sharpen the focus on the level of the workshop. There can be very great differences in designing an event to train entry level staff in security policies and guidelines, for example, than for training senior managers in the very same policies or guidelines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who do we expect to be in this workshop?</td>
<td>To clarify whether or not the training audience is to be from one organization only, or from a mixed group of organizations with differing mandates, rules, etc. This information can guide you in knowing how organizationally specific or how generic information on policies and “best practice” should be.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the typical background or baseline level of competence of the participants in the proposed workshop topics?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### QUESTIONS TO ASK

**How big is the pool of potential participants?**

**REASONS FOR ASKING**

If the answer is "very large," for example, a few hundred or more trainees, then a higher level of care is necessary for keeping notes and revisions during the process, and a "pilot event" will likely be needed. Also, if the numbers are very large, other management issues will arise, such as the possible need for a "training of trainers" course to support the implementation of many workshops, and issues about quality of the materials and trainers in many different locations at the same time.

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**In which language will the workshop event be held, and what is the language proficiency of the group involved?**

The answer to this question will greatly affect the design of the workshop. Exercises and background documents that require reading more than a few pages will have serious time consequences. Will translation be required?

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**What is the status of the core content of the workshop?**

- Fully developed?
- Partially untested?
- Completely new experiment?

The nature of the core content or message of the workshop is also important to the workshop design. If the content is solid and well-tested policy, then the sessions and exercises can be designed to be factual tests with definitive answers for most participants’ questions.

If the information or core content is still developing and the workshop is being used to test the content, then the overall format will need to include much more facilitating and less training. It will also be more tentative in its conclusions. There may not be any "textbook answers".

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**What specific topics or focus points are to be considered?**

**How many key points or issues are to be addressed?**

These are actually prioritizing questions. The answer will give you information on whether or not the workshop is to be broad in nature, covering many diverse, but related topics in a basic way, with an emphasis on how they are all linked together; or narrow in nature, indicating a smaller group of topics, but longer time spent on each and more depth or detail to be covered.

This also provides some guidance on how long the workshop should be, and whether or not expert presenters or a training team are needed.

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There will be many other important issues to clarify in your own specific situation, but the questions above should give you a good idea of what kinds of things to consider.

### 2.2 Consider Workshop Goals from the Participants’ Perspective

Once you have navigated the pre-design questions above and come to some conclusions or general learning goals with key stakeholders on the core content or message of your workshop, you should think about how best to integrate the perspective of the participants themselves into the workshop design. Even though they were considered in the stakeholder analysis above, their needs are so important to the overall success of the workshop that their perspective requires specific attention.

What do potential participants need and expect in regard to this event? How can you find out? Regardless of what you or senior management want them to learn, how will you integrate the learners’ perspectives into the design of the event? To ignore this aspect of the design can lead to a wasted, boring, or even painful workshop experience for the participants—and for you.
“Hurt not others with that which pains yourself.”
– 560 BC, from the Buddhist text Udanavarga 5:18

This useful example of the “golden rule” applies to workshop design too. Avoid designing the type of workshop that you yourself would find unsatisfactory. The real difficulty in implementing this ideal for workshop design, however, is that the participants may not like what you like, and may not need what you think they need. How can you deal with this difficult situation?

What strategies might work to help you design your workshop in a way that matches workshop content to the invitees’ expectations and needs when you have not yet met the participants?

Four strategies for dealing with the needs and desires of the participants are described below. Consider each one and apply those that are most suitable to your own situation in your next workshop design process.

Strategy 1. Ask participants about their interests and needs in a pre-workshop survey. In many instances, once the general topic has been established, you can email or telephone potential participants to ask them what their specific concerns are regarding the workshop topic. If you will conduct the workshop many times and have the opportunity to hold a “pilot workshop event” you can benefit from direct question and answer sessions as well as the participants’ written evaluations. Once a workshop is well established as an ongoing event, it may also begin to reach a more diverse or simply different audience from the one for which it was designed for. Even a well-designed workshop can fail if the wrong participants are in the room. More information on this aspect will be provided in Chapter 9, Learning and Improving from Each Workshop.

Ask potential participants how the workshop can help them. Many, but not all, participants will have been exposed to situations that have highlighted problems or gaps in their knowledge that they can share with you. In this situation, participants’ direct requests for information or guidance can provide you with valuable focus for the workshop goals that will reflect the learner’s own stated needs. Talk through some of your draft goals to test them, but be aware that in some instances and for some topics, participants may not have the experience or knowledge to provide you with useful advice.

In this second instance, testing the workshop goals with participants may not provide direct advice on writing the workshop goals or structuring your workshop sessions, but may still yield positive results for the overall success of the workshop. By conducting this type of survey you will find it much easier and quicker to establish rapport with a workshop group with whom you have already been in communication. One other advantage of this kind of pre-workshop communication is that you may also identify participants who can help support the workshop event with their ideas, case studies, or questions.
Strategy 2. Explain the reason for the training in a pre-workshop “information campaign”.
In some cases, participants really cannot comment on the content of a proposed workshop. This is true, for example, when they are completely unfamiliar with the approach or content of the proposed workshop. In this case they will not be able to advise you whether or not they need the training as they have no idea what it is about. They may need to experience the workshop before they know how appropriate it is for them. In this case your decision to offer the workshop is based on your own or other managers’ opinions of what is needed—not the opinion of the participants. In this instance you should explain the reason for offering the workshop to the participants and provide at least enough information for them to understand why the training is being offered.

In some cases, the training or informational content of the workshop may simply be set as an organizational goal by higher management, and no advice on the content or core message is wanted. In this case, you may prefer to avoid asking potential participants questions about what they want since you are already committed to a course of action. You can always, however, ask questions about best methods to deliver the training (remember the different learning styles and options from Chapter 1) and other variables that are flexible even when the core content is pre-set.

Strategy 3. Leave open space in the workshop design to accommodate unforeseen needs raised by the workshop participants. In some instances, particularly where the workshop participants will come from a wide variety of backgrounds and may have very different needs, you need to allow some free time in the agenda to dedicate to important issues that are not known in advance. These can be Open Forum sessions or flexible evening sessions that can be implemented or not, depending on the need. If you are truly unsure of the learning needs and the suitability of the workshop design for the participants, for example in a pilot workshop event, consider proposing that finding the answers to those questions is, in fact, one of the main goals of the workshop.

Strategy 4. Be flexible enough to change your plans if you discover a mismatch between the planned workshop agenda and what is actually needed. This approach is more difficult to accomplish well than it seems at first glance. It is quite possible to lose important structure and sequence in a workshop event once you begin to alter pre-planned activities with “on the spot” changes. While these changes can be refreshing and even exciting, they can also be seen by the participants as unstructured, or just poorly planned.

Whichever strategy or combination of strategies you choose for incorporating the learners’ perspectives, find some way to communicate with potential participants before the workshop event where possible. At a minimum, include the goal statement at the opening of the event and in the workshop materials. If participants are still unsure of why they are at the workshop after the first morning break, something is badly wrong.

2.3 Writing Workshop Goal Statements

Workshop goal statements are generally broad in nature and try to address the question, “What is this workshop about and why should I attend it?” The format of the statement is not as important as the content and will depend on which learning domains you are addressing, how familiar the topic is to the participants, and the background or developmental level of the participants. In many instances, the goal statement is presented along with “main themes” or an “overview” of the workshop content if it is being prepared for participants’ information. The examples that follow are based on three different UNHCR eCentre workshops. Compare the differences between the examples and the content of the core goal statements of each (highlighted).
Example 1 – Emergency and Disaster Management Workshop

The UNHCR eCentre, in partnership with the National Institute of Disaster Management of India, is pleased to welcome you to this Emergency and Disaster Management workshop.

The National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM), the nodal national agency of the Government of India for training, research and documentation in the field of disaster management, is an internationally recognized leader in disaster management expertise in one of the world’s most disaster-affected regions. UNHCR is a front-line emergency response organization that has played an increasingly active role in natural disasters. What can we learn from each other?

UNHCR’s mandate calls upon it to work predominantly in areas of man-made, rather than natural, disasters. However, many common threads link these environments. The need for effective contingency planning, assessment, and rapid assistance to vulnerable people is equally urgent. Coordination among a diverse range of actors is a common challenge. Finally, natural and man-made disasters both create displaced populations, where similar challenges are experienced by responders. The present workshop will thus offer an opportunity to compare approaches, share best practices, and learn and improve from each other’s experience.

This workshop is intended for senior officials dealing with disaster management, either as a member of a national disaster management organization (NDMO) or a ministry or other body likely to be involved in disaster planning or response. It is also intended for members of inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations involved in disaster management. The audience in this regional forum will include participants from India, other nations of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), and other international experts.

Main themes of the workshop

- Major disaster threats affecting the region
- Contingency planning for disasters
- Coordination arrangements
- Disasters that displace large populations
- Assessing and managing logistics for disaster response
- Planning for vulnerable groups
- Civil-military relations in disasters
- Managing information and working with the media
- Planning for recovery

Workshop goals

Through this workshop, it is hoped that participants will gain:

- A greater awareness of effective practices used in managing emergencies and disasters
- A broader understanding of the roles and approaches used by counterpart organizations
- Strengthened cooperation, leading to improved concerted action in facing emergencies, through mutual familiarity and understanding.

Example 2 – UNHCR eCentre Workshop: Planning for Mass Population Displacement Emergencies

This workshop is a concise, three-day introduction to the basics of planning for humanitarian response to mass population displacement emergencies, such as those resulting from natural disasters, mass migrant movements, refugee influxes, and IDPs who are forced to move under emergency conditions.

Workshop goals

- A greater awareness of effective practices used in planning for emergencies and disasters, and…
- Strengthened cooperation, leading to improved concerted action in facing emergencies, through mutual familiarity and understanding of guidelines, standards, and indicators for humanitarian disaster response.
EXAMPLE 3 – UNHCR EMERGENCY AND SECURITY SERVICE / THE ECENTRE AND JAPAN INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AGENCY JOINT PROGRAMME: SAFETY IN THE FIELD (SIF)

Note: This example is presented in the form of a welcome letter from senior management.

Welcome to the UNHCR eCentre and JICA Safety in the Field Workshop.

We would like to extend a warm welcome to all those who have come to Pranburi to attend this important workshop. We are confident that there will be a lot to learn and you, in turn, will have much to share with others. Equally, it will be an opportunity to foster relationships which will support us all in our common aim, to be safe while working to accomplish our objectives in humanitarian emergencies or development aid work.

From Chad to Iraq to Sri Lanka, global trends in the safety of aid workers remain a matter of great concern to us all. Whether in the humanitarian emergency or development fields, our work increasingly calls upon us to operate near and sometimes in areas of conflict. Moreover, the circumstances in which we must work are all too often characterized by the collapse of normal governing structures, where national and international laws and norms afford little protection. Finally, aid workers face a variety of hazards other than intentional violence, such as traffic accidents, disease and the results of accumulated or acute stress.

As civilian populations are at increasing risk from disasters both man-made and natural, our work becomes all the more essential, but equally more risky. This fact makes it imperative that staff exposed to such environment be properly equipped with the knowledge, skills and attitude to keep themselves and others safe.

The purpose of this joint programme with UNHCR and JICA is to prepare staff of development and relief organizations to operate safely in their complex working environment. Revised and updated to incorporate the most recent lessons from the field, the course is designed to help you learn by, seeing, hearing and above all practicing the actions that will help keep you safe in dangerous situations. As in other eCentre workshops we benefit from the particularly rich mixture of NGO, government and UN participants, from the emergency and development communities, from situations as varied as Sudan, Afghanistan and Timor Leste. UNHCR and JICA believe that this diversity allows us to bring new knowledge and viewpoints into our respective organizations and country programmes, and helps us explore together how we can work as partners to improve collective safety in the field.

We invite you to take full advantage of the experienced resource people that are available here in Pran Buri by asking questions, and equally that you will help us make this an interactive event by sharing your own experiences.

Finally, although the topics before us in the coming days are serious, we hope that you will have time to take full advantage of this beautiful setting on the coast and will enjoy some moments of relaxation.

Exercise

You have just been asked to develop a workshop on disaster mitigation strategies for local communities. Discussions with your office counterparts and supervisors have resulted in general agreement on the following points:

- The workshop should be designed for mid-level field officers and programme staff who already have some background experience in humanitarian field work and disaster response programmes.
- The workshop will be prepared for internal staff only at first, but if it is successful, it may be offered to partner agencies as well.
- The focus is to be on different types of mitigation strategies that can be incorporated into ongoing projects as well as new emergency responses and programmes.
• It is important to show the disaster response specialists in the organization the benefits of incorporating a more developmental approach into emergency response programmes from the beginning.
• The workshop should serve to motivate participants to actually change the way they design field programmes and think about disaster response.
• Most of the offices consulted feel that their staff can only take a few days off for this training, and are arguing against any workshop lasting longer than three days.
• Write a workshop goal statement in the space below that you could propose to the other stakeholders.

Based only on the information above, your goal statement may vary considerably from the two examples offered below. Regardless of your specific answer, you should have considered what was agreed by the stakeholders, as well as how much time is available and the background of the expected participants. Was your goal achievable in the three day time limit? Was it appropriate for mid-level field practitioners? The two examples below are based on two different views of what was actually agreed in the preliminary discussions. Note that the second example also provides some useful insight into how the workshop might be structured.

Examples

Option 1 “The goal of this workshop is to familiarize field staff with the key principles of disaster mitigation. The workshop will train participants to design better programmes that incorporate disaster mitigation strategies into all aspects of disaster and emergency response.”

Option 2 “The goal of this workshop is to improve field staff skills in designing effective disaster response programmes and projects. This workshop will provide a chance for all participants to practice incorporating disaster mitigation elements into project design and implementation. It will also provide a forum for networking with colleagues in related fields and exchanging views and ideas on current best practices in the humanitarian response field.”
As the workshop designer, you might choose to propose the one example you believe to be the most suitable, or you may propose both statements to counterparts in order to clarify the issues further. This would give you a chance to reach consensus on the goal of the workshop and possible methods to be employed in the workshop itself. The more you can develop a shared vision of the workshop at this point, the easier the next steps will be. The goal statement must be discussed and clarified as far as possible before beginning the individual session designs and session learning objectives. A well-written workshop goal statement will help you to design the workshop, and will help potential participants decide whether or not they should attend.

2.4 Write Clear and Concise Session Objectives

Your workshop goal will provide you with a sound basis on which to take the next step of developing discrete sessions or exercise topics that will make up the overall workshop event. Think carefully about each topic you will cover. What is the real point of spending time on each specific topic? What value do you expect to be gained from each session? What do you want the participants to know, appreciate or do differently than they did at the start of the session? Answering these questions at the beginning of the session design process will save you much time and frustration.

The learning objectives, if well-written, have many important uses. They can:

- **Provide clarity to the training task** — objectives answer the question “What are we really trying to accomplish?”

- **Guide the trainers and facilitators in planning sessions** — instruction, delivery of information, design of exercises and other strategies for achieving the objectives

- **Provide a measure for evaluation of the participants’ learning** either by the workshop organizers or through self-evaluation by the participants

- **Prepare and guide the learner** to help focus and set learning priorities

- **Make the training more focused and organized.**

How would you describe the attributes of a good session learning objective? Write at least three important attributes or qualities of session learning objectives that you feel would make them the most useful for everyone concerned.

1) __________________________

2) __________________________

3) __________________________
When you design your next training plan, write each learning objective so that others can clearly determine whether or not the objective has been achieved. From reading the learning objective, participants should be able to answer the question: “What will I know, believe or be able to do as a result of this session?” (You may want to review Bloom’s Taxonomy in Chapter 1.)

Learning objectives should also be SMART (an acronym for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic (or Relevant) and Time-bound with a specific deadline. This is an old and well-known approach, but it is still very relevant.

Most trainers and educational experts distinguish between workshop goals (broad statements about the reason for the workshop discussed in the first section of this chapter) and learning objectives which are much more specific and tend to address the various levels of the cognitive domain of Bloom’s Taxonomy. Many educational designers consider behavioral change to be the only real measure of learning as a practical exercise. In other words, it does not really matter to the trainer or to senior management if a person knows a new policy, or even whether or not they believe it is a good policy. The only objective measurement of success of the training initiative is whether the learners put the policy into practical action at their jobs by changing their behaviors in ways that reflect an understanding of their new learning.

It is important to note that in many instances a decision will be taken to spend workshop time on issues or objectives which are so subjective, expensive or difficult to evaluate that it is understood there is no practical evaluation of success in achieving the objective. This does not mean, however, that those deep, philosophical, or personally important sessions should be avoided. Many trainers and facilitators would argue it is precisely these types of highly subjective, emotional, and personal areas that are most effectively dealt with in a workshop format, and that they may go the farthest in actually bringing about changes in an organization. It is agreed by most, however, that proving this by workshop evaluation is very difficult.

One useful tool that many professional educational specialists use to structure their learning objectives is based on a simple template. Using it will help you think more strategically about your session design and will help you clarify session objectives in a less subjective way. It has a relatively simple format with only three key components:

- **Task**: The written learning objective has a measurable action-oriented verb.
- **Condition**: Any important conditions under which the performance of the verb above is to be carried out are listed.
- **Standard**: The quantifiable criteria for determining acceptable performance are established.

You may not need to include the evaluation criteria or the conditions under which the action is to be done in situations where these are obvious, but adding the condition(s) and the evaluation criteria will often clarify the learning objective both for you as well as the participants. Even when dealing with topics in the attitude domain, thinking about the learning objectives in this format often provides valuable insight on how to structure the topic, session or exercise.

To illustrate the process of arriving at a well-considered and well-written learning objective for a workshop session, consider the following case. You have been asked to prepare a workshop session in a field security workshop that will train participants about Global Positioning System (GPS) devices. After discussing with other security and technical experts, you understand that GPS devices are becoming common in the field and that your organization’s staff need to “catch up” with this technology. Your initial discussions result in an agreement that the real point of this session is that all participants should know about the GPS device as it is becoming a basic tool in the field. The initial draft of the learning objective for such a training session might look like the one below.
GPS training session learning objective (draft 1): Participants will be able to explain how a GPS device works, and use it effectively in the field.

After receiving this objective from you, the security expert explains that while it would be useful for the participants to understand how the device works and to become familiar with it, the real security-related learning need is for participants to be able to actually use it in case of a serious security incident. You then discuss this with technicians and others and determine that learning to actually use the GPS instead of just learning about it will require several GPS devices to be provided for hands-on practice. This is agreed, and you revise your learning objective accordingly.

GPS training session learning objective (draft 2): Participants will be able to identify their actual location coordinates in a rural practice area using a GPS device.

The security expert congratulates you on this improved learning objective but now, after reading it through, realizes that what is really needed is for participants to be able not only to use the GPS to find their coordinates, but to use one particular coordinate system (MGRS) and to be able to accurately send that information over the radio or satphone to arrange for support, first aid, or evacuation. She asks you to amend your learning objective one more time.

GPS training session learning objective (draft 3): Participants will be able to identify their actual location coordinates, without instructor assistance, in a rural practice area using a GPS device and transmit them accurately to a base station using field radios and standard radio language. Coordinates will be in MGRS format and accurate to 100 meters precision.

This final draft of the learning objective contains all three components of the suggested format: task, conditions, and the standard to be achieved. The security expert thanks you for your efforts and agrees that you have now identified exactly what needs to be done in the session and how success can be measured.

This example is typical of the development of many workshop session designs and shows the value of writing the session learning objectives clearly and early. The process gives you a greater level of comfort that you are actually doing the right thing, and it illuminates many other aspects of the session that may need support to accomplish the objectives, in this case buying the GPS devices and radios, and finding a suitable field area in which to conduct the practice sessions.

Practice Example – Disaster Mitigation Workshop

Review the discussion of the workshop goals for the disaster mitigation workshop on pages 23-24. After further discussion, the second example goal statement was agreed by all stakeholders. You have now decided to include a session (or sessions) devoted specifically to encouraging participants to include physical or structural mitigation techniques against future disasters. Your organization currently provides many people around the world with shelter materials after disasters and it is important to explain to the participants that all shelter projects should now include components, activities or materials that will actually reduce the impact of future disasters rather than simply replace what was lost or damaged.
In the space below write your own learning objective for a session or sessions dedicated to explaining and encouraging participants to use physical mitigation techniques in their future shelter project designs. Make whatever assumptions you need to complete the task.

Compare your proposed learning objective to the ones shown below. Does your learning objective include the action verb to be done, the conditions it is to be done under, and the standard to which it is to be accomplished? If so, you have successfully drafted a useful learning objective. Note that the three objectives provided as examples below as well as your own may all be useful and correct for the purposes of this training initiative. The only way to achieve consensus on which of these to pursue is to present them to your counterparts or superiors and reduce the possible options to the one that best suits your purpose.

Mitigation Learning Objectives

**Option 1.** “Participants will be able to highlight the differences between traditional emergency shelter responses and a mitigation-oriented response, and effectively argue for inclusion of mitigation measures in future shelter projects in their own offices and areas of operation.”

**Option 2.** “Participants will be able to describe at least five different basic mitigation strategies in the shelter sector and explain how they can be incorporated into future project designs.”

**Option 3.** “Participants will prepare a draft shelter response proposal that incorporates a practical disaster mitigation strategy in outline format, in response to a disaster scenario provided by the workshop training team. The proposal will include the following components at a minimum, goal statement, required inputs, implementation strategy, outputs and expected long-range results.”

2.5 Test Your Workshop Goals and Session Objectives

Finally, review your now clear and concise workshop goals and learning objectives for appropriateness and achievability. Are they really what the participants need? Are they achievable in the timeframe available in your workshop? Will you need resources that you do not currently have, or cannot reproduce in a workshop situation in order to accomplish them? Test your session learning objectives against these factors:

- Learning needs
- Time limitations
- The workshop setting or context
Learning needs Sometimes after working through the session objective development exercise illustrated above, you may arrive at a very clear and agreed set of objectives, but actually lose sight of what the learners really need. Review the objectives from the learners’ perspective. Do they actually already have this information, skill or attitude? In many cases, particularly those like the mitigation workshop in the previous exercises in this chapter, participants may be well aware of the advantages of a certain philosophy, approach or management consideration, but are simply constrained to act on them due to lack of adequate funding. There may also be other pressures or limitations such as inadequate budget line descriptions, public pressure for immediate short term response instead of longer term strategies, or other organizational pressures that push them to other responses. The fact that field staff are not performing a certain function or using a prescribed approach does not necessarily mean that they need training in that topic area. Take care to match training-based solutions to actual training needs.

Take care that even though your objectives are measurable, they are also achievable. It is very unlikely, for example, that workshop participants in a Field Security Workshop could “ensure that all staff members follow new security protocols and avoid serious security incidents.” However, it might be reasonable that after a three day workshop on “Security Management for Small Field Offices” that those participants completing the workshop could “explain key security concepts to staff, and monitor their adherence to stated guidelines, on a monthly basis in their duty station.”

Time limitations Set realistic time goals. One common problem is over optimism about how much can be accomplished in an hour, in a session or in a day. Topic experts will often feel that they can explain the basic content of a topic session as well as conduct a lively short exercise, do a useful debriefing and then synthesize the whole thing into a meaningful conclusion – all within an hour or ninety minutes. While this may be possible, it is very difficult and requires that the trainer be fairly expert in delivery and facilitation. It also requires that the session topic be quite focused.

Review the materials or lesson plan yourself. Compare the content with other sessions you have done in the past and rigorously demand that enough time be allowed to complete each attempted component of the workshop successfully. More on this aspect will be covered in Chapter 4, Presenters and Presentations.

The workshop setting Review your objectives in terms of the activities or resources that will be required to accomplish the objectives in a workshop setting. For some skills training, for example, expensive equipment may be required which cannot be taken from the field office or emergency location for the purposes of training at a workshop held in a hotel. Could the workshop be held in the field instead? Could the equipment be made available for this purpose from other sources?

Some objectives may require realistic duplication of emergency situations which cannot be done realistically enough in a hotel workshop room. Can the workshop be located in an area where needed facilities, actors, and other role playing or simulation props are available? The main point is that by further clarifying your objectives and testing each one for “achievability” in the workshop setting you can avoid writing unattainable objectives and thereby undermining the participants’ (and your own) faith in them as a useful guide.
Summary

As a responsible workshop designer you need to ask other stakeholders in the process the right questions about the underlying purpose, goals and context before investing significant time in the details of your next training event. Asking better questions early-on in the process will help you design a better workshop.

Write and use workshop goal statements to clarify the focus of the workshop with other stakeholders and to provide a sound basis for the workshop design.

Test workshop goals from the perspective of the participants to the extent possible, and incorporate ways to integrate the participants’ concerns into your workshop design.

Develop and support your workshop goal(s) with clear and concise session learning objectives. These learning objectives should be written as clearly as possible and should include:

- The specific action(s) that the participants will be enabled to do.
- The conditions under which they should be able to do them.
- The measure or standard which they should be able to meet.

Remember to test your workshop goals as well as your session learning objectives against these three factors:

- learning needs
- time limitations
- the workshop setting or context
Self-Test
Chapter 2
Self-Assessment Questions

Check T or F to indicate whether a statement is True or False

1. Asking about the background and expected knowledge or skill levels of the potential workshop participants is an important step in the workshop design process.

2. Potential workshop participants can always provide useful advice on their own learning needs.

3. A well-written workshop goal statement will help you design the workshop, and will help potential participants decide whether or not they should attend.

4. The fact that field staff are not carrying out a particular function or approach proves that they need training in that area.

5. Determining how achievable the workshop goals and learning objectives are in your training venue should be an important consideration in your workshop design.

Multiple choice. Mark ALL correct statements—more than one may apply.

6. Which of the following are strategies that can help you appropriately decide on workshop content for an unfamiliar group of participants?
   - Use a pre-workshop survey to learn more about the potential participants.
   - For topics that are completely unknown to the participants, explain the reasons and the perceived need for the training in this area.
   - Provide Open Forum sessions or other open-ended sessions in the workshop agenda to allow flexibility to meet needs you may have overlooked.
   - Take a flexible approach to the workshop agenda and change topics or sessions as you learn that changes are needed “on the spot”.

7. Professional educational designers often use a three-part template for writing their learning objectives that includes:
   - The task to be enabled by the training—an action-oriented verb.
   - The effort to be expended by the trainee in accomplishing the objective.
   - The conditions under which the trainee should be able to perform the trained task.
   - A quantifiable standard against which the trainee’s actions will be measured.
Chapter 2
Self-Assessment Questions (con’t.)

8. If the core content of the workshop is not firmly established policy or fact, but reflects changing policies or new and untested directives, which of the following are likely?

- **A** Exercises and questions asked of participants will have concrete “textbook” answers.
- **B** The workshop event will tend to be much longer.
- **C** The workshop will probably consist of more facilitation and less training.
- **D** You do not need to write learning objectives for the workshop sessions.

9. Which of the following are appropriate uses of well-written learning objectives?

- **A** They provide clarity to the training task.
- **B** They provide a measure for evaluation of the participants’ learning.
- **C** They make the training more focused and organized.
- **D** They help predict the usefulness of the training session.

10. Which of the following should be considered in testing your workshop goals and session learning objectives?

- **A** Whether or not the training on each particular topic is actually needed by the participants.
- **B** The workshop venue.
- **C** Time limitations for both the overall workshop event as well as topic-specific sessions.
- **D** Availability of needed equipment and or props to meet the objectives.

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Chapter 2 Answer Key

5. T 7. F 10. A, B, C, D
If you have followed the advice of the last two chapters in designing your workshop, you should now have a clear workshop goal, supported by a logical and appropriate set of related topic sessions that are discrete, focused, and clarified by sound learning objectives. Chances are good that your workshop content will now meet the basic learning needs of your participants.

In order to make the workshop experience both memorable and positive, however, you must also consider how best to organize the different sessions so that they all make sense as an overall package or story. You need to think through the day-to-day dynamics of the learners in the workshop environment, and how each session works together with the others to tell a clear and understandable story, even when dealing with complex field concerns, dilemmas and contradictions involved in humanitarian work.

This chapter provides advice on how to:

- Find and apply a unifying logic to the sequence of the sessions or activities in your next workshop.
- Integrate the individual components or sessions of the workshop into an overall theme or story line.
- Consider agenda timings, and work with, instead of against, the different natural human rhythms in a workshop session, day, or week.
- Build learning “checkpoints” into your agenda to allow monitoring and correction of training strategies “on the spot.”

### 3.1 Ordering Your Sessions into a Logical Agenda

Providing an overall logic for ordering your workshop sessions is important. Most participants, regardless of their learning style preferences, will naturally want to understand the overall sense of the workshop and how each session relates to the next. Participants that happen to prefer the Theorist learning style, as described in Chapter 1, may lose interest in the workshop if no overall organizing logic is made clear to them.
Designing Participatory Workshops

What aspects of workshops that you have attended have annoyed you?
Describe at least three attributes of bad workshops that you would like to avoid in your next training event.

The Workshop to Avoid
You may find the account of the fictional workshop below all too real. As you read through it, identify the issues you wish you could change, improve or correct. Circle or underline them so that you can easily identify the main problems later.

Late last week you were told to attend this workshop, since the person who normally should have done so had a family emergency and cannot now attend. The theme of the workshop is related to your work, but you haven’t really planned for the time required — a full week. Highly skeptical, but hoping to make the most of the event, you arrive at the training venue just before midnight the day before the event is to begin.

During the first day, you begin to understand that the workshop format consists mainly of presentations by different experts. Through the first two days, you notice that the experts generally arrive at the training site within an hour of presenting their sessions, meet the workshop coordinators and other presenters for the first time, and hastily exchange memory sticks or CDs with their prepared presentations. You watch with some amusement, at first, as last minute technical issues are worked out and one presenter hands off the control of the podium to the next. The second day you decide to bring a magazine to read during these technical time out periods, just to be prepared.

As the workshop drags on, experts present their case studies, personal or organizational perspectives or activities, or short training sessions based on their unique experience and expertise. While their expertise and experience seems to be genuine, there is often little or no connection between one speaker and the next, some ideas are repeated many times in different ways, and many points are totally unrelated to the workshop goals. Some sessions are interesting, some are not. Rather than feeling like you are heading towards some useful “learning destination”, you feel more like you are simply “circling the learning airport”, waiting to land. Even though you are not really working hard, you feel very tired.

Halfway through the first session of the fourth day, you realize that you are not actually listening to the presenter at all. You want to be interested, but instead find yourself actively engaged in repeatedly checking your watch and wondering what will be offered at the next break or lunch. At the end of the day you don’t reflect on the topics and how they relate, nor do you see how to sum up the experience into a meaningful synthesis. You simply want to get out and go shopping or otherwise entertain yourself as a reward for suffering through another workshop day. At least tomorrow it will be over and you can get back to your office.
In seminar or workshop situations like the one described above, it is common for participants to ask themselves “Where is this all going?” They may think, “I liked the first session, but could not understand the second one, and I do not have any idea what the next one is actually about.” Workshop participants quickly learn to “tune in” or “tune out” individual speakers depending on their individual preferences, particularly when there is no clue or evidence that future sessions will build on or relate in any way to learning acquired in the current session.

In some instances, a range of unrelated sessions like a kind of learning buffet may be offered where participants can choose from many different topics and perspectives. This can be very appealing. Those who already know the information or skills offered in one session can choose something else. The appeal is lost, however, when the dynamic is changed so that this optional learning selection becomes mandatory and participants are required to take every item offered, and to take each one sitting in the same seat for several days in a row. Unless you actually have the resources to offer participants optional choices in a large seminar format, with parallel sessions being offered at the same time, this approach will not usually produce a satisfactory workshop.

An alternative to the “learning buffet” described above, is to offer a well-designed “set-course meal” of learning activities. In this approach the overall agenda is seen as the unfolding steps or “courses” of a complete learning experience. Light starters come first to whet the appetite, then something to warm you up, followed by a hearty entrée, perhaps a sweet, and finally coffee or a digestive, to help you savor and close the experience on a positive note.

The topics you have identified with stakeholders need to be organized into a sequence that makes sense to the participants. There is not a single right way to do this in every instance, but there are two basic approaches—structural and chronological—that often help organize workshop topics into a logical agenda. Each approach is described below and illustrated with a simple exercise.

**Structural** This approach applies to workshops that include core topics that are theoretical or which can more easily be divided into theory and practice. The general idea is that foundational theories or approaches which must be understood before further refinement and application should be presented first. Greater focus, critical challenges, and definition of limits to these theories come next. After this, practical applications can be introduced, followed by hands-on practice or testing. The approach is called structural since the theoretical or academic foundation is provided first, followed by the secondary structural system(s) of the approach, and finally by detailed elements relating to practical applications in real-life situations. This is much the same as a physical structure is built (foundation, core structure, then details and finishes).

Practice applying this approach to the topic list below that has been agreed on for the Disaster Mitigation workshop introduced in the last chapter. The workshop goal is to encourage staff to change their operational activities to prioritize vulnerability reduction strategies in their project designs over other competing pressures and issues. The unorganized list of agreed topics includes:

- Understanding and measuring community vulnerability
- Disaster management basics—threat, vulnerability, and risk
- Preparation of the threat, vulnerability, and risk matrix for local communities
- Conceptual basics of humanitarian and development work
- Limits to understanding and measuring human-made threats
- Organizational budgeting and policy guidelines on vulnerability reduction projects
- Understanding and quantifying threats in terms of likelihood and force
- Methods for quantifying relative vulnerability in different communities
- Combining measures of vulnerability and threat to identify relative risk
- Risk matrix analysis—identification of vulnerability as the primary factor under local control
- Reducing vulnerability through mitigation projects
- Standards and limits in measuring and predicting natural threats
In the space below, order the topics as you would place them in the agenda using a structural approach. When you are finished compare your solution to the one at the end of the chapter.

1) 
2) 
3) 
4) 
5) 
6) 
7) 
8) 
9) 
10) 
11) 
12) 

Chronological To use this approach, you must consider your topics or sessions and think about how your participants would normally encounter them in a typical sequence of events in their lives or work. The order of the sessions then follows the chronology one would expect that they would be experienced in the field.

For example, imagine a short field security workshop where the 12 agreed topics to be included are shown below. The primary workshop goal for this example is to provide organizational staff with basic personal field security advice for working more safely in insecure field locations during international deployments.

- Stress
- Personal security in insecure cities, taxis, hotels, and public places
- Security rules and procedures
- Emergency evacuation and office closure procedures
- Threat of rape
- Emergency first aid
- Threats from crowds and mobs
- Security threat analysis
- Security incident reporting
- Threats against the office—parcel and vehicle-borne bombs
- Personal security for airports and international travel
- Threats from landmines

Order these topics into a logical agenda using a chronological approach. Write your ordered listing of 12 topics on the next page. When you are done, compare your solution to the one offered at the end of the chapter.
3.2 Develop Your Agenda into an Interesting Storyline

Whatever system you use to order your topics, you still need to consider the way that the participants will experience the overall “story” you are telling through the workshop. Good stories start with a bang, or a mystery, or some other device that draw the readers or listeners into the story. They may need help in shifting focus from their day-to-day work issues and other pressing concerns to the theme you are dealing with in the workshop.

Next, provide details and background about the topics and the themes you are presenting. Any needed background information or tools that are to be used should be provided at this point so that participants can begin engaging in the discussion and exercises independently. Once the participants become “part of the story” they are ready to take on the core messages, themes or training points. After the basic topics are covered, provide an exercise, case study, or role play to give the participants a chance to put what they have learned into practice.

A good story also has an ending that ties up loose strands of the plot and answers the questions that drove the initial interest in following the storyline. End with a strong point, a conclusion or a summary of key points that participants are expected to remember and apply. The workshop events should then be closed, with appropriate thanks and farewells, and not just ended when the time has run out.

Thinking through the agenda as an interesting story or movie with a definite storyline to keep interest and provide a full narrative will help you to organize the whole event and will provide more interest for the participants. It is important to remember that each session should be valuable and interesting in its own right as well as supporting the overall structure.

3.3 Consider the Natural Rhythms of Workshop Life

There are many observed patterns of workshop behaviors that should sound familiar to you regardless of where you are in the world. People are generally lively and eager to talk and chat with their colleagues the first thing in the morning. This bright and energetic feeling may last only a few moments as people take their places and prepare themselves to listen, discuss, or participate in the
first session of the day. Within 15 minutes of starting the workshop activities, that initial lively feeling may already be gone. Think carefully about what you do in those first moments and what you can accomplish that would be much more difficult to accomplish at other times in the workshop.

*How do you generally feel during the first session of the day in a workshop? What kinds of activities do you believe are best done in the first session of the day?*

During the first session of the day, participants generally feel awake and ready to focus, discuss and learn. Workshop organizers and designers should take this early morning readiness into account and use that time for sessions that take more mental effort or focus. Core theories, academic approaches, and presentation of tools that will be used later in the workshop would all be usefully implemented at this time of the workshop day.

Our bodies quickly learn workshop routines. By the second day, workshop participants will need coffee or cigarettes, or a snack or a toilet break by the pre-set time of the previous day's break. As the session approaches the scheduled break time, people's bodies begin to make their urges known, and the participants' ability to focus and stay on topic decreases. *Once a break time norm has been set, respect it.*

*People who work in offices sit all day looking at their computers. Why then, does it often feel so much more tiring to sit in a workshop setting all day?*

While it is true that, even in the field, many staff devote much of their time to their computers, they are not doing the same mental tasks they are doing in a workshop environment and they are largely managing their own time. Also, even sedentary workers in an office situation rarely sit at their desks for the whole day, focused on what someone else is explaining or presenting. People are much more engaged in their own work than in reading or hearing about other people's work. Secondly, people simply need to get up, walk around, check on their neighbors, chat about various things and move between focused work and "office society".
At work, people are in control of their own bathroom and smoking breaks and have considerable control over how long they sit at their desks, and to whom they talk. To the degree possible, workshop events should provide many of the same opportunities. Failure to provide different types of activities and some options for physical and mental activities will often result in the participants’ loss of focus on the workshop content as they turn their attention to their own personal discomfort and the search for ways to relieve it.

The lunch break has the same urgency as the morning break, except that the need to stop for an adequate time to eat lunch, smoke, and in some countries to nap, is usually greater. Respect lunch, and allow enough time for participants to really take a break from the workshop activities. In most instances this break should be physical and spatial as well as simply a break in the schedule. Whenever possible, arrange to have lunch served or offered in a separate location. It is better still if the participants have to walk a bit to get to the lunch area, and can see other views and people.

How do you generally feel during the first session after lunch in a workshop? What kinds of activities do you believe are best done during this session?

The session immediately after lunch can be very difficult. As people begin to digest and “settle in” to their workshop chairs, they often become dull, groggy, sleepy, or even fall asleep in the workshop room. Long presentations or videos at this time will enhance the effect of the “post lunch low”, particularly if the room lights are turned down for long videos (more than 5 minutes). To counter this, provide action and exercises rather than lectures and presentations immediately after the lunch break whenever you can.

The last session of the day is what you make it. If the previous sessions of the day have gone well and participants have been engaged and inspired, the last session of the day can often be the best. Tap positive energy and interest to deal with serious or difficult matters. Where appropriate, use the information learned earlier in the day to good effect in this last session. It is also a good time for more reflective sessions where participants can synthesize what has gone before and start to come to some conclusions about the day.

Whether or not the day has gone well, take time to summarize and conclude the day’s learning in a proactive way. There are several things that usually need doing at the end of the workshop day, but for which adequate provisions have not been made. The last session and “wrap up” for each day might reasonably incorporate all of the following activities:

- Review and summary of the day’s key learning points either by the facilitator or by the participants themselves
- Observations and feedback for the presenters and facilitators on how the day has gone or any issues that need to be addressed before the next day
- A preview of the next day’s activities and reminders on any required reading or other overnight preparation for the next day
- Conclusion, closing, or formal ending of the day
The workshop week also has its own rhythm of high and low energy points. The first day is an opportunity for participants to get acquainted, catch up with old friends, and in some cases finally get to talk to the person they have been trying to contact for some time. Energy levels are high (unless everyone has traveled a long way and just reached the training venue—tired and hungry).

The first session must set the ground rules and norms for the workshop and provide the background and goals statements for the participants. It should also provide a chance for participants to become quickly acquainted with one another and to feel free in participating and discussing topics in the workshop. To achieve this, some kind of introductory exercise or “icebreaker” is used to establish the feel and behavioral norms for the workshop. For example, people should feel free to ask questions, challenge presenters, and engage in discussions.

Throughout the first day of a week-long workshop participants will still be wondering what it is all about. This is a good day to engage them with a highly participatory exercise of some kind and to engage them in the overall question, problem or goal of the workshop so that they feel truly invested in accomplishing a successful outcome. One excellent way to accomplish this is to engage the participants in a well-developed exercise, role play or simulation. In-depth discussions and advice for designing each of these types of activities are presented in Chapters 6, 7 and 8 of this course. Complex table-top simulations can often last for a full 90-minute session, half day or even a full day. Field simulations usually require a full day, especially when travel to an off-site location is required.

For a workshop lasting a few days or a week the middle days are generally dedicated to the core content, but if the content is very dense, a mid-week break or lighter material may be needed. In many countries and organizational contexts a mid-week break of a half-day free for socializing or shopping is the norm. In many instances this break is an absolute requirement, particularly when the rest of the workshop is poorly designed and boring. Following the guidelines offered in this course will help you reduce, but may not eliminate, the need for a mid-week break. Whatever you do, make sure that the schedule is known in advance and that previews of each day are rigorously done so that participants do not feel that they have been deprived of a deserved break.

The second to last day is often when the real message or key learning points are achieved. This is often the case, since for a workshop of four or five days the participants’ focus on the last day is often largely lost to the “getting ready to go home” mode of thinking. One useful strategy to use on the penultimate day of the workshop is to use another fully participatory exercise that allows participants to apply what they have learned in an exercise scenario that is as active and realistic as possible. This exercise which may also last a full session or half day will require a structured debriefing and a chance for participants to review, and sometimes explain, their actions—both their successes and failures.

**Question**

How do you generally feel during the last day of a workshop?

What kinds of activities do you believe are best done on the last day?
On the last day of the workshop, participants may need to check out of the hotel which will put them into the mindset of closing suitcases and leaving. On the morning of the last day, thoughts begin to turn to the logistics of traveling home and away from the workshop. The problem for you is that this mental journey has already begun, even though you still have important information to cover. The participants’ bodies will be there, but their minds may need to be brought back into the training room. The last day may be best used for testing, reflecting and summarizing the week, debriefing the previous day’s application exercise if one was used, or other subjects that require participants to actively engage and to look ahead—such as sessions that focus on how to apply what they have learned to their own offices, for example.

3.4 Build Learning Checkpoints Into Your Workshop Agenda

When you stop to think about how little you usually know about the participants you will have in your workshops, it is easy to understand that you will not always “hit the mark” of presenting the right material at the right speed, tone, or depth that the participants need. Also, all groups are diverse and what some participants find interesting, others will find boring, particularly if they have already been exposed to ideas being presented in the workshop as “new”. To address this uncertainty of targeting (and the near certainty of some imprecision in the workshop design), you should schedule sessions or places in the agenda for reflection, and correction of gaps or errors in targeting of your materials to your participants’ needs.

“Learning checkpoints” offer support to the learners as well as to the trainers. They are planned opportunities designed to check that what is being presented or discussed is indeed what is needed, is making sense, and has an application that is useful to the participants. There are several good places and different ways to insert learning checkpoints into a busy workshop agenda, but the following three are particularly useful ideas:

- Objective setting
- Daily review
- The open forum session

**Objective Setting** This is a useful exercise to conduct with the participants very early on in the workshop. It generally comes after the introductions, welcome and any other required background statement. Objective setting gives the participants an opportunity to tell the organizers and facilitators what they have set as their own personal learning objectives for the workshop. It is extremely beneficial since it is early enough in the workshop agenda to allow time to deal with the specific concerns raised or even to redesign some sessions to meet learners’ stated needs. This session may take upwards of 30 minutes or more to adequately implement depending on the size of the group. It requires that each participant has time to reflect and organize his or her thoughts on this question, and time for each person to briefly explain his or her personal objectives. These statements can be written on a flip chart as they are given and kept throughout the workshop as a guide for session trainers and as a review of accomplishment of the objectives at the end of the event.

There are some instances where this exercise is not recommended. In particular, in well-established short workshops and courses where the design is firmly set and due to quality control, certification, or other norming requirements only minimal change is allowed in the pre-set design, it is counter-productive to ask what participants want since very little or no change can be made to accommodate them.

**Daily Review Session** These relatively short sessions are very useful and may be conducted either at the end or the beginning of each training day. If done at the end of the day, be sure to include them on the agenda and treat them as important and distinct sessions, rather than last minute add-ons or optional afterthoughts. Usually 10-20 minutes can provide a satisfactory review and add a sense of closure to each day.
Sometimes, however, they can feel too tiring if the content has been dense or the activities very intensive. In these cases the daily review can effectively be done at the beginning of each day to review the previous day’s learning and to preview what the day ahead has in store for the participants. Given enough time to actually reflect and ask some clarifying questions, these sessions can provide you a good sense of how well the participants are accomplishing the learning objectives, day by day, before it is too late to make useful changes or offer additional assistance.

**Open Forum Sessions** These sessions are typically an hour or longer and are completely dedicated to answering questions and dealing with issues raised by the participants that have not been foreseen by the training team. These are best done after enough material has been presented to allow the participants to form significant questions, and yet early enough to adequately address issues that may not be answered (or answerable) on the spot. These sessions are quite useful when inserted in the agenda when about 75% of the overall event is complete. Often, this session is most useful on the third or fourth day of a five day workshop.

**Agenda Design Practice** Select either the agenda items for the Disaster Mitigation Workshop or the Personal Security Workshop presented on pages 35 and 36 respectively. Using all of the ideas presented in this chapter such as logical order, interesting storyline, workshop rhythms and learning checkpoints, design a maximum 5-day workshop agenda for the event.

The blank agenda worksheet below is divided into five days. You should include no more than four 90 minute topic sessions in any one day. Additional lines are provided for breaks, lunch, and any other sessions you may decide to include. Make your own assumptions about starting and finishing times, time allocated for breaks and lunch, and other sessions you may decide to add. You may assume that each topic/session described in the provided topic lists requires a full 90-minute session.

(Pre-set blank agenda block format here to be filled in by the participants—the blank template should look more or less like the one shown below i.e. 4 open slots for writing before and after lunch for each day.)

When you are finished compare your agenda to those designed by the Disaster Mitigation Workshop designer and the Security Training Officer responsible for the Personal Security Workshop. The example answers are found on pages 44-45).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session #</th>
<th>Time (minutes)</th>
<th>Session topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td><strong>DAY ONE</strong></td>
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<td>Lunch</td>
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<td><strong>DAY TWO</strong></td>
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<td>Lunch</td>
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<td><strong>DAY THREE</strong></td>
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<td>Lunch</td>
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<td><strong>DAY FOUR</strong></td>
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<td>Lunch</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>DAY FIVE</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lunch</td>
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## 5 DAY FIELD SECURITY WORKSHOP AGENDA

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<tr>
<th>Session #</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Session topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>DAY ONE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Registration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>Welcome &amp; objective setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Break</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>Personal security for airports and international travel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>Personal security in insecure cities, taxis, hotels, and public places</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Break</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>Core organizational security rules, policies and procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Daily wrap-up</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>DAY TWO</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>Security threat analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Break</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>Threats from crowds and mobs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>Threats against the office — parcel and vehicle borne bombs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Break</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>Threats from landmines</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Daily wrap-up</td>
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<td><strong>DAY THREE</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>Threat of rape</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Break</td>
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<td>3.2</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>Open forum</td>
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<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
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<td>3.3</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>Emergency first aid</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>Security incident reporting</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Daily wrap-up</td>
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<td><strong>DAY FOUR</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>Managing stress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Break</td>
<td></td>
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<td>4.2</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>Emergency evacuation and office closure procedures</td>
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<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>Next steps &amp; practical applications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Break</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>Workshop closing and evaluation</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>DAY FIVE</strong></td>
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# 5 Day Disaster Management Workshop Agenda

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session #</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Session topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>D A Y  O N E</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>Welcome, introductions and objective setting</td>
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<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Break</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>Conceptual basics of humanitarian and development work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>Disaster management basics—threat, vulnerability, and risk</td>
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<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Break</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>Understanding and quantifying threats in terms of likelihood and magnitude</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Daily review</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>D A Y  T W O</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Daily Q &amp; A</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>Standards and limits in measuring and predicting natural threats</td>
</tr>
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<td>30</td>
<td>Break</td>
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<td>2.2</td>
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<td>Limits to understanding and measuring human-made threats</td>
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<td>Lunch</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.3</td>
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<td>Understanding and measuring vulnerability</td>
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<td>Break</td>
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<td>2.4</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>Methods for quantifying relative vulnerability in different communities</td>
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<td>Daily review</td>
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<td><strong>D A Y  T H R E E</strong></td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Daily Q &amp; A</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>Combining measures of vulnerability and threat to identify relative risk</td>
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<td>30</td>
<td>Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>Preparation of the threat, vulnerability, and risk matrix for local communities</td>
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<td>90</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>Open forum</td>
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<td>30</td>
<td>Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>Risk matrix analysis—identification of vulnerability as the primary factor under local control</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Daily review</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>D A Y  F O U R</strong></td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Daily Q &amp; A</td>
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<td>4.1</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>Reducing vulnerability through mitigation projects</td>
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<td>30</td>
<td>Break</td>
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<td>4.2</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>Organizational budgeting and policy guidelines on vulnerability reduction projects</td>
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<td>90</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>Open forum—specific cases, questions, and applications</td>
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<td>30</td>
<td>Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>Closing and workshop evaluation</td>
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<td><strong>D A Y  F I V E</strong></td>
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After agreeing on the learning content of your workshop, find and apply a unifying logic to the sequence of the sessions or activities. Two useful approaches are the structural and chronological methods of organizing topics into an agenda.

Integrate the individual components or sessions of the workshop into an overall theme or story line. Good workshop design requires an overall “story line” that generates both interest and greater understanding for the participants.

Consider your agenda timings and work with, instead of against, the different natural rhythms in a workshop session, day or week. Early morning sessions can take advantage of the participants’ refreshed mental and physical energy, while sessions after lunch, for example, may need to be energized to overcome the participants’ natural urge to take a nap. Take into account times of day as well as times of the workshop week where certain activities are most needed or efficient.

Build learning “checkpoints” into your agenda to allow monitoring and correction of training strategies “on the spot”. Three typical techniques are:

- Objective setting sessions
- Open forum sessions
- Daily review sessions

You will not always know the background or attitude of the participants. These types of learning checkpoint activities provide you with opportunities to understand their needs, and provide them a chance to ask or debate about anything they want or need.

You will not always know the background or attitude of the participants. These types of learning checkpoint activities provide you with opportunities to understand their needs, and provide them a chance to ask or debate about anything they want or need.
Self Test

Chapter 3

Self-Assessment Questions

Check T or F to indicate whether a statement is True or False

1. An overall logic or structure to the workshop does help participants better understand and learn from the workshop.

2. All workshops will have some boring sessions which simply have to be done.

3. Office staff members are so used to sitting at their desks for most of the day that sitting in a workshop environment comfortably for a full-day comes naturally.

4. Saving the priority content sessions for the last day of a five-day workshop is generally a good strategy since participants will remember whatever they heard last.

5. Open forum sessions are generally appropriate to offer in the morning of the first day of the workshop while participants are still fresh.

Multiple choice. Mark ALL correct statements—more than one may apply.

6. Four optional agendas are shown below for a day long workshop on first aid. Each numbered session lasts 90 minutes. The sessions appear on the agenda in the order shown after each letter choice. CPR stands for Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation (rescue breathing and chest compressions). Which one of these agendas best illustrates a chronological design approach?

A 1) Preparing a first aid kit, 2) First steps at the accident scene, 3) CPR and other life-saving measures, 4) CPR skills practice and open forum

B 1) CPR skills practice and open forum, 2) First steps at the accident scene, 3) CPR and other life-saving measures, 4) Preparing a first aid kit

C 1) Understanding the human body, 2) Basics of first aid, 3) CPR and other life-saving measures, 4) CPR and splinting skills practice.

D 1) CPR and splinting skills practice, 2) Basics of first aid, 3) CPR and other life-saving measures, 4) Understanding the human body

7. Which one of these agendas best illustrates a structural design approach?

A 1) Preparing a first aid kit, 2) First steps at the accident scene, 3) CPR and other life-saving measures, 4) CPR skills practice and open forum

B 1) CPR skills practice and open forum, 2) First steps at the accident scene, 3) CPR and other life-saving measures, 4) Preparing a first aid kit

C 1) Understanding the human body, 2) Basics of first aid, 3) CPR and other life-saving measures, 4) CPR and splinting skills practice.

D 1) CPR and splinting skills practice, 2) Basics of first aid, 3) CPR and other life-saving measures, 4) Understanding the human body
8. The “storytelling” approach to workshop agenda design, reminds you to:

A. “Start with a bang” to draw your participants into your “story”.
B. Develop ideas and themes to be used by the participants in making the story their own.
C. Place the most boring part of the story in the middle of the event.
D. End your workshop with a strong point, summary, or conclusion that brings the story to a close.

9. Which session(s) would probably be appropriate directly after lunch on the second day of a three day workshop?

A. Open forum session
B. PowerPoint presentation/lecture on core theory
C. Case study session based on a 45 minute video
D. Hands-on practice session.

10. A good “wrap up” session at the end of each workshop day might include which of the following items?

A. Quick review and summary of key points
B. Feedback to presenters and facilitators
C. Preview of the next day’s activities
D. Conclusion or formal ending to the day
Exercise — Structural Approach

How did you order the list of topics for the disaster mitigation workshop into a logical sequence or agenda? Several theoretical principles are included along with combinations of one or more of these ideas in other sessions. Practical application and organizational policies of designing projects are also included in the list. The way the Disaster Mitigation workshop designer ordered the topics into a coherent workshop agenda using a structural approach are given below. The reasons for the ordering of each one follow. Your agenda may vary slightly, but your reasons should be similar to the ones shown here.

1) **Conceptual basics of humanitarian and development work**
   Basic underlying concepts, motivations and global frameworks are presented first.

2) **Disaster management basics—threat, vulnerability and risk**
   The specifics of disaster management principles are built onto the basic concepts as one area of humanitarian and development work.

3) **Understanding and quantifying threats in terms of likelihood and magnitude**
   The focus can now be placed on threats which are explored in more detail than in the simplified introduction in the previous session.

4) **Standards and limits in measuring and predicting natural threats**
   This session is a still more specific and more focused look at the threats—in particular how they are quantified and predicted.

5) **Limits to understanding and measuring human-made threats**
   This session looks at another type of threat but incorporates the underlying principles and language introduced earlier.

6) **Understanding and measuring vulnerability**
   The second of the three basic concepts is introduced in more detail.

7) **Methods for quantifying relative vulnerability in different communities**
   Specifics on quantification now follow the basics of vulnerability.

8) **Combining measures of vulnerability and threat to identify relative risk**
   After both threat and vulnerability have been introduced and developed, the full picture of risk can be explored using information and terminology from the two previously introduced concepts.

9) **Preparation of the threat, vulnerability and risk matrix for local communities**
   A specific tool is introduced to apply the idea of risk in a meaningful way.

10) **Risk matrix analysis—identification of vulnerability as the primary factor under local control**
    This tool which incorporates both threat and vulnerability can now be analyzed to show why vulnerability reduction is a priority action area for the organization.

11) **Reducing vulnerability through mitigation projects**
    Specific, practical methods of vulnerability reduction are presented in the context of the participants’ practical experience and projects.

12) **Organizational budgeting and policy guidelines on vulnerability reduction projects**
    Organizationally-specific information is given to guide participants in designing projects that reduce vulnerability in the field.
Exercise — Chronological Approach

After reviewing this list of personal security topics from a chronological perspective you might order these elements as shown below, the ordered topics are shown at left and the reason, or logic shown at the right. In any cases where your answers disagree, check to verify that your logic is sound, some variations are possible depending on your assumptions.

1) **Personal security for airports and international travel**  Most participants would first need to fly to their international work assignment before anything else on the list.

2) **Personal security in insecure cities, taxis, hotels, and public places**  Arrival at the airport in an insecure country follows from above.

3) **Core organizational security rules, policies and procedures**  Upon arrival, staff should be briefed on the security rules and polices for the office.

4) **Security threat analysis**  Staff should be aware of their security environment. They should be briefed and be able to personally assess the situation, before undertaking field assignments.

5-8) **Threats from crowds and mobs**  Note that these different specific threats can be presented in any order from 5 through 8 if there is not a chronological reason to believe that one would happen before any other.

   a. Threats against the office — parcel and vehicle-borne bombs
   b. Threats from landmines
   c. Threat of rape

9) **Emergency first aid**  If any of the threats above happen, the victim would then need this information.

10) **Security incident reporting**  After the incident and first aid, reporting is required next.

11) **Managing stress**  Living in an environment where the issues above are happening often results in stress.

12) **Emergency evacuation and office closure procedures**  Finally, after some of the events actually occur, staff may need to evacuate.

As this example illustrates, the main rule for ordering things chronologically is that the topics should appear on the agenda in the natural order they would be experienced by a staff member in the field. This kind of ordering works well where the sessions or topics are generally about different situations that the participants might experience in the field, but which do not greatly develop or build on one another. For example, a session on “Safety in Airplanes” does not in any way affect or provide a basis for understanding a session on “Landmine Safety”. Since the one session does not provide a basis of understanding for the other, there is no need or logic to using the structural approach shown earlier.

Since this autonomous relationship is generally true of most of the sessions in the security workshop described in this chapter, the chronological approach will make more sense to the participants. It will also provide them with a useful framework for understanding (and remembering) overall workshop themes and messages.

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<td>7. C</td>
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<td>3. F</td>
<td>8. A, B, D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. F</td>
<td>9. A, D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. F</td>
<td>10. A, B, C, D</td>
</tr>
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Participatory and interactive training workshops differ from more traditional instructor-centered training approaches. The participatory workshop approach generally grants a higher value to participants’ insight and experience and relies on increased participant involvement in the teaching and learning process. Participatory workshops also recognize that participants learn best when several of their senses are engaged in the learning process (seeing, hearing, and in particular discussing and doing things themselves).

In a participatory workshop, trainers and experts still make presentations, but the workshop does not rely primarily on them. So, how do you prepare your presentations, when they are required, and how do you prepare the topic experts, who may not be training specialists, so that their presentations best fit into your overall participatory workshop plan?

4.1 Relating Presentation Time to Participation Time

As discussed in the last chapter, workshop participants will become bored and may “tune out” if presented with too many long lectures or presentations. You, as the workshop designer, must decide how to avoid this. The basic idea is to balance the simple presentation of information with active participant-driven exercises. Providing different training methods or activities will help to relieve monotony. The advice in this chapter, however, goes beyond simply mixing in different types of activities for the sake of variation alone.

The traditional way of thinking about the balance between passive lectures and activities has been to add “interesting” and energizing activities (energizers) to the workshop agenda in order to keep everyone engaged so that they can then better absorb the information presented. In some cases...
this strategy is reduced to simply helping the participants stay awake. While that is a good start, the real point is not to add energizers to make the boring parts more acceptable, but rather to remove the boring parts completely, by injecting the learning objectives, or main training themes into the exercises themselves. The remaining information that truly needs to be presented in lecture format will be shorter, more focused, and no longer boring.

If designed properly, active exercises, role plays, analytical small group work or other activities can provide the core training experience itself (much more information on designing exercises, role plays, simulations and other participatory activities is provided in Chapters 5-8 of this text). Participants can often discover the key learning points in their own discussions, and take much greater interest in the process when it is the result of their own work and thinking. The presentation part of the sessions can then be used to sum up key learning points or fill gaps between what participants have taken from the exercise and the learning objectives you have set.

An appreciation of the points above should change your mindset from looking for “energizer” activities to break up the tedium of the lectures to one of looking for good training activities. The balance then is not dictated by a rule or ratio of active to passive activities, but rather depends on how much lecture or presentation you need in order to allow useful participation and achieve your learning objectives.

### 4.2 Basic Graphics and Text Guidelines

Presentations are required sometimes, and when they are used they should be of high quality, include good clear graphics and simple language. Many training courses and workshops today rely on PowerPoint presentations. There are a few simple PowerPoint guidelines that have proven to be very effective and which you can use for your own presentations as well as for those of other presenters who may support the workshop. Since the files are digital, it is fairly straightforward to send templates or guidelines by email to other trainers and presenters whom you might not actually meet until the workshop event itself. Use the simple guideline below as a tool to prepare your own materials and ask (or instruct, in situations where you have the authority to do so) other presenters to follow the basic guidelines below.

#### PowerPoint Design Guide

For a PowerPoint presentation, use:

- **Big letters** — minimum text size should be 24 point.
- **Short sentences** and phrases. Longer, lengthy text should be prepared as a handout—not as a PowerPoint show.
- **Minimal animation and transitions** (or other fussy details)
- **Contrasting colors**
- **Pictures** instead of words where possible.

Finally, when on site, **test each presentation** on the system and in the room that the participants will actually be in. Practice using the computer system ahead of time as well as your own files and those from other presenters. If your co-presenters or visiting experts are available ahead of time, offer to practice the session with them or to run through the presentation yourself — just to check the format and text size for easy readability. Where workshop budgets and schedules allow, request other presenters to be on-site at least the day before their presentation, so that last-minute changes can be made out of sight of the participants. This also allows the drop-in presenters a chance to see the participants in other sessions, and to observe their level of expertise and experience.
Do not automatically assume that other presenters’ materials will meet the workshop requirements or that you do not have the right to change their font or graphic design if it is too poor to be useful. Do ask for permission and explain your reasons, but do not allow poorly designed presentations to lower the quality of the workshop experience, even if someone else has prepared the session. Remember that you can only make these kinds of improvements if the other presenters’ presentations are made available in advance so that you actually have the time to make needed corrections.

Always test the slide presentation in the room using the projector and screen you will actually use for the training. Your workshop may also include video presentations. In these cases test out the projection system as well as the sound quality. Be sure you can adjust the volume and other controls yourself.

Even a fairly bright projector can be “overpowered” by too much ambient light. Particularly if you are conducting a workshop in a room surrounded by large clear glass windows, you will need to investigate curtains or other blackout devices, or in a worst-case scenario, schedule sessions at night! Use highly contrasting color schemes—either white on black or black on white. If the room is brightly lit, dark letters on a white background will be a bit easier to read. If the room is relatively dark or lighting is dim, white letters on a black background will read better. The presentation as you see it on your computer screen can look very different from how it appears in the training room.

Have a backup plan! If the information on the slides is critical, know how you can make quick paper copies for distribution—or be ready to use flipcharts and markers to clarify key points or re-create critical diagrams.

### 4.3 Keeping it Short — Exercise More and Lecture Less

As a rough guide, lectures or PowerPoint presentations should last no more than 30 or 45 minutes. While there are situations where a full 90-minute presentation is useful, needed, and even fascinating, these are relatively rare and generally depend on truly dynamic speakers with deeply moving or important content. One other type of situation that often requires a longer presentation without hands-on activities is the presentation or discussion of serious, technically difficult, or dangerous situations that cannot usefully be replicated in a role play or hands-on demonstration, such as the effect of landmines and other serious security incidents. In such cases videos and open discussions are useful to support longer presentations.

Two simple strategies for presenting a generic 90-minute session plan are shown below. The main ideas that you should take away from these guidelines are that the initial presentation should be short and concise, time for exercises should be adequate for participants to actually complete what they are tasked to do, and adequate time should be left for debriefing and discussion of the results.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy 1 – Presentation before Exercise</th>
<th>Strategy 2 – Exercise before Debriefing/Presentation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>30 minutes</strong></td>
<td><strong>45 minutes</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Present basic information, theories, approach, etc.</td>
<td>Participants actively do an exercise, small group work, brainstorm, or other activity in order to explore the issues or core learning points</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>30 minutes</strong></td>
<td><strong>45 minutes</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants actively do exercise, small group work, brainstorm, or other activity, using the information from the presentation</td>
<td>Debriefing and summary or conclusions on main learning points conducted by participants themselves with insights and guidance from the facilitator/trainer. Summary and conclusions include basic information, theories, approach, and observations on the applications of these as evidenced by the exercise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>30 minutes</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debriefing and summary or conclusions on main learning points</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Both of these strategies can work quite well and are suited to many of the types of topics and sessions common in workshops. The presentation-first session strategy is better suited to situations where the information being presented is truly new and unknown to most participants. It is also well suited to actual skills-building approaches, in which the skill is demonstrated, then copied by the participants and then critiqued and corrected by the trainer. This approach is generally suitable for the Knowledge and Skills domains of Bloom’s Taxonomy introduced in Chapter 1.

The second strategy is well suited to topics or approaches which are either already generally known or which could reasonably be deduced by the participants without too much time lost in finding the answer. For many workshop topics that are related to human nature, management, planning, or a heightened focus on a specific approach rather than truly new information or data, this second strategy often works better than the first. This approach is quite useful for workshop sessions that deal primarily with the Attitude domain of Bloom’s taxonomy.

While one of these strategies may be a good approach for your specific topics, you should still consider varying the format of successive sessions to keep the pace and methods fresh. If three sessions have just been done in the same way, it may be time for a change! If you are very comfortable with the material and have practiced the different components, you should feel secure enough to switch the order of the session elements. Start with the exercise, for a change of pace, and let participants discuss it without an explanatory presentation. See what they can do. They may make all of the points for you. In this instance you can simply discuss the exercise results and reinforce key points with your own presentation. You just changed the pace, but still accomplished the learning objectives. You can only do this type of “real time” adjustment if you have prepared yourself enough to feel confident in the materials yourself.

**Short Presentation Strategy**

When a presentation is needed, particularly when using the “presentation first” strategy described above, make it a good one, and do try to minimize your speaking time. One important way to minimize the duration of your presentations is to remove whatever is not needed. Everyone will appreciate your efficiency as a trainer in this regard. Think through what your trainees may already know and what they do not know, and then focus only on what is really needed. Do be flexible and ready to expand points of interest, but do not take extensive deviations from your pre-planned schedule. The following short points are considered to be the basis of a good, clear, short presentation. Use this guide as a simple preparation tool for your next presentation.
Start with a memorable point! Get their attention with:

- A shocking fact
- A provocative question or statement
- An interesting story
- An outrageously optimistic viewpoint
- Jokes can be good, but be careful of translation issues, sensitivities, etc.

Overview

- Explain your topic and the main areas of your presentation. Explain yourself, and why you are giving the presentation.
- Never apologize for being too inexperienced, or less than the perfect trainer! Do not exaggerate your qualifications, explain yourself as you are, but avoid doing so in ways that will lead participants to discount your presentation before you have even started.
- Find at least one good reason why this should be a great session.

Develop the main themes or points

- Set out a logical framework or sequence.
- Allow different points of view and encourage discussion, but keep on track and on time.
- Use structured language or “verbal outlines” to organize ideas in your presentation …
  “I have three main points I’d like to present, first …”

Wrap it up — conclude with a natural ending, such as:

- A summary or synthesis
- A recommendation
- A challenge or instructions for a practical application exercise

End

- Finish clearly and cleanly.
- Finish on time.
- Thank everyone for listening, and invite follow-up questions or discussion.

Keep this guide in mind when preparing your own presentations as well as when coordinating with other presenters. One of the most common errors, even among seasoned trainers, is overly optimistic estimates of how little time a presentation or PowerPoint slide set will actually require. Once you have made your outline, practice it, in full. When asking other presenters about the time they will need to make their presentations, ask if they have ever given this exact presentation before. If the answer is “no” do not take for granted that their estimated time is a matter of certainty. Look over the material yourself if possible and try to make your own estimate.

4.4 Managing Your Own and Other’s Time

Time management in participatory workshops is much more than a simple formality. Once you have designed an exciting workshop, with good information that participants actually need, each session is important. If you have achieved this goal, then any significant time overruns from one session, no matter how exciting or spirited the debate, is taking time away from other sessions which also deserve their full time allotment. There is also an important, even if unstated, agreement that is made between the workshop facilitator and the participants. In simple terms, the agreement is “if you are here, in the training room, ready to start on time, we will work hard to make it worth your while, and we will also respect your needs by ending the workshop session (or day) on time”.

The primary way to encourage prompt starting times is to start each day promptly yourself. Make sure the workshop room is open well before the start time so that early attendees can get in and
find their places and review materials or have a coffee if possible. Have all the equipment and materials that you will need in the session ready to go. If the participants arrive on time, only to watch you setting up the room and equipment at the posted starting time, they will come 10 minutes later the next day, presuming that this is your norm. Start on time and request all other trainers and organizers who are present to also be in the training room ready to start on time, whether or not they are required to present during the first session. Lead by example.

Recall a workshop session, or even a meeting, that went well beyond the agreed ending time. How did you feel? What was your mental energy focused on during the end of the session?

Once workshop sessions begin to start late, participants will soon accept this as the norm. After that, each day may begin later than the last. One problem with this is that there may be outside visiting experts who have tight schedules that must be respected and that do not fit into the evolving schedule. Secondly, many people will feel that they are being penalized to stay longer than the officially scheduled end time – even if they have started late. For those who have busses or trains to catch at the end of the workshop day, the reasons for staying on time are practical and obvious. The third important problem with time overruns is that, in most instances, many people will begin to mentally “switch off” after the scheduled end of the session, even if there are a few actively engaged participants.

Sooner or later you will encounter the session overrun syndrome. It typically starts with an opening presentation that is longer than anticipated, and is followed by an exercise or discussion that is much more effective at engaging the participants than the presentation. It can be triggered by many different situations. Some of the more common reasons for overruns are:

- Very important and engaging questions are asked of the participants but only in the last 10 minutes of the session.
- The presenter has packed the session with too many key points, and will not abandon any of the learning points.
- A presenter who is used to delivering lecture-style presentations, experiments with interactive discussion and examples for the first time, and completely loses track of the time schedule.
- Exercises done in small groups take more time than foreseen and the debriefing that follows runs too long as each group requires time to present their findings.
- Technical problems arise delaying the session start time; projector problems, power outages, and late arriving presenters are common.

Whether or not to intervene in a session in order to bring it to a close is often a difficult decision. Presenters’ feelings may be hurt, key points may be lost, or engaged participants may be frustrated by closing down a session that is seen as too important to end at the scheduled time. The only way you will be able to make the judgment appropriately is to weigh the value of the current session, the ability of the majority of the participants to take advantage of the session, and the impact that overruns have on upcoming sessions. Consider the following strategies as tools to help you manage time overruns. Remember that, like most tools, they will help you do a specific job (in this case ending a session that threatens to run too long) but do not offer any advice on whether or not you should be doing the job at all.
## Session Ending Strategies

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<tr>
<th>Situation threatening time overrun</th>
<th>Facilitator’s strategy</th>
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<tr>
<td>A very lively debate in a Q &amp; A session seems to just be getting started, but the session is almost over.</td>
<td>Observe how many people are truly engaged in the debate. It may seem lively and interesting to those who are engaged, but the great majority may be ready to go to break and have already “switched off”. You might say, “Let me remind everyone that our coffee break is being served and I think we would all prefer to take it hot rather than cold. Those of you who have burning questions or issues, please continue over the break, I am sure our presenter will take more questions over coffee.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Session presenter or topic expert has a prepared presentation that is being followed word for word. Near the end of the session, it becomes clear that there is still another 50% of the material to be covered.</td>
<td>It is likely in this scenario that many people are already sleepy. Going through the remaining points will not likely resonate with anyone except the presenter. You need to find a diplomatic way to thank and stop the presenter in a friendly way. Wait until a key point is made, or even a long pause, and then you might say, “Thank you very much for the presentation, it is clear that this topic is vast and we appreciate your sharing this much with us. Let me invite you to share a break with us and to answer any remaining questions participants may have over coffee. If you can leave your presentation with me I will copy and distribute it to everyone before the end of the workshop. Thank you.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The session design has a complicated exercise with several groups or individuals wanting to speak about their exercise results. Remaining session time will not allow everyone to speak.</td>
<td>This is best avoided by debriefing the exercise in a way that gives each working group a chance to offer something, but no chance to repeat what has already been said. In cases where debriefing will be long or complex take care to set time limits for each speaker at the beginning of the debriefing and then stick to it. You might say, “For each group, could a representative give us one key point from their findings? We’ll go right around the room to each group, so please be prepared with a different point, if you have one. Thank you.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The session is just finishing on time and has been very engaging, but no Q &amp; A time has been allocated. At the end of the session the presenter asks “Are there any questions?” and everyone raises their hand expectantly.</td>
<td>This is a classic case of “too much of a good thing”. You really want to capture the positive energy and interest of the group, but the time is gone. You need to close the session, but avoid frustrating the genuine interest of the participants. You might say “This has obviously been a very enlightening and interesting session. Thank you very much. Can you stay on a bit longer to take a few questions – let’s take three.” OR “There seem to be a lot of questions left. Due to the time I don’t think we can address all of them fairly now. If you’d like to take a few moments and write your questions on these cards we will collect them after the break and we can address them in tomorrow’s Open Forum Session.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The presenter is a high level official or counterpart, and has been delayed. He arrives 30 minutes late for a scheduled 60 minute session with a complete PowerPoint presentation, and a local journalist.</td>
<td>You must allow this person to present to avoid possibly serious repercussions. Your only strategy is to try to be in close contact with the speaker or his or her support staff to be advised of any delays as early as possible. Take advantage of the 30 minute delay by inserting presentation or other material from the next session into the available time if possible. You might also try to make the best of a bad situation by converting the waiting time to a mini-open forum or Q &amp; A session. When the speaker arrives, you might say, “We are glad you could be with us. Due to the time, I’d like to ask participants to please hold questions until the end of the presentation. Perhaps we can meet in a smaller group over the break (or lunch) to discuss any follow-on questions.”</td>
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You should prepare speakers and presenters with early warning about timing norms for the workshop, followed up with on-site coaching and time management interventions. It is useful for the overall workshop coordinator or facilitator to brief each presenter about the importance of timing (particularly when time overruns early in the day affect all of the following sessions). Meet with each presenter and discuss how you can help him or her stay on time. You can prepare several cards with the remaining time in minutes written large enough to be seen by the presenter across the room. In this case just flash the card so that the presenter sees it and acknowledges that he or she knows how much time is left. You can accomplish the same objective by agreeing on hand signals. Make sure a clock is available on the back wall so that the presenter can see it. Do this briefing and time management with each presenter.

### 4.5 Case Study Guidelines

Often an external expert, workshop participant, or other person with a unique experience may be asked to present a case study as a part of your workshop. Case studies are particularly attractive to those participants who identify closely with the Reflector learning style preference discussed in Chapter 1. They will have a greater tolerance than others to listen to the description of personal experience and will likely enjoy thinking about the experience and imagining what it would have been like to have been there themselves.

Other participants who do not share this learning style preference may be left wondering what the point was or why it is taking so long to get to the point. This situation can be improved if the case study presenters are briefed on the kind of case study most appropriate for a participatory workshop and are given some guidance on preparing and timing the case study.

**What are the elements of case studies that help you to learn something new?**

**What would you like to hear about in a short case study presentation based on someone else’s experiences?**

The guidelines that follow can be used to prepare any type of short case study and can be applied to almost any situation. Although the unique aspects of a specific case will require emphasizing different parts, the general presentation structure should be as outlined in this case study format.
Case Study Preparation Format

- Description of the problem
- Description of the problem analysis
- Response actions taken
- Results
- Lessons learned

Description of the problem
This part explains the nature of the problem to be solved and provides the general background or context of the situation. In any example being studied, it is useful to describe the situation that you found yourself in as presenting a particular problem to be solved or overcome. For example, for a case considering a logistics system, the problem might be that not enough food was being delivered or that deliveries were not dependable. It may be that in some cases more than one problem may be considered at the same time, but be careful not to “over complicate” the case. It is important to simplify the situation to some extent to clarify the lesson.

Description of the problem analysis
This part of the case study describes what processes or analyses were used at the time to try to better understand the problem. What types of evaluations, assessments or research were conducted to gain information about the problem or possible solutions? What expertise was called on to clarify the situation or to whom did you turn for guidance or other assistance to solve the problem?

Response actions taken
This part of the case study tells in chronological order the steps that were taken to solve the problem. You should clearly state what actions were taken (and when). This might be a description of a specific program or plan or a description of personal action. This description should be as objective as possible, simply stating the actions taken without judging them.

Results
This part of the study discusses the results of the program or action undertaken. These results may be either positive or negative but should relate closely to the original statement of the problem. Was the problem solved? Were there outcomes from the actions taken that were unexpected? What were the constraints to success? How were these constraints overcome (or not)?

Lessons learned
This section of the study is the key to the presentation. What was learned about the planning for or the management of disaster/emergency situations? If someone else would be faced with the same or a similar situation, what advice would you offer based on your experience with the situation described in this case study? Again, try to present your “lessons learned” in an analytical but concise manner.

This type of presentation, if well-prepared should take no more than 30-45 minutes. Maps, charts, graphs or other graphic information can be helpful. This does not mean that the session is finished after 45 minutes, however. An interactive session of 90 minutes could easily be anticipated based on the template above; a few minutes to introduce the speaker, 30-45 minutes for the case study presentation, 40 minutes of open facilitated discussion and investigation of the case, and 5 minutes for a summary of key points and the key lessons learned. Do not be shy to propose this structure to visiting case study presenters. Very often they will be happy to follow your format, if it is given to them well in advance to allow them to actually use it.
4.6 Preparing and Managing Invited Presenters

Good preparation makes a good training. You should now be able to prepare yourself for making better and shorter presentations, and better case studies, using some of the advice presented above. If you are responsible for organizing or designing an entire workshop, however, you may also have to work with a team that includes the full range of trainer types: expert trainers, trainers, experts, and some people you do not really know at all. The advice below should help you prepare all of them to contribute to a well-coordinated and participatory workshop.

Research and transmit participants’ needs to other presenters and experts. Aside from agreeing with the other presenters on the learning objectives for each session, research the list of participants and share their level of expertise and likely interests in the training with the rest of your training team. If the background of the participants can be determined, adjust the material or techniques to better suit the group. If you use a short quiz or survey before the training to learn how much participants already know about the topic, this information should be shared with other presenters.

Prepare notes and timings. If you are using templates or guidelines like the case study or short presentation template discussed above, share them with the other members of the training team. It is sometimes awkward to be seen as advising other experts or trainers in their own areas of expertise, but even seasoned professionals do appreciate being received well and positively evaluated by the participants. By sharing your own materials, even generic templates, you can sometimes “lead by example” in situations where attempting to dictate norms or even offering advice might not be well-received.

One useful method of preparation for yourself and others is to prepare your own set of note cards as a simple trainer’s guide for each session. Use the cards to list the key parts of each session, introduction, exercise, role play, presentation, etc., and the estimated time required for each part. It is often helpful to note the actual time of day, or “clock time” for each part as it will be easier for you to note your progress through the session as on time or delayed.

Even if the other presenters are developing their own session materials, sharing your timing cards with them and/or asking to see theirs for overall organization purposes, will help you communicate the level of care that should be the standard for the course. Also the exercise of preparing the cards will help you learn the key points and timings yourself should you need to step in and serve as a substitute trainer due to last minute cancellations!

Encourage presenters to make the materials their own. It is important for other presenters who have received session learning objectives, or even a draft presentation and session design, from you or another prepared source to “make the materials their own”. When presenters are asked to train a workshop group using a prepared training package or session plan that they did not write, there will be a sense of tension about how closely they need to follow the prepared materials. This is particularly true when they have been asked to be a part of the training team because of their own expertise in the subject.

The best way to manage this tension and optimize the balance between making the most of their experience and expertise while remaining true to the overall workshop goals and structure is to communicate with them well before the workshop event. This means early identification of expert resources and trainers and an overall workshop planning approach that begins some weeks or months before the event actually starts.
If your workshop includes several different presenters or topic experts, each preparing their own materials, how can you best coordinate the different presenters’ sessions into a coherent whole workshop?

If other trainers or experts will be developing most of their own session materials, send them the agreed session learning objectives as a minimum requirement. Ask for a copy of their materials so that you have time to review and make suggestions for ties that will link their session(s) to other sessions that may not be familiar to them. If you have several expert presenters, this should also be done early enough for you to identify redundancies or gaps and make suggestions to correct them.

If you are developing exercises or other session elements for other presenters, send them the materials early enough to allow them to read through the materials and put them into their own words. Explain that they are not expected to use language or terms that they would not normally use in their own conversations. Encourage them to seek clarification on any points that are unclear.

Remind presenters that it also helps to provide illustrations from their own experience wherever possible. Ask them to review the draft or outline materials and to consider which of their own experiences they can share to tie the presentation to a real-life situation that they know well.

Three things you never want to hear a presenter say in a workshop session:

“I don’t know who wrote this, or what it means, but it says here that…”

“I don’t agree with this, but I am supposed to say…”

“I don’t have enough time to explain this to you, but…”

Support and believe in what you have to present. Do not say things you yourself do not agree with, and do not expect other presenters to do so either. Cut down your training message to fit into the time you have, and require (and help) other trainers to do so as well. If the presenter (or you) do not agree with a prepared topic presentation, do not ask him or her to make the statement anyway. It is better to discuss it thoroughly with the speaker beforehand to determine the point of disagreement. If the issue is not important, omit it from the presentation. If it is important and it is a matter of facts, check the facts. If it is important and a matter of policy that is controversial or that the speaker does not agree with, encourage the speaker to simply state what the policy is, leaving aside personal feelings to the extent possible. In any case, encourage the presenter to use vocabulary and examples that he or she is comfortable with to make the general points.

In some cases the perceived problem or disagreement is that there is simply not enough time to present a particular topic properly. In this case, discuss the overall topic with the presenter and jointly prioritize which items are most critical. Structure the session to allow the most important points first. It is better to start such a session with an opening like, “In this session I’d like to share three of the most important of the many issues associated with this topic. We will cover these core elements of the issue in as much depth as we can in the time allowed.”

In many cases you will find that focusing in more depth on fewer points is more valuable to the participants than covering a wide range of points in a cursory way. Lecture less, exercise and discuss more. If you and your whole training team can follow these rules, you will be on your way to offering a very successful workshop.
Summary

Balance the need for presentation and participation in an effective way. Do this by focusing on the learning objectives of each session and designing strategies for active learning. As a design goal, presentations are only offered to the extent needed to guide the participants’ learning activities.

Design your own presentations well and set the expectation that everyone on the training team will do the same. Advise others in basic good practice for graphic presentations when necessary. Test PowerPoint and video presentations in the actual room with the lighting conditions under which they will be seen by the participants whenever possible.

Give shorter workshop presentations with more confidence and better training effect.

Manage time overruns effectively. Time management is important to keep the entire workshop on track and properly balanced between the various sessions. Be diplomatic but firm on this point.

Provide useful training advice to case study presenters in formulating concise and learning-focused case studies. Share case study formats and learning objectives with them well in advance of the workshop event so that they can adequately prepare themselves to meet your expectations.

Manage invited experts and case study presenters by preparing them in advance to be part of a coordinated and unified workshop team. Empower each presenter to use the language and examples that they know and are comfortable with, but do set norms, provide advice and information that will help each presenter achieve the learning objectives of their session(s).
Chapter 4
Self-Assessment Questions

Check T or F to indicate whether a statement is True or False

1. When using PowerPoint slides from your computer, the general rule for readability is “if it looks good on the computer screen on your desk, it will look good on the big screen in the training room.”

2. For participatory workshops, the basic philosophy should be “lecture first, then do a fun exercise.”

3. Time management is an important factor to consider in the success or failure of your workshop.

4. The best way to end sessions on time is basically the same regardless of the reason for the time overrun—intervene in a strong way and do not tolerate divergence from the established schedule.

5. When outside presenters are asked to present case studies they should be briefed on the norms of the workshop, the background of the participants, and offered a template for constructing their presentations and case studies in a useful way.

Multiple choice. Mark ALL correct statements—more than one may apply.

6. You are responsible to design a workshop in which several experts from different offices will be participating as presenters. Which of the strategies below would be useful in managing the overall workshop and making a unified whole out of these individually developed sessions?

A. Send each presenter the learning objectives for the specific session.
B. Send each presenter your prepared presentation for the session and require them to follow it precisely as written.
C. Meet with the presenters before their presentations to review content and timings or even rehearse each presentation if possible.
D. Send each presenter a template or style guideline to help them prepare PowerPoint slides and case studies.

7. Which of the following session plans could be effective strategies for a 90-minute workshop session on training entry-level participants to use new and unfamiliar equipment; for example, a satphone or field radio?

A. 90 minute lecture
B. 30 minute introduction, then 30 minutes exercise or hands-on practice, then 30 min. Q & A & summary.
C. 45 minute exercise or hands-on practice followed by 45 minutes of debriefing and identification of key points
D. 90 minutes of exercise or hands-on practice
8. The best statement to begin a presentation that is very wide in scope, but for which you only have a limited time allotment is:

A. There is no way we can understand this topic in the next 90 minutes, but they have asked me to try.”

B. “In other workshops we usually devote two full days to this topic, we seem to only have 90 minutes today I guess, so…”

C. “In this session we will cover a few of the most important points on this very interesting topic. I hope it will inspire you to investigate this topic even further.”

D. “To do this topic justice would require much more time than we have, so I’ll just go through the overall outline of the issues, but we won’t be able to look at anything in much depth.”

9. Which session plans could be effective strategies for a 90-minute workshop session on training mid-level participants on inter-agency coordination strategies?

A. 90 minute lecture.

B. 30 minute introduction, then 30 minutes exercise or hands-on practice, then a 30 minute Q & A & summary.

C. 45 minute exercise or hands-on practice followed by 45 minutes of debriefing and identification of key points

D. 90 minutes of exercise or hands-on practice

10. The best PowerPoint presentation for a dark or dimly lit room would include which of the following features?

A. White letters on a black background

B. Black letters on a white background

C. Short sentences and phrases

D. Many different animations and transition effects to enhance interest in each slide

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Chapter 4 Answer Key

In the previous chapters you have studied the underlying principles of designing good participatory workshops. In the next four chapters, you will have the chance to focus in greater depth on the design of specific exercises and other participant-driven activities that are at the heart of truly participatory workshop events.

By reading this chapter and doing the short self-study exercises included, you should be able to:

- Use the underlying “experiential learning cycle” to analyze what makes some exercises work well and others fail.
- Choose the appropriate kinds of exercises for your work-shop sessions and develop them into complete learning activities.
- Conduct better debriefings for your small group exercises through active listening and guided questioning.
- Estimate adequate time requirements for exercise instructions, working times, and debriefing.

5.1 The “Experiential Learning Cycle”

“What we have to learn to do, we learn by doing.”

– Aristotle

Experience is the best teacher they say, yet we all know experienced people who do not seem to have learned as much as they should have from their experiences. There are also people who, with a minimum of direct experience, seem to have learned the lessons they need to succeed very early on in their careers. Why do some people learn and others not learn from the same experience? What are the elements or factors that make one experience meaningful and another one forgettable?
How do we learn from experience—what is the actual process of learning from our experience?

The “experiential learning process” can be described by a simple diagram developed by Kurt Lewin (1890-1947). Lewin was a psychologist who developed the basis for much of today’s basic learning theory. Many other training experts have developed much of their work from Lewin’s simple idea.

The idea is typically shown as a cycle involving four sections or steps, and is called either Lewin’s Cycle or the Experiential Learning Cycle. The basic idea is that an experience (which can be almost anything you see, do or are a part of) sets off a cycle or set of steps, which will lead you to actually learn something of value that can usefully be applied to future experiences. The four steps are called; concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization (or generalization), and active experimentation (or application). You can immediately see the relationship of these four steps to the discussion of the four learning styles presented earlier in this text. Consider the diagram below and relate the learning styles discussed in Chapter 1 to the points on the cycle. The work of David A. Kolb and Honey & Mumford on learning styles was directly influenced by Lewin’s Cycle. There is a close resemblance and the two models fit together quite neatly.

Lewin’s Cycle of Experiential Learning

1) The Concrete experience The initial activity and data-producing part of the Experiential Cycle.

2) Reflective observation The thoughtful reflections on the activity undertaken during or right after the experience.

3) Abstract conceptualization (or Generalization) Drawing conclusions, identifying lessons learned and making generalizations stimulated by the first two phases of the model.

4) Active experimentation (or Application) Incorporating what has been learned in the first three phases of the model and applying it in practice. The diagram is cyclical in essence since this application provides another experience to feed the cycle—we continue to “live and learn”.

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The Honey & Mumford Typology of Learners

1) Activist
Prefers doing and experiencing.

2) Reflector
Observes and reflects.

3) Theorist
Wants to understand underlying reasons, concepts, relationships.

4) Pragmatist
Likes to “have a go” and try things to see if they work.

By putting the two concepts of the learning styles and the experiential learning cycle together you can begin to see the value of each learning style and the need to support and develop other learning styles for a more balanced approach in your own learning as well as in your trainings and workshops.

You have probably been involved in a simple exercise, either in or outside of a workshop setting, that “just felt right” or simply “worked” to help you really learn something. In such exercises the task is made clear, although the discussion of actual achievement of the task may be quite challenging. In the process of carrying out the task and then listening to others’ reasons and ideas about it, participants gain a deeper understanding and appreciation of the value of the experience.

Try to remember a good learning experience and, in particular, a good learning exercise in which you were involved. Review your memory by focusing on each part of the experiential learning cycle discussed above. Were they all undertaken? Did they all require the same amount of time? Were all of the steps explicitly articulated, or did you go through some (or all) of the steps of the cycle without realizing it at the time?

Connect the Numbers Game

One good example of a short workshop exercise that clearly illustrates the experiential learning cycle is called the “Numbers Game”. It is normally facilitated by a trainer who gives instructions on the spot and controls and times the activity. In order to recreate the idea as clearly as possible in this self study format, please follow each written instruction below closely and refrain from looking ahead in the text until you have finished this section. You will need a pencil or pen and a watch. Get these ready before turning the page. When questions are posed, take the time to answer each question by writing in the spaces provided.

Step 1 — Instructions

You are about to participate in an experiment. You will perform a simple task of “connecting the dots”. Your job will be to locate the number 1 somewhere in a random field of other numbers on the next page. When you are ready to start timing your exercise, you will:

• Note the time on your watch. Then turn the page and write the starting time at the top of the page.
• Locate the number 1 in the field of numbers you will find there. Put your pencil point directly on the number 1.
• Next locate the number 2, and then draw a line from 1 to 2.
• Continue this process, from 2 to 3, from 3 to 4, and so on until you reach the number 25. Your pencil should remain on the paper the whole time drawing the path from each number to the next in a continuous line.
• When you finally connect your line to the number 25 STOP IMMEDIATELY AND NOTE THE TIME YOU FINISH!
### The Numbers Game

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Note the time you finished and the total time it took to complete the task in the space above.
Now read the instructions for Step 2 of the exercise on the next page.
Step 2 — Instructions

When you are ready to start the second step in the exercise, go back to the Numbers Game on the previous page:

・ Note the time on your watch and write it down in the space provided for Step 2.
・ Locate the number 25 in the field of numbers (where your pencil line ended previously).
・ Put your pencil point directly on the number 25.
・ Next locate the number 26, and then draw a line from 25 to 26.
・ Continue this process, from 26 to 27, and so on until you reach the number 50. Your pencil should remain on the paper the whole time drawing the path from each number to the next in a continuous line.
・ When you connect your line to the number 50, STOP IMMEDIATELY AND NOTE THE TIME YOU FINISH STEP 2!

Please read the following questions and answer each one as fully as you can in the space provided.

A) Compare your two completion times. Did your performance improve? By how many seconds?

B) How did you find the exercise, easy or difficult?

C) What was the most difficult aspect of step one?

D) Was the second step easier than step one?

E) If you were to go back again and start from the number 1 and redo step one of the exercise, do you think you would be able to do it faster than you did the first time?

F) Why did the second step take less time than the first step? Describe the reason(s) as clearly as you can.

G) What patterns did the exercise reveal? Describe as many patterns as you can. Describe them below as you would to someone on the telephone who cannot see the actual pattern at all.

H) What conclusions, if any, can you make about finding patterns in seemingly chaotic information?

I) What other conclusions can you draw from this exercise?
J) How do your conclusions relate to the design of training materials, or to adult education in general?

K) What lessons can you apply from this exercise to your next workshop or exercise design?

Some observations on the *Numbers Game* exercise from a trainer's perspective:

This deceptively simple exercise is the classic example of a short, simple and very useful device that you can use to make an important learning point in a participatory way. In this case we highlighted the recognition that recurring patterns exist in the real and complex world in which we live and work. As a training designer what is most valuable is to understand the exercise itself, and why it is effective. The sequence below reviews the Numbers Game exercise and illustrates the stages of the experiential learning cycle that you just completed.

1. **Experience**  You completed the numbers game exercise. You did the activity of drawing zigzagging lines that revealed a pattern. You did this twice and compared the relative time it took you to complete the task in two different tries.

2. **Reflective observation** (Questions A-F): The trainer (in this case the written instructions) engaged you in questions designed to help you remember and reflect on your experience of doing the activity. How was this exercise, easy or difficult? Why? Was the second attempt easier than the first? Why? Your answers may have included statements like, “My hand knew where to go” and “I could see a pattern developing, and once I saw it I knew better what area of the page to scan in looking for the next number.”

   If you are facilitating this part of the learning process, you can ask questions about the experience itself such as, “What did you do?” Describe it to me.” “Was it confusing or straightforward?” “What happened?” “Why did things go the way they did?”

3. **Generalization** (Questions G-J): You were then asked what conclusions could be drawn from the experience. You probably mentioned conclusions or lessons learned about recognizing patterns, even though you may have used other words to describe this phenomenon. Most people respond at this point with some of the following observations. “There are hidden patterns in seeming chaos.” “Odd numbers are on the left, even numbers on the right.” “The pencil lines create a recognizable uniform zigzag pattern. Learning the pattern makes the task easier, therefore faster to finish.” “Some patterns don’t matter (the black or white background pattern is irrelevant to the task at hand.)” When you were asked to explain underlying the reason for your answers, you were engaged in the generalization step of the learning cycle.

   Another way to ask the critical question in this part of the experiential learning cycle is simply, “What did you learn from the experience?” When you are facilitating this kind of exercise, your task is to use these kinds of questions to guide others to distill generalizations from specific observations that might be applicable to other situations.
4. **Application** (Questions K & L): This is the point at which the underlying lesson or point is applied to the learning objective at hand. “How might you apply these conclusions or lessons to your work in designing learning programmes or workshops?” “What are some specific ways that you could apply this learning?” For example, this exercise helped illustrate the importance of pattern recognition—a concept that also applies to those doing humanitarian assessments. There are also patterns in the needs that arise after disasters—knowing them helps responders act more efficiently and quickly, particularly when time is of the essence.

In this way, the learning cycle is completed and participants learn the key lessons themselves, not only from the experience—“learning by doing”—but also from the structured reflection, generalization and application of learning points to their own lives and work. Good exercise design addresses all parts of the cycle.

5.2 Developing exercise game mechanics

Most workshop groups enjoy the social interaction of doing exercises together or participating in small working groups. This is useful when participants are from different backgrounds or situations where some may have more to contribute in some discussions and little or no experience to contribute in others. Small groups let participants learn from one another as well as from the lead trainers. An important way that groups can act and react in an engaging way is through games. The term “games” in this sense does not mean that the activities should be silly or trivial, but simply that everyone “plays by the same set of rules” and generally is asked to “play along with” or in some cases “compete with” others in the group. There is nothing wrong with having fun while learning!

*What makes an exercise or a game “playable”?*

In order to make any game playable, the rules or mechanics of the game should be relatively simple and made absolutely clear to the players. Exercise designs succeed or fail on the strength and clarity of the instructions that are given and the questions that the facilitator asks, not on the importance of the training topic or learning objective. When you give your instructions for a learning activity, think through the words you use very carefully. Make the task as clear as possible so that participants can get into the activity quickly, rather than spending a lot of time trying to clarify what it is they are supposed to do.

For simple questions and brainstorming exercises, all you need is a clear question and an adequate timeframe in which participants are supposed to answer the question.

From the previous discussions it is easy to see the importance of providing different types of experiences in your workshop. Participants have different learning preferences and will naturally gravitate to different types of learning opportunities. Using several methods will help engage more people in activities. In addition, different types of exercises are better at helping participants learn in the different learning domains. Use the right exercise for the right training purpose. By using exercises and activities that are structured to present a full learning opportunity, you can lecture and present less, and participants will be more personally engaged and can learn more!
Experiential training activities can be anything from short role plays, group case studies, brainstorming, or other quick exercises, and can incorporate hands-on training and skills practice in some instances. Your next workshop should incorporate many diverse learning activities. Whatever the activity, you will need to explain what is to be done, help participants carry out the task, and then lead them through a debriefing that follows the learning cycle. The tip sheet below is a handy tool to remind you of the basic steps to be followed and some good practices for facilitators.

### Trainer’s Tip Sheet for Facilitating Small Group Exercises

**What the facilitator should do …**

**At the beginning**
- Clarify the task
- Discuss methods and expected results and formats
- Set concrete and achievable objectives, suitable for the available time
- Remind the group of time constraints

**During the activity**
- Provide advice and clarification where needed
- Be impartial in providing guidance (provide the same advice to all groups)
- Encourage participation, look for “quiet spots” and work to energize them
- Focus the group on the task if they wander too far
- Keep an overview
- Reformulate and summarize if needed
- Provide ideas for methods to achieve consensus

**At the end**
- Lead participants through the three steps of **reflection, generalization** and **application**
- Summarize the conclusions and key points

**What the facilitator should ask the participants to do …**

**Participate in the activity fully**

**Appoint a small group reporter** (for any exercise requiring group findings or answers)
- Use flip chart
- Print in large letters/ dark colors
- Record main points as they occur
- Ask for clarification when needed
- Do not continue until the point is clearly recorded
- Rewrite for report-back (if necessary)

**Report back**
- Maximum 5 minutes (typical time)
- Speak slowly and clearly
- Give the main points only
- Finish clearly
- Do not block the view of others
The activities listed below are all good experiential learning tools, and all can be done well in a typical workshop environment. All of them can be used as the “concrete experience” component of the experiential learning cycle. Some of these will be described in much greater detail in later chapters of this text. A brief summary of some of the common workshop exercise types as well as some suggestions for their best use is provided below. The different exercises are listed in order from the easiest to the most complex to design and manage in a workshop setting. One of the most basic of these and a very common workshop activity is simple “brainstorming”.

**Brainstorming exercises**

**Description** This is designed to be a freewheeling and energizing technique used to generate lots of ideas with no attempt to evaluate quality—a stimulant to unrestricted creative thinking. This is almost always followed, however, by prioritizing or ranking the results in some useful way.

**Advantages** Brainstorming can quickly generate excitement in the group, balance participation, and result in original solutions to problems. One participant’s response often sparks another person’s imagination, resulting in a wide array of ideas and options. Many ideas can be produced quickly. It is a very flexible tool which can be used to brainstorm ideas on a broad range of issues.

**Comments** Brainstorming requires expert handling and close adherence to the rules.

To conduct a session, follow these “rules of the game”:

- Encourage everyone to participate; no ideas should be held back, even if they seem silly at the time.
- While the group is brainstorming, the facilitator should allow no discussion, criticism or evaluation of ideas generated. This comes after the brainstorm.
- A reporter should be writing all of the ideas on a flipchart for later reference.
- After the brainstorm, the group should discuss, evaluate, combine and then select the best ideas or solutions.
- This technique is useful for finding out what the participants already know about a particular topic. It is very handy to use when you want to avoid telling participants things they may already know.

**Case study exercises**

**Description** A case study exercise (as differentiated from the simple presentation of a case study) requires a situation or problem to be described by the presenter or participants, or can be prepared in advance in written form. The case study should describe a situation as if it were actually to be faced by the group. It may be based on a real or fictional situation, but the main idea is that the group, assigned to answer the case study questions, does so as if they are actually responsible for the outcome of the situation. After the case study is discussed and analyzed, a decision is reached based on the group’s evaluation of the facts provided and their consensus on the best solution.

**Advantages** Case study exercises can provide opportunities to discuss and understand realistic issues and applications (even when cases are fictional) rather than just talking about abstractions. They naturally appeal to those who tend to favor the pragmatist learning style, as well as reflectors, who may prefer to sit back and listen to the discussion before commenting themselves.

Particularly when based on a fictional story or situation, these exercises also can raise issues and problems common to many of the participants in a way that does not implicate any one of them directly. This allows for more objectivity in general, and less defensiveness on the part of the participants who may be involved in the actual situation. Well written or prepared case study exercises allow the group to deal with the “how to” or application aspects of a subject or topic. Participants bring their own experience and knowledge to bear on the problem.
Comments  Real cases should be simplified to the needed facts only, and should be treated very carefully if anyone in the training group might be implicated as having performed poorly in the actual situation. If the cases are fictional, they should be closely aligned with the other training materials presented and should be as true to life as possible.

Cases should be selected and written with care. They should not be too remote from the experience of the participants. Care must be taken to bring out the relevance of the learning to every participant in his/her real-life working situation. Participants should be organized into smaller groups to allow for healthy discussion and interaction; four or five persons per group is ideal, with seven or eight as a maximum.

Trainer’s Tips

- Be very familiar with the facts of the case study yourself
- Know what you would consider to be the “textbook answer”, if there is one, as you guide the debriefing of the exercise
- Prepare questions that are clear and limited scope to guide the analysis of the case
- Encourage differences of opinion and alternative ways of looking at the problem
- Follow the experiential learning cycle in your questioning and debriefing
- After the groups give their own account of their analysis or findings, identify and summarize areas of agreement and disagreement between different groups or reporters

Role playing exercises

Description: Participants play the role of specific offices or humanitarian managers or responders. Only the situation and individual goals of the different role players are given so that the end product (usually the dramatic acting out of a scenario) depends on the way different people play their roles. After the scenario is acted out, participants, observers, and the facilitator reflect on the experience to draw out key learning points.

Advantages: Role-playing is a useful way to develop communication and interactive skills. Activists and pragmatists will typically enjoy these exercises, particularly if they are enrolled in the role playing themselves. It also gives participants an opportunity to try out their approach to a problem and obtain feedback. Role-playing can build participant confidence in dealing with similar real life situations and may increase their sensitivity to the feelings of others. The trainer also has a chance to evaluate the effectiveness of the role play in achieving the learning objectives and can supplement it if necessary. Role playing exercises can also be videotaped, allowing the participants to later view themselves.

Comments  Some participants may be hesitant to play a role in front of others. One trainer cannot handle more than eight to ten participants using this technique. This can be time consuming as participants need to become acquainted with their roles and think through strategies for playing them out beforehand. The prerequisites for a successful role-playing exercise include:

- it must be realistic — the roles should model actual behavior that participants could be expected to encounter in their work
- it must be within the experience or knowledge-base of the participants
- timid participants should be allowed not to participate if they wish
- those playing roles must be briefed verbally or in writing about their roles
- those offering critique of the role play must positively suggest alternative action or behavior, once any element of the role play has been critiqued
In role playing exercises, the importance of clear instructions and role descriptions, usually in writing, deserves particular emphasis. Reading the role description can be time consuming, as participants need time to become acquainted with their roles and think through strategies for playing them out beforehand. Moreover, different people will respond to role-play assignments very differently. Some people are “natural actors” who will intuitively know how to improvise in different situations in accordance with their assigned role. Others may feel uncomfortable when asked to act and unsure of how to respond to situations not specifically described in their instructions.

Remember that if one person cannot keep up his/her part in a role play it can affect the learning of others. While there is little that can change this (other than repeated exposure to role-playing exercises), a good rule to remember is that the more clear you make your role descriptions and instructions, the more likely it is that your role play exercise will be effective.

**Skills practice exercises**

**Description** Participants are given opportunities to practice specific skills. In a *Training of Trainers* workshop, for example, these skills might include presentation and facilitation skills. In many personal field security courses the use of radio handsets and verbal radio communications are practiced daily, with the actual equipment that field workers would use on assignments.

**Advantages** The participants can practice the skill in a relatively “risk-free” environment in which they can practice and receive constructive feedback. This practice can also build participant confidence in using this skill in the future.

**Comments** If one participant is allowed to practice, then other participants may become discouraged unless they also are offered a similar opportunity. Make sure that there is enough equipment for everyone to be able to practice. After the practice session, the trainer and other participants should have an opportunity for giving constructive feedback. The trainer should conclude the session by summarizing the main points and lessons learned. Skills practice sessions generally need several repetitions to be effective. As the workshop designer you will often need to plan ways to allow participants to conduct ongoing and repeated practice without the need for administration or supervision. One way to do this is to provide the required equipment and then illustrate the practice through a monitored practice session, to be followed up with scheduled testing points or opportunities to discuss progress throughout the workshop.

**Simulation exercises**

**Description** These exercises are similar to role plays, but tend to be more complex. There are two basic types. In the first type, the awareness-raising simulation, participants are put in a simulated situation where they are faced with a real-life situation or dilemmas and are expected to react instinctively on the spot. In a drill type simulation, where the simulation is provided as chance to apply their learning, participants are expected to effectively implement plans and actions for which they have been trained. The simulated activities are followed by a debriefing and critique.

**Advantages** Simulations can engage the participants in many of the problems, behaviors and issues that the training is addressing. Learning objectives in all three learning domains—**knowledge**, **skills** and **attitudes**—can be addressed and their progress measured. As such, simulations are considered full learning experiences.

They also provide a useful way to develop problem-solving and inter-personal skills along with learning the topic content. In this way, participants are drawn into the training by having been personally involved in the experience. Simulations offer a common point-of-reference and a wealth of data and simulated experience that can serve as the basis for ongoing discussions, presentations, analysis and problem solving.
Comments  Simulations can be complicated to design. They take a long time to develop, write and implement. They require an experienced trainer who knows the simulation and can provide clear and ongoing instructions. Because they can be very personally challenging for participants, simulations should be followed by a facilitated discussion where participants have a chance to talk about what they did and thought during the action and “vent” any strong feelings. The trainer should also lead a discussion aimed at drawing out and analyzing the main issues, problems and challenges that were experienced. The session should end with a clear identification of the conclusions, lessons learned and useful applications.

5.3 Thinking through the Debriefing

As a rough guide for facilitators and workshop session designers, the debriefing may often take as much time as the exercise (concrete experience) itself. Based on an understanding of the experiential earning cycle, it is clear that the reflection, generalization and application phases of the cycle are as important to the overall learning as the initial experience itself. How you structure and then manage the debriefing will contribute to the success of the exercise. Debriefing is really about listening closely to what participants present as their own findings and leading them through the learning cycle with follow-on questions if there are gaps or short-cuts in the cycle. As the facilitator conducting a debriefing, your primary task is active listening.

What are the attributes of a good listener?

Listening

Active listening lets your learners know that you are paying attention to them and allows you to tune in to their specific issues, challenges and viewpoints. In doing so, you can adapt and refine your debriefing strategy for optimum effect. There are a few basic guidelines for becoming a better active listener:

- Focus on listening, not speaking
- Avoid interrupting
- Do not feel compelled to fill the silence
- Be interested and alert
- Seek areas of agreement
- Paraphrase
- Summarize and reformulate what you think the person is trying to say
- Withhold judgement until the speaker is finished
- After listening, ask questions to clarify or check your own understanding
The second skill you will need for debriefing is asking questions that will guide the participants through the experiential learning cycle to useful conclusions. Your approach in this aspect of the debriefing should be to “mark the trail, but let the participants walk to the destination themselves”. The following advice on asking useful debriefing questions should help in this regard.

**Asking questions**

The debriefing of the exercise should be as interesting and engaging as the exercise activity itself. Questions help participants build a conclusion and stay involved in all phases of the learning cycle. To do this well, you must know how to formulate and ask questions that help your participants achieve the learning objectives while keeping the atmosphere positive and upbeat. The way that a question is asked can greatly affect the mood of the session and the information you receive.

**What makes a good question?**

Ask questions that can be answered honestly by the participants. For example, if a very difficult or complex issue is being discussed, asking, “What is the right solution?” may be far too difficult for anyone in the room to answer. If you ask, “What are some of the possible solutions that you can imagine?” you will likely get more answers. If participants are still stuck and are too shy or uncertain to propose solutions, you can ask an underlying question such as, “What would you need to know to propose a solution in this case?” Or simply, “What do we know about this case as of now?” or “If you were in this position what would you do?”

**Questions to avoid**

- **Unanswerable questions** Try to ask questions that can be answered by the group or by some member of the group.
- **Closed-ended questions** These refer to questions that elicit answers of simple assent or dissent. Unless followed up by other questions of why, when, where, how, what, or who, a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answer leads nowhere.
- **Vague, indefinite, or ambiguous questions** To get satisfactory answers you must ask good questions. Sometimes you may need to rephrase your question or break it down into sub-questions if your first question is not immediately understood. Above all, avoid leading a participant into an incorrect or misleading answer.
- **Witness-box interrogation** You may have to ask a participant several questions in the interest of clarification, but your conduct should never be that of a courtroom cross-examination where the person answering feels threatened or “put on the spot”.

**Giving feedback to participants’ answers**

A very important training skill is the ability to give appropriate and timely feedback. Most participants desire positive encouragement. People learn better when they receive confirmation of the specific things they are doing right and constructive feedback on the exact things they need to improve or change. When providing feedback, remember to:
Designing a Participatory Workshop

- Give feedback with the aim of helping—not judging
- Be specific and give concrete examples—avoid generalizing
- Balance constructive criticism with recognition of what is being done right
- Continually provide positive reinforcement and encouragement
- Acknowledge and build on the participants’ strengths

In general, people will strive to improve if they have a sense that they are competent and successful during the process. This applies to participation in general, as well as to specific learning. Encouraging participation will lead to more and better participation over several workshop sessions or days. While you will need to point out the specific things that participants can improve and give specific suggestions for doing so, it is very important to remain positive and encouraging throughout.

Paraphrasing and summarizing

Although relatively simple, paraphrasing participants’ comments and posting them to a flipchart or projected screen can be one of the major tasks for a good facilitator. It is often overlooked or seen as redundant, and may be left out of the mix of activities in a workshop discussion. In the right situations, however, paraphrasing and recording key points has several important uses:

- It clarifies
- It lets participants know they have been heard, and allows them to check that they have been understood correctly
- It facilitates summarizing and drawing of conclusions after an active discussion
- It leaves a record (when done with a flipchart, for example) that may be used later in the session, or in later sessions

**Paraphrasing**  Paraphrasing is simply restating in your own words what another person has said. The best way to paraphrase is to listen carefully to the other person. Actively restrain yourself from converting someone else’s words to your own opinions! One way to do this is to get the speaker to help you, for example, you might prompt a speaker to be more concise by saying “can you say that again in five words or less?” Use paraphrasing to check your understanding of what the other person says or means. Writing it on the flipchart allows the speaker to agree with your interpretation or to ask for a restatement on your part.

Use initial phrases when paraphrasing such as:

In other words … I gather that … If I understand what you are saying …
What I hear you saying is … Let me see if I understand you correctly …

**Summarizing** pulls important ideas, facts or data together to establish a basis for further discussion and/or to review progress. When summarizing, you must listen carefully in order to organize the information systematically. It is useful for emphasizing key points and getting a sense of closure.

Try these summarizing phrases:

Let’s review … Your main concerns were … These seem to be the key ideas you have expressed …
What have we said today? We discussed …
5.4 Timing Issues for Short Exercises

Often an otherwise well-designed exercise fails because not enough time is allocated to each part of the exercise, or designers are simply overly optimistic about how quickly an exercise will run. This is usually due to failure to consider adequately the time required for each part of the exercise. Read each of the short descriptions below and estimate how much time you believe is required to complete each one. The answers follow each section and are based on actual exercises that have been conducted several times in various UNHCR eCentre workshops. These exercises are now well-established and have been accurately timed.

The Numbers Game

This exercise is basically the same as the one that you did earlier in this chapter. Estimate the time for this exercise based on the following content. The exercise is used to illustrate the importance of identifying recurring patterns in disaster management. It will be used both as an “energizer” and to begin the debriefing of a major simulation exercise which is expected to produce many observations, some of which will be useful to participants in their personal applications. The objective of using the exercise in this way is to orient participants to analyzing their simulation experience in terms of useful patterns in disaster response.

The workshop group has 36 participants, all of whom will do the exercise at the same time. The number charts are already prepared as handouts. You will time both steps and will report the time difference between the two groups. In order to make the task measurable, you set the rule that you will time how long it takes for the first 10 people to finish each step and raise their hands.

Question

How long do you estimate it will take to conduct the exercise and make the key learning points?

The Numbers Game exercise usually takes 20 to 25 minutes to complete. This includes about five minutes to explain the exercise and make the game rules clear, another 10 minutes to actually conduct both steps of the exercise (some people take up to three minutes to complete the first step, and even if one person takes four minutes, everyone else waits). The short debriefing that follows the activity using all of the questions to guide the participants through the experiential learning cycle and a final conclusion takes from 10 to 15 minutes.

Brainstorm

In this case the exercise is used to generate a list of strategies participants already know in relation to managing stress. The exercise is incorporated into a session about managing personal stress in the field. The brainstorming question is, “What strategies can you think of to help reduce or manage stress in your office?” There are 24 people in the workshop, all of whom are experienced field personnel. You decide to break the group into four working groups of six people each.
How long should it take to give instructions, conduct the exercise, do the debriefing and either summarize or draw conclusions about the results?

The time you allow for the actual brainstorming part of the exercise will determine how deep or how perfunctory the exercise results will be and how long it will take. This exercise usually takes 30 to 45 minutes. This includes a few minutes to explain the exercise and make the brainstorming rules clear and another 15-20 minutes to actually generate the brainstorming lists. The debriefing that follows the activity takes from 20 to 30 minutes.

Short case study exercise

The exercise for this example presents the 32 participants in a week-long refugee emergency management course with the dilemma of managing a food distribution to an unruly crowd of refugees who are hungry, angry and disenfranchised. The scenario is based on a true account, but has been fictionalized by changing the names and using a fictional country. The short reading to explain the situation is one full page. The group has already been divided into six smaller groups each sitting at their small group team tables. The scenario description ends with two specific questions. “You are responsible for the management of the food distribution in the camp. You only have half of the normal food materials available for tomorrow’s scheduled distribution. What do you do today to manage the situation? What will you do tomorrow when the distribution is scheduled to begin?

How much time will you allow for reading, discussing, reporting and debriefing of this exercise?

In this case, the time needed for reading and understanding the one page background document is likely to be about 10-15 minutes for most international audiences. The small group discussions could easily require 20 minutes to arrive at answers to the two prepared questions. If each of the six groups is allowed only five minutes to explain their results, this requires another 30 minutes. Your summary and conclusions of the exercise discussions in this case would take another 10 minutes. Approaching the exercise in this way means that you will need more than an hour to adequately run the exercise in full.

You do have some options to save time in this process if need be. The instructions and reading time are more or less set and cannot really be reduced but the case study questions could be made even more specific or limited to one question only, for example, to reduce the discussion time.

Finally there are options available in the debriefing that can save time. You might pull the answers from each flipchart yourself, rather than asking for each group to report their own findings. This saves time as you can take key points only if you choose, and avoid repeating the same points from each team. Even so, the debriefing of output from six small groups will take no less than 15 – 20 minutes in any case.

This exercise usually takes about an hour to complete if some of the quicker debriefing methods are used.
Role play

This kind of exercise is often used to give participants a chance to view problems from other people’s perspectives by asking participants to play the role of counterparts in the field. It can also be used as a type of skills practice, where the skills are human communications or relational skills, such as negotiating, tempering violent behaviors, mediating or simply employing active listening.

While some role plays used for “quick illustrations” can be quite short, only lasting a few minutes, the example we will consider here is more complex and constitutes a complete learning experience. This example is a role play in which several different emergency responders are all trying to negotiate sharing of inadequate resources to carry out their related, but differing response goals. In this exercise, each of the 25 workshop participants receives a short one-page individual role guide that has been prepared with individual objectives and a list of available resources for each role player.

The exercise will be run simultaneously in five teams of five role players each. The five different role players are expected to meet, discuss their needs and agree on a resource sharing plan to carry out their missions as effectively as possible. The role guides make it clear to each player they will be judged on their success in meeting their individual goals as well as on reaching an optimal solution for all players.

How much time do you schedule to run this exercise?

In this case, the time needed for setting up the teams and making sure there are five different (and balanced) teams, each with the five distinct roles included, is almost always longer than planned. In practical terms, at least 10 minutes should be allowed just for moving people around, checking role assignments, clarifying ambiguities and fixing little logistical errors in the handouts and seating arrangements.

Reading and understanding the one page role document is likely to be about 15 minutes for most international audiences. The small group discussions could easily require 30 minutes to arrive at an agreed solution.

If each of the five groups is allowed only five minutes to explain their results, this requires another 25 minutes. Your summary and conclusion of the exercise discussions in this case would take another 15-30 minutes, particularly if you have prepared an optimized or “textbook solution” to the problem that you would also like to review with the participants. Approaching the exercise in this way means that you will need a full 90-minute session or more to adequately run this exercise in full.

GPS skills practice session

This skills-building exercise is now a standard part of a humanitarian field skills course, offered by the UNHCR eCentre in an eight-day workshop format for approximately 30 participants. The exercise is done after an explanatory presentation about the various uses and functions of global positioning system (GPS) devices and their applications for use in the field. In this example small groups or teams of eight rotate through different skills training stations, so that four different skills training practices are happening simultaneously in different areas of the training venue, each with its own dedicated instructor.
The group of eight is directed to the right training area at the right time by a prepared schedule. Eight GPS units are available so that each person can use a device. The instructor shows how the devices are used, and leads the group in an exercise in which they each navigate to a nearby point and report the coordinates correctly to 10-figure accuracy.

How long do you think this exercise takes?

The time needed for distributing the GPS units and making sure that batteries are working is about five minutes. About 15-20 minutes are required to explain the devices, the user interface help screens and functions (even after a general presentation has been given, more questions will arise when participants actually hold the device in their hands). It generally takes 30 minutes of working time for the participants to complete the exercise. A short question and answer session with the instructor follows which takes another 10 minutes. The full exercise is normally completed within an hour.

Generally this session is enough to show participants how to use the device and try it out themselves. They can duplicate the action within the hour, but achieving basic competence usually requires a secondary “homework assignment” which the participants are required to do using the GPS devices on their own time. They are then required to provide the proof of their completion of the additional exercise by the end of the course.

Short simulation

Simulations can run from a few moments to a full day or longer, depending on what it is you are trying to simulate. An in-depth discussion of simulation exercise design is provided in Chapter 7. For this example we will consider a very short simulation offered in a field security course that exposes participants to the sensations and options available to field workers who are taken as hostages.

The example takes place as the opening activity of a workshop session dedicated to training participants how best to survive kidnapping or hostage situations. For this case there are 20 participants and several trainers, some of whom play the role of hostage takers who burst into the training room with masks and realistic guns in a surprise attack. The hostage takers fire weapons (blanks, but loud ones) and bind, blindfold and give orders to the participants who are now hostages.

How much time should this exercise take?

About five minutes are needed to carry out the simulated attack and subdue all of the participants. Another 10-15 minutes are required to debrief the scenario. The debriefing includes a quick reflection and description by the participants of how they felt and the thoughts that went through their minds during the simulation. The rest of the debriefing takes the form of a prepared presentation which refers back to the simulation scenario as appropriate. The complete exercise takes 20 minutes.
Summary

As a trainer and designer of very participatory workshops, you will depend on exercises as much, or more than presentations. A good understanding of the “experiential learning cycle” will increase your ability to analyze what makes some exercises work well and others fail.

Choose the appropriate kinds of short exercises for your workshop sessions and develop them into complete learning activities, not just “energizers”. Some of the typical kinds of workshop exercises are:

- Balancing presentation and participation in an effective way
- Brainstorming
- Case study analysis
- Role playing
- Skills practice
- Simulations

Conduct better debriefings for your small group exercises through an understanding of facilitation skills, particularly active listening and guided questioning, to lead participants through the experiential learning cycle. In simple terms, the steps through the cycle are:

- Concrete experience
- Reflective observation
- Abstract conceptualization (or generalization)
- Experimentation or application

Estimate adequate time requirements for complete learning experiences. Include the time needed for exercise instructions, working times, and debriefing in your planning and scheduling. Help each presenter achieve the learning objectives of their session(s).
Chapter 5
Self-Assessment Questions

Check T or F to indicate whether a statement is True or False

1. Everyone learns best from his/her own direct experiences so talking about one’s experiences, analyzing them and trying to draw up theoretical models about them usually do not affect learning.

2. Using several different training methods will help engage more people in the workshop activities, as the participant group will likely include people with different learning preferences.

3. Good listeners interrupt the speaker frequently to compare their own ideas to what the speaker is saying.

4. If workshop participants are having fun, they probably aren’t learning anything of value.

5. Paraphrasing lets participants know they have been heard, and allows them to check that they have been understood correctly.

Multiple choice. Mark ALL correct statements—more than one may apply.

6. Which of the following are included in the four steps of Lewin’s cycle of experiential learning?
   - A Concrete experience
   - B Experimentation
   - C Rejection
   - D Argumentation

7. At the beginning of an exercise, the facilitator should do which of the following things?
   - A Explain and clarify what is to be done.
   - B Provide clues to the correct answers.
   - C Set concrete and achievable objectives.
   - D Remind participants of time constraints.

8. Which of the following are prerequisites for good role play exercises?
   - A The role play must be realistic - the roles should model actual behavior that participants could be expected to encounter in their work.
   - B The roles must be within the experience or knowledge-base of the participants.
   - C Timid participants should be allowed not to participate if they wish.
   - D Role players must be briefed verbally or in writing about their roles and the situation they will be modeling.
Chapter 5
Self-Assessment Questions (con’t.)

9. Which of the following should the facilitator do during the debriefing at the end of an exercise?
   A  Summarize key points.
   B  Guide the participants through the steps of reflection, generalization and application.
   C  Paraphrase participants’ reports or findings to test understanding and clarity.
   D  Ask open ended or vague questions to encourage creativity.

10. Which of the following are true of skills training exercises?
    A  They often require multiple repetitions (or additional time for individual practice) to be effective.
    B  They should be done with the actual equipment (or very similar equipment) that will be used in the field or on the job.
    C  People will learn as much from watching others practice as they will from practicing the skills themselves.
    D  One good reason to provide skills practice in a workshop session is that it is a relatively risk-free environment that allows experimentation and even failure without significant negative consequences.
1. F  6. A, B
2. T  7. A, C, D
3. F  8. A, B, C, D
5. T 10. A, B, D
Designing Role Plays and Skills Training Sessions

6.1 Use Role Plays to Meet Learning Objectives

Role plays are relatively simple activities to design and implement, require few resources, but can be extremely effective. They can be used in many ways and for very different training purposes. Role plays are usually used to illustrate situations, to show a range of possible solutions or approaches to a problem or situation, or to provide a skills practice session for human or relational skills such as listening, communicating or negotiating. How you use the role play will depend on your learning objectives and what you need to accomplish.

Role plays as illustrations

This is the simplest type of role play activity to design and implement. Its function is exactly the same as an illustration in a text-heavy book. A book illustration shows a situation or topic directly and graphically rather than in text. In the workshop setting the illustration is an enactment of a scenario rather than talking or lecturing about the topic. Note that whether in books or in workshops, the illustration almost never replaces the text, but simply...
Designing Participatory Workshops adds a level of greater understanding or clarity. The importance of noting this is that role plays are additive, and therefore will always take more time. Your task is to determine where illustrations are needed and when they merit taking the time.

Illustration role plays are used to explain something that will be better understood or understood in a more nuanced way than could be achieved by simply talking about it. In this type of role play most of the participants simply watch the dramatization, which is acted out by a few people who may be either the instructors or the participants themselves. From the perspective of active participation, only those acting in the role play are really participating, the others are watching, the same as they might watch a short video or movie clip. In fact, the video clip might be better. The need for skilled actors, specific equipment or stage “props” and good lighting can combine to make play-acting less cost effective than simply showing a short video clip. It is relatively simple to add these clips into PowerPoint presentations or to show short segments from DVDs or other sources. So, what are the advantages of illustration role plays?

When would you use a role play as an illustration in your workshops?

Role plays are used to explain something that can be better understood by illustration than simply by talking about it. While not all participants will be natural actors, there are usually a few (typically activist learners and extroverts) who are willing to play the acting roles as volunteers. The lower quality of performance compared to a commercial video is usually more than offset by the fact that the participant role players can illustrate the exact points that you want to highlight.

Very often, when using commercial videos for illustrations, it is difficult to find the specific material that shows something of value to participants from the international humanitarian or disaster management community, so some compromises are usually made. The role play allows you to direct the action and situation exactly as you like. For situations where it is critical that the acting be controlled tightly to meet your vision, it may be better to use the other trainers and facilitators to do the dramatic acting rather than the participants. Some of the typical role play illustrations used in UNHCR workshops have been:

- media reporter/interviewee
- good or bad active listening or communication skills
- actions taken in serious security incidents
- disaster assessment reporting and communications by telephone or radio
- stress symptoms
- poor management or poor meeting skills

It can also be effective to illustrate a bad example as well as a good one. For example, in illustrating proper checkpoint procedures, the typical method would be to play-act someone following all of the correct procedures. Another effective alternative is to use the role play to illustrate people making common mistakes and then challenge the other participant observers to note what could have been done better. To reinforce the learning, this should be followed by a further demonstration of the “right” techniques, or a practical application where the participants have a chance to get it right themselves.
Role plays to investigate options or multiple strategies

Some role play exercises are used as a kind of participatory laboratory to investigate different ways of dealing with the same problem. These can be scripted to yield different solutions by offering small cues in the instructions to lead different role players to try different strategies. They may be designed to be more experimental by creating many (often simultaneous) identical role plays and then comparing the results and debriefing the activity by focusing on the different strategies people tried, what worked and what did not.

These role plays are more interactive than the purely illustrative types discussed earlier. They usually include more people and may be designed to include the entire group. They will require more time for exercise instructions as well as debriefing, in order to compare differing outcomes. It is worth the time, however, in situations where an investigation or comparison of different approaches is important in achieving the learning objective. This type of role play is quite different from the illustrative type in that it generally cannot be replicated by using video or other alternatives.

Some common examples are:
- Negotiation role plays (which negotiator made the best deal, using which strategy?)
- Coordination meeting role plays (role players play different organizational roles)
- Media interviewing role plays (players act out reporter and interviewee roles)
- “You are the manager” role plays about dealing with violence, security incidents, stress or teamwork issues in the office

Skills training and testing role plays

Role plays used in ways that let participants try out their own strategies, approaches and styles are directly related to skills training – particularly for interpersonal and management skills. Once the participants are involved in a role play about a difficult negotiation, for example, they are both exploring options and developing negotiations skills, and practicing at the same time. These role plays may be used as initial illustrations, option generators, or even skills testing and evaluation activities in this learning realm.

6.2 Some Common Problems with Role Plays

Role plays are often exciting and can be quite funny, adding a good mental and emotional break in a long training day. This aspect is useful in itself, but you should beware of the possibility for unintentional messages and learning that may occur during the course of a role play. While role plays can liven up a session and gain quick participation of those playing the roles, they do not always help the participants achieve the intended learning objectives, and may, in fact, promote learning conclusions quite different from your designed objectives.

What do you think might go wrong with simple role play exercises that could lead participants to draw conclusions other than those desired?

Question
The general way things go wrong in a role play is when the actions produce unanticipated negative consequences for which you may not be ready, do not recognize, or have no direct way either to avoid or correct on the spot. The tips below give an overview of some ways that role plays can more effectively achieve what you want by avoiding some common problems in role-play design.

**Problem 1. Over-scripting personal attitude or character in the role play**

**Example** A 10-minute role play was designed to provide skills practice in mediation between coworkers. Three roles were to be played: (1.) Angry Boss who expects superhuman effort from staff, and who cannot see the staff viewpoint of wanting to balance work and family life, (2.) Angry Staff Member who feels unappreciated and overworked, and on the verge of resignation, (3.) Well-Intentioned Colleague Mediator, from middle management level. The exercise was supposed to show that through active listening and other active facilitation techniques, mediators could bring hostile opponents together to find a mutually agreeable solution to their disagreement.

**Unanticipated consequence** The Angry Boss role player enjoyed playing the role so much (or became so determined to meet the terms of the script that he should be angry and unreasonable) that the mediator could not accomplish anything even when the mediation skills were very well done. The result was that the actual lesson learned was that these skills were not really useful.

**Advice** Avoid over-emphasizing emotions to be played or “unreasonableness” in your role guide or script if the role play is supposed to present options for experimentation and skills training. If the purpose of the role play is simply to illustrate a very angry and unreasonable person, there is no problem. One tip for the Angry Boss role is to write in specific triggers or actions that the Boss must respond to if they are offered by the mediator. This allows the Boss to play an angry and stubborn role, but still rewards the mediator if the skills to be learned per the session objective are actually demonstrated.

**Problem 2. Pre-conceived conclusions do not materialize**

**Example** A five-minute negotiation role play was designed to illustrate the benefits of the “principled negotiation” or “win-win” approach. There were two role players: (1.) a Fuel Supplier who wanted to obtain the most money possible from the buyer and (2.) a Logistics Fleet Manager who needed fuel, at a good price, in large volume, and for a long-term period. The role play came after the theoretical presentation of the negotiation approach. The participant actors had a few minutes to develop their negotiation strategies and then to act out the scenario in front of the group.

**Unanticipated consequence** The participant playing the Fuel Supplier role was actually the senior manager of the participant playing the Buyer role. When the role play dramatization started, the supplier/seller set the price in a loud and authoritative voice and the buyer immediately agreed, in order not to counter his supervisor, thereby missing the opportunity to show the steps in the win-win approach, and leaving the impression that whoever spoke louder was the better negotiator.

**Advice** Provide specific steps to be followed in the role guide that match the approach being presented. In this example the role play is being used both as a simple skills practice for the buyer and seller actors, and as an illustration for everyone else. For the purpose of the skills practice it is helpful to outline the steps and to ask for them to be replicated by the role players. This will also result in a much better illustration for everyone else. Finally, take care in assigning roles. For people from the same organization, their actual hierarchy may often interfere with or cause unscripted tensions between them as role players.

**Problem 3. Participants do not invest themselves in the roles**

**Example** A three-minute media interviewing role play was designed with two roles: 1) aggressive reporter and 2) busy emergency responder. This role play was part of a session on dealing with the media in emergencies. It was to be run four times in quick succession with a short debriefing after each one. It was designed to illustrate different strategies for dealing with the media and to eliminate any errors as they arose from one role play to the next. The exercise was to explain different good practices as well as convince the participant group of their value. By showing some improvement from one example to the next, the role plays should have convinced the group that avoiding the various errors and following the tips provided would help them carry out better media interviews.
Unanticipated consequence The last two interviewee role players were so shy and retiring that they did not include any of the previous lessons learned in their role plays, nor could they answer the media’s questions at all.

Advice Particularly when trying to encourage everyone to participate in these types of exercises, you may find the individuals who can be most dramatic and outgoing in role playing will volunteer quickly and repeatedly. As you try to include everyone you may actually push too hard and embarrass someone into playing a role that he or she is not prepared to do. Provide a brief description of the roles to be played so that volunteers may feel more comfortable in agreeing to participate.

Language ability may also be an issue if the workshop is not being conducted in the participants’ native language. Simple shyness may be so overpowering that participants pressured into this situation may become physically ill or drop out of the workshop due to embarrassment. Encourage, but do not force or push anyone to do a role play of this type in front of the workshop plenary group.

Problem 4. Role play results confirm or reinforce preconceived, unhelpful stereotypes

Example A 30-minute field coordination meeting role play of an international emergency humanitarian response was designed for five players. The role play was to be part of an interagency training on coordination and joint operations in the field. The training objective was to change players’ attitudes about coordination and preconceived interagency biases by asking participants to play roles from one another’s organizations so they could see the problem from the perspective of a different organization.

Unanticipated consequence In the role play, the participants had so much fun acting out their own stereotyped responses of their counterparts’ positions, that they made a very convincing, but highly biased stereotype of the partner organization, with most of the observers, agreeing that this caricature was actually the truth.

Advice Avoid role playing of this type that takes place in front of an audience. The “entertainment” aspect of the role play will often lead people to play out their stereotyped biases more robustly for the amusement value. If the objective is to expose participants to the perspectives of different agencies and to understand partners better to enhance field coordination, consider giving them only the organizational goals and mandates of the organization to be represented. Leave it to them to try to accomplish the goal however they can rather than to act like they think that organization would act. This will put each person in the role of his/her counterpart. If the stereotyping result does occur, take care in the debriefing to investigate this result and hear other viewpoints. Do not let misunderstandings remain unclarified or misinformation remain uncorrected.

6.3 Debriefing the Role Play Exercise

The debriefing of the role play exercise depends on how the role play was used. For the “illustration only” type of role play, there may not need to be any debriefing, except to ask questions about the demonstration. Some typical questions are, “Did that illustration seem real to you?” or “Have you seen this situation in the field?”

For the other types of role plays where participants are practicing skills, experimenting with different approaches to problems or gaining an appreciation of new perspectives, there are some useful guidelines to follow. Consider each of the tips below for use in your next role play exercise.

Role play debriefing tips

1) Ask role players to explain their own feelings and what they learned from playing the role before analyzing or critiquing the experience yourself. Particularly for role plays that reveal a deeper appreciation of a new attitude, participants rarely need anyone to “tell them what they learned”, although they may need an opportunity to share their experience with others.
2) Do not let role plays run too long before stopping to reflect, theorize and apply lessons learned to the participants’ field reality. It is easy for role plays to become boring or to lose effectiveness after a few minutes. Design them to highlight a few important ideas. As soon as those have been achieved, stop the action and conduct a quick debriefing with the whole group to keep them involved, particularly where only a few people are in the actual role-play.

3) For role plays that are designed to provide opportunities for evaluation or testing of skills training, avoid being too critical of the participants’ efforts. Any actual errors must be pointed out, and wrong conclusions corrected. But, wherever possible, this should be balanced by recognition of any positive accomplishments. Real encouragement of the role players is important, particularly early on in the workshop. If participants learn from early role plays that they will be critiqued in a harsh way, they and other participants may resist volunteering to act in other role plays that are scheduled later in the workshop.

6.4 Choosing Skills that Can Be Learned in Your Setting

Skills training sessions are very attractive for inclusion in a participatory workshop. People want to learn skills they can use in the field and want to be able to demonstrate these skills both in the workshop setting and at their own place of work. The typical ways that skills training sessions fail are when too much is attempted in too short a time period or when there is not adequate clarity about the specific learning objective or the level of skill to be achieved. As the workshop or session designer, you must be able to match needed tools, equipment or other resources required to each learning objective.

Skills training preparedness exercise

Imagine that you are responsible for a workshop that includes each of the skills training components listed below. Think through the session or sessions you would run in a workshop to help participants become comfortable with using each of the following basic level skills on their own, unassisted. What resources would you need to train 20 participants in each of the following skill areas in a workshop setting?

1. Basic VHF field radio use for participants deploying to an international humanitarian response for the first time.

Resources required:

2. New accounting software application for budgeting emergency projects for senior office administrative staff participants (all from the same organization, all at middle management level).

Resources required:

3. Basic map reading skills for novices with no previous experience.

Resources required:
4. Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) first aid training for non-medical field staff.

**Resources required:**

- Certified first aid trainer(s), video or PowerPoint presentation, booklet or printed guideline for each participant, practice dummies for small teams or two to three people each.

5. Communication skills, particularly active listening and paraphrasing skills for workshop facilitators. Participants are mid-level training staff, but are not experts in facilitation.

**Resources required:**

- Trainer, or facilitator, prepared case studies or role play guide for all participants.

In answering the questions above, you may have answered in any of several correct ways depending on your assumptions about the skill level to be attained for each topic. For example, was it your intent that participants should be able to do what you showed them how to do? Should they be able to remember this and replicate it in the field without an instructor to help them? Should they be able to do the task smoothly, like a seasoned expert? Would one set of equipment be enough to illustrate how to do a task, but not enough for everyone to practice individually? How much time must each person be able to use each piece of equipment in order to actually learn and remember how to repeat the learned actions in the future?

The below reflect the resources required for typical beginner’s skills training sessions in a basic workshop. In general, they reflect an entry-level proficiency, with the specific objective that participants will be able to carry out basic skills on their own, without guidance or prompts from the instructors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training Type</th>
<th>Typical resources required for beginner-level training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VHF radio practice</td>
<td>Expert trainer, written handout or guideline text, 20 radios (+ additional units for instructor(s), batteries and chargers for all units.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New accounting software use</td>
<td>Expert trainer, application manual copies &amp; tip sheets for each participant. Computers – either shared in small groups of two or three participants, or better, computers for all participants (if the participants have laptop computers – no other equipment may be necessary).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic map-reading skills</td>
<td>Expert trainer, graphic presentation (PowerPoint) of map symbols and meanings, maps for each small working group team – or pair.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPR training (per Red Cross or Red Crescent, for example)</td>
<td>Certified first aid trainer(s), video or PowerPoint presentation, booklet or printed guideline for each participant, practice dummies for small teams or two to three people each.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication skills</td>
<td>Trainer, or facilitator, prepared case studies or role play guide for all participants.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Obviously, the resources required (particularly time) will vary greatly depending on how high a skill level you want the participants to achieve. The point of taking the time to do the exercise above is that it replicates exactly what you will need to do to prepare properly for skills training sessions in your own workshops. Two of the most common reasons why skills trainings fail in workshops are that not enough equipment is provided for each person to practice and the overall expectations of the skill levels to be achieved are overly optimistic, unclear or both.

You may decide to abandon plans for skills training or change your objectives for the skill level you will try to achieve if, for example, you simply cannot get the materials or equipment you will need. The next section is about clarifying different levels or expectations of the skills to be learned, so that you can design appropriate activities and allocate enough time and other required resources to meet your learning objectives.

6.5 Writing Skills Learning Objectives and Evaluating Skills Training

The Psychomotor Domain of Bloom’s Taxonomy (learning of skills rather than knowledge or attitudes as explained in Chapter 1) was designed to clarify the way that manual skills are developed and evaluated. Originally these skills were conceived as the physical and coordination skills relating to manual tasks and physical manipulation of tools and movement. A traditional example might be a factory worker learning the skill of operating a new machine or piece of equipment. It can be difficult, however, to separate completely even these types of clearly delineated skills from either attitude or knowledge in practical application.

Modern day office and management skills are even more difficult to label as purely skills-based. Consider some of the skills that might be included in workshop type trainings: hardware and software use, analysis of different kinds of data, and even effective speaking and listening skills. While there are definitely knowledge and attitude issues to be considered, these skills can be quite effectively categorized and evaluated using the elements of psychomotor domain of Bloom’s Taxonomy.

There are several different accepted interpretations and levels of the skills domain of Bloom’s Taxonomy which have been developed over the years by different experts. Each of these different interpretations have their uses, but the one that is most common and applicable to the type of skills you are likely to use in a workshop setting are referred to as Dave’s psychomotor domain taxonomy. Professor R. H. Dave described this now widely used taxonomy in the book Developing and Writing Behavioural Objectives. The Dave version of the skills learning domain is very practical and directly applicable to writing learning objectives for skills training as well as in analyzing the materials and time you will need to accomplish each. Consider the five levels of skills achievement described below and reflect on the answers you wrote to the skills training planning exercise above. Would these clear objectives have made the question clearer or your planning more concrete?

Imitation: “Do what I do.” The participant watches, and can duplicate the action while (or immediately after) watching. EXAMPLE: Writing a word in a foreign language after the teacher has written it on the board.

Manipulation: Being able to perform certain actions by following instructions and practicing. EXAMPLE: After copying many words in a foreign language and learning them, being able to translate a simple sentence using those same learned words.

Precision: Refining, becoming more exact with few errors. EXAMPLE: Writing a paragraph in a foreign language that is logical, sounds correct, and has only a few grammatical errors.
Articulation: Coordinating a series of actions to achieve a meaningful whole.  
**Example:** Writing a paper in a foreign language with narrative, quotations, and illustrations to make a strong point or position.

Naturalization: High level performance, with very few errors, becomes normal, without hesitating to think.  
**Example:** Native born language speaker.

### Dave’s psychomotor domain taxonomy (simplified)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category or ‘level’</th>
<th>Skill achievements</th>
<th>Examples of activities or demonstrations to be objectively measured</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 – Imitation</td>
<td>Copy action of instructor; observe and replicate.</td>
<td>Participant watches teacher or trainer and repeats the action, process or activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 – Manipulation</td>
<td>Reproduce activity from instruction or memory.</td>
<td>Participant carries out the trained task from written or verbal instructions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 – Precision</td>
<td>Execute skill reliably, independent of help.</td>
<td>Participant performs a task or activity with expertise and to a pre-described level of precision without assistance or instruction; able to demonstrate an activity to other learners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 – Articulation</td>
<td>Adapt and integrate expertise to satisfy a non-standard objective.</td>
<td>Participant relates and combines associated activities to meet varying or new requirements, or to solve new problems for which they have not been specifically trained.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 – Naturalization</td>
<td>Automated, unconscious mastery of activities and related skills</td>
<td>Participant performs activities to a high level of quality, with few errors, without hesitation or overly conscious effort.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table above is based on R.H. Dave’s version of the Psychomotor Domain Developing and Writing Behavioral Objectives, 1970. See [http://www.businessballs.com](http://www.businessballs.com) for a more in depth, but very practical, explanation.

Other useful internet search terms:
- Behavioral objectives
- Dave’s taxonomy
- Educational objectives
- Evaluation methods
- Performance criteria
- Psychomotor domain
- Psychomotor objectives
- R.H. Dave

It should be clear that a better and more precise definition of what levels of skill achievement you are trying to reach should make it easier to determine whether or not you are successful in attaining them. Predetermining these achievement levels in workshop design plans will also help you achieve consensus among the design team or other stakeholders about what it is you actually need to do, and how much time, equipment, or other resources may be needed to meet a desired skills level.
Think about what you would need to do to help your participants achieve learning objectives for different skills levels related to use of a standard VHF field radio and the associated terminology and commonly accepted radio language suitable for field deployment. The amount of time, expertise, and equipment you would need to reach each level of Dave’s taxonomy would be different.

Complete the table by making your own estimates of the minimum resources needed to achieve each level for 20 novice participants in a workshop setting.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SKILL LEVEL</th>
<th>TIME NEEDED</th>
<th>RESOURCES NEEDED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 – Imitation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 – Manipulation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 – Precision</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 – Articulation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 – Naturalization</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Compare your chart to the answer key at the end of the chapter. While your answers may vary somewhat, your considerations and general approach should reflect the concerns illustrated there.
Summary

Use short role plays and skills training sessions more effectively to meet your workshop learning objectives. These kinds of activities are naturally attractive and focus the participants’ energy in positive ways. They should be used to meet needed learning objectives, however, rather than simply to enliven the workshop atmosphere. The three basic types of role plays are:

- Illustration
- Exploration of scenario-based options
- Interpersonal skills practice

There are some very common problems in using role plays that should be anticipated and avoided where possible. Four of these are:

- Over-scripting negative or aggressive attitudes into player roles
- Allowing important conclusions or learning points to be abandoned if the role play does not play out as intended
- Lack of enthusiasm or engagement by the role players
- Reinforcement of stereotypes by the role players

Make the most of role plays by integrating the debriefing and discussion that follow into the overall exercise design. Debrief the role plays more effectively by asking good questions that help participants meet learning objectives.

Determine what skills are needed by your participants and which of those can effectively be trained in a workshop setting.

Prepare specific skills learning objectives that express the level of skill to be achieved and are appropriate to your time and setting.

Evaluate skills training sessions more effectively using the specific language and levels described in this chapter:

1 - Imitation
2 - Manipulation
3 - Precision
4 - Articulation
5 - Naturalization
Chapter 6
Self-Assessment Questions

Check T or F to indicate whether a statement is True or False

1. The only purpose of conducting a role play in a workshop is to illustrate a scene or situation to those who have not experienced such a situation themselves.

2. One problem with role play scripts with heavy emphasis on angry, uncooperative, or belligerent emotional reactions to other role players is that strict adherence to the “angry” role may not allow other role players to accomplish any tasks, even if they are modeling proper approaches and techniques.

3. One problem of role play exercises is that they can sometimes reinforce already-held stereotypes of the roles being played.

4. The “precision” level of Dave’s psychomotor domain requires that learners can execute skills reliably and independent of help.

5. A more precise definition of what levels of skill achievement you are trying to reach should make it easier to determine whether or not you are successful in attaining them.

Multiple choice. Mark ALL correct statements—more than one may apply.

6. Which of the following should you do in assigning roles to participants for an exercise scenario that is to be dramatized by only a few participants and observed by the rest of the group?

A  Encourage active participation from the whole group, and avoid always asking the same few people to volunteer for these roles.

B  Explain the roles briefly before asking for volunteers.

C  Require the quieter participants to play these roles as they would otherwise never volunteer on their own.

D  For role plays that are written to show poor performance, they should be followed by other role plays or practice sessions that clearly show the correct performance expected.

7. Which of these show the correct order of increasing difficulty in skills levels to be learned according to Dave’s psychomotor domain?

A  Imitation, Precision, Naturalization, Articulation, Manipulation

B  Imitation, Manipulation, Precision, Articulation, Naturalization

C  Imitation, Naturalization, Precision, Articulation, Manipulation

D  Imitation, Articulation, Naturalization, Manipulation, Precision,
8. Which of the following are common ways that skills training sessions fail?

A. The skills levels attained fall short of expectations because trainers are overoptimistic in how much can be achieved in the time allowed.

B. Most people do not like to undertake skills training in the workshop format since there are usually others watching them.

C. Skills level learning objectives are too precise.

D. Skills level learning objectives are too vague.

9. For role plays that are designed to provide opportunities for evaluation or testing of skills training, which of the following should you do in the evaluation or debriefing?

A. Avoid pointing out actual errors.

B. Encourage everyone.

C. Recognize positive accomplishments along with shortcomings to soften the critique where possible.

D. Criticize the first participants in a strong way to make it clear to the other participants what not to do.

10. The difference between the terms manipulation and precision in defining skills levels is that:

A. It is more difficult to achieve manipulation than precision.

B. It is more difficult to achieve precision than manipulation.

C. Manipulation is the level at which the learner is able to perform the activity being learned from memory or an instruction, while precision requires performance of the activity independent of any help or prompt.

D. Precision is the level at which the learner can perform the activity reliably as well as to a specific level of accuracy.
Exercise – Answer

It is generally true that the first three levels of Dave’s taxonomy should be readily achievable in a workshop setting. The fourth level—articulation—can be achieved as well for many skill sets, but the fifth level—naturalization—is only achieved after considerable time, and as a part of day-by-day experience.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SKILL LEVEL</th>
<th>TIME NEEDED</th>
<th>RESOURCES NEEDED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 – Imitation</td>
<td>Very short, only a few moments for each person to model the procedure shown. Could be done in one plenary session</td>
<td>Radio for each person to be able to imitate procedure, perhaps six radios if shared in small groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 – Manipulation</td>
<td>At least two sessions, so that instruction can be given in one, and a chance to carry out assignments in the other. “Homework” assignments or other self-directed study may take a few hours.</td>
<td>Radios could still be shared, but it would now be better to provide one radio for each participant to allow individual practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 – Precision</td>
<td>As above, but allow more time for individual practice. At this point wide variations begin to appear between the amount of time each person needs to attain the same level of proficiency. It is becoming a more learner, rather than instructor, dependent activity.</td>
<td>Radios should be provided for each participant to allow frequent unstructured practice to match individual need.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 – Articulation</td>
<td>As above.</td>
<td>Radio for each participant. Exercises, role plays, or simple simulations to provide opportunities for synthesis of trained elements into applications for new situations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 – Naturalization</td>
<td>Long-term and regular radio usage by the participant, probably only acquired in the field over greatly varying time periods for different people.</td>
<td>Nothing beyond the above — except time.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Good exercises make good workshops. One of the most stimulating types of exercise that can be accomplished in a hotel or training center venue without access to significant field assets or expensive resources is the tabletop exercise. This chapter will give you advice as well as some approaches, templates and tools you can use in developing and running your own effective tabletop simulations.

In particular, this chapter will show you how to:
- Decide when a tabletop simulation is the right exercise for your workshop or training event.
- Develop an appropriate scenario for your exercise.
- Develop a timeline and action sequence.
- Develop player roles for the exercise.
- Develop the simulation game mechanism(s).
- Develop the props and tools needed to implement and manage the simulation.

7.1 Evolution and Uses of the Tabletop Simulation

The term tabletop exercise comes from the disaster response community and has a distinct meaning among those practitioners. In the terminology of firefighters, army, police, civil defense and other emergency response organizations there are three “classic” types of emergency planning and preparedness exercises commonly used for training and emergency preparedness. They are generally called tabletop, functional, and full scale exercises and represent a progression from the simplest and least resource dependent (the tabletop), to the most complex and expensive to implement (full scale). This terminology is standard throughout the Americas and Europe and the distinctions among these types have been fairly well developed over the last 30 years.

The classic emergency response tabletop exercise is one that requires minimal preparation. It is typically used for training officials and other key responders and decision-makers in response areas such as coordination, assignment of responsibilities, emergency communications and similar issues. This exercise is conducted in a “no-fault” and low risk environment. Its purpose is to detect potential problems with coordination among actual
potential responders and to determine the appropriateness of assigned responsibilities. It also reveals problems in response procedures and can help determine requirements for further training, planning or policy revision.

To conduct the exercise, selected officials and key staff gather in an informal setting such as a conference room. They are presented with a scenario and related problems devised by the emergency manager (for example, the scenario might involve a flood, winter storm or terrorist attack). Maps and diagrams are provided, along with a written scenario for each of the participants to follow.

These types of exercises are sometimes called tabletop simulations. They are designed to put people in situations that artificially simulate actual emergency events by means of simulated emergency messages, phone calls, faxes, email, and other emergency communications. These are particularly useful for helping planners and managers develop emergency plans and coordination procedures.

Once emergency personnel have achieved a certain level of familiarity with their own roles and emergency procedures through training and tabletop exercises, they are ready for a functional exercise or drill. This exercise is more complex and requires more resources than a tabletop exercise and may require several months to develop. It is designed to test an individual emergency response function, such as public warning and evacuation control. In more limited functional exercises only a single function may be tested, for example building evacuation procedures or fire drills. Unlike the usual conference room setting typical of a tabletop exercise, the functional exercise is conducted in an operations center, field environment, or a combination of the two.

The full-scale exercise is the highest level of exercise and is often done as the culmination of a comprehensive exercise programme. It requires the most planning, resources and time from emergency managers. This type of exercise involves testing a major portion of an emergency response plan and system elements and organizations in a realistic, highly stressful environment. Actual mobilization and movement of personnel and resources are required to demonstrate coordination, response and recovery capability.

Emergency operations centers and on-site command posts are normally fully activated as part of the full-scale exercise. These full-scale exercises are usually highly visible to both the media and the local community and often have a “public demonstration” aspect to their implementation.

**Tabletop simulations for workshop training events**

The tabletop simulations commonly used in UNHCR eCentre workshops are derived from those described above, but they often have some variations depending on the training audience. For participatory training workshops the tabletop simulation does not require participants to play their own actual role or real life function. Often these simulations have participants play counterpart roles because the training objective may be greater understanding or coordination among organizations.

Another common deviation from the traditional tabletop exercise is to base it on a situation other than emergency or disaster-related response. Many useful tabletop simulations have been built around preparedness activities, assessment, response, and even long-term development scenarios.

**Why would you decide to run a tabletop simulation in your workshop?**

**What could it offer that other methods discussed so far cannot?**
The basic reasons for using tabletop simulations in training workshops are to:

- **Simulate** the pressures and relationships in planning and response activities as they would actually be experienced in the field.
- **Expose** participants to pressures and field difficulties in accomplishing tasks they are being trained to do that might not satisfactorily be conveyed by other training means such as case studies or lectures.
- **Provide an affordable and achievable “concrete experience”** in the workshop context that is detailed and realistic enough to support more in-depth investigation, analysis and application of lessons learned than is possible with other exercise types. As discussed in Chapter 5, the training objective is to complete fully the experiential learning cycle with the participants. If the initial experience is more dramatic, detailed and realistic to the participants, then the subsequent steps in the learning cycle can be more developed and useful to the learner.

It can take considerable time to design and test good tabletop simulation exercises, so they are often not achievable when your available design time is very short or the workshop event is not likely to be repeated. They are good choices for workshops that will become regular repeated events as this gives you the chance (or chances) to improve the exercise based on the experience of running it with participants. They are also appropriate when you have an adequate time budget for preparation and the workshop is long enough to accommodate the set-up, exercise action and debriefing, which often takes a full day.

These simulations can be run as effective introductory exercises to illustrate field realities and constraints and to make the training topics “come alive” for the participants by throwing them into the action immediately. In this instance, the learning objective for the exercise will be almost entirely in the attitude learning domain. When used this way, the tabletop simulation is used to raise the awareness of the participants or convince them of the urgency or need of the topics you will be covering later in the workshop.

The second use of the tabletop exercise is to give the participants a chance to prove that they can carry out appropriate responses in simulated scenarios. In this instance it is closer conceptually to the original disaster management tabletop exercise. It serves as a chance to practice or test what has been learned.

### 7.2 Developing a Scenario

Developing the exercise scenario will depend on the learning objectives for your exercise. A goal statement should be prepared for the exercise as well as learning objectives for specific events or scenarios to be simulated. The goal statement for the exercise is simply the explanation or reason why the exercise is being conducted. For example, the goal of the exercise might be: to improve response to specific types of emergencies, to improve existing plans through testing, to improve coordination through greater appreciation of roles and responsibilities of all responders, or to familiarize response personnel with field constraints in emergency response. The learning objectives for the exercise should be prepared just as described in Chapter 2.

It is important to write out a clear statement of purpose or general objective for your exercise. This will have many uses, from initial design to evaluation of the exercise, and it will keep your exercise focused. Using the diagram below as a pattern, you can create your own template for this part of your next tabletop simulation design. The chart includes General Objective, Specific Objectives and Specific Events (scenarios) to support those objectives. The template is based on an example tabletop exercise designed to simulate the response to a hazardous chemical spill in an urban area.
**Purpose, Learning Objectives and Exercise Events Table**

Develop your exercise scenario from purpose to specific objectives to specific events.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Specific Objectives</th>
<th>Specific Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improve local preparedness for response, warning, and disposal of spilled hazardous material in an urban setting.</td>
<td>Demonstrate the ability to notify response agencies and to mobilize emergency personnel</td>
<td>Tank truck carrying pressurized Anhydrous Ammonia (NH₃) overturns and begins leaking Ammonia gas in urban area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Local witnesses alert nearby police officer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Demonstrate the ability to coordinate and control emergency response activities through operations of an incident command system (ICS)</td>
<td>Gas plume begins to rapidly spread through nearby neighborhoods, local police cannot cope.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Civil Defense initiates Incident Command protocols and initiates establishment of joint information center.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Demonstrate the ability to signal an alert and to provide emergency notifications containing information and instructions to the public.</td>
<td>Gas plume begins to rapidly spread through nearby neighborhoods, local police cannot cope.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Evacuation order is given by Civil Defense.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Demonstrate the organizational ability and resources necessary to implement site security and to control evacuations, including traffic flow and access to evacuated and sheltered areas.</td>
<td>Traffic jam from backup interferes with evacuation procedures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Small adjacent streets are crowded with evacuees, making access for ambulances difficult.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Writing the exercise scenario narrative

The narrative is almost always better when it is short, presented in simple, clear language, and includes the following:

- Enough background or context information to allow participants to build a mental picture of the overall situation.
- The specific scenario event, clearly described.
- Information on how the event became known to the participants.
- Initial sequence of events up to the point that the exercise starts.
- Description of geography and location of the event and, if progressive or moving, from where to where.
- Any initial actions already taken or in place that describe the scene as it is now.
- Scale or intensity of the problem, threat, humanitarian emergency or disaster situation.
- Any elements that would allow prediction or analysis of spread or worsening of the problem.

Consider the next scenario as a tabletop exercise for municipal emergency responders in a large city.

Hazardous material spill response example

On a hot dry day in August, a white-painted tanker truck entered a large urban area in the city of X from the south and reduced speed before entering a congested highway underpass. At the bottom of the underpass, the tanker was struck from behind by another large truck that did not slow down. The resulting crash involved six other vehicles, five passenger cars and one school bus. Traffic entering the tunnel/underpass at the south end of the tunnel is at a standstill and a long line of backed-up cars and trucks is quickly developing.

One driver at the south entrance to the underpass, now stuck in the traffic, calls in the accident to the local police on his mobile phone. He reports that there is an accident at this location and during the call begins coughing and complaining of a strong smell, burning eyes and throat.

A police officer driving on the shoulder along side the stalled cars reaches the southern end of the tunnel and assesses that he cannot drive farther into the tunnel due to the cars stuck in the line. He opens his car door and walks toward the tunnel opening. Near the tunnel entry he smells the strong odor of ammonia and is forced back from the entrance by the burning sensation in his eyes and throat. He radios his position to HQ immediately and informs them of the strong ammonia smell and requests immediate emergency assistance.

The accident scene is on the edge of a large urban area. The highway divides the immediate area between residences and apartment buildings on the east side of the road and light industrial buildings and small factories on the west side. There is a slight wind of 5 km/hr blowing from the northwest. It is 15:30 on a Wednesday.

Now look again at the checklist of basic information to include in your scenario. Does this example provide all of the basic information? What, if anything, could be included to improve this short narrative as a basis for a simple tabletop exercise?
The previous example includes most of the information needed since the exercise participants are officers and staff members who know their own roles and the respective roles of the other players. For your workshop exercises, particularly where participants will be playing roles that are new to them, additional information about the other players responding to the situation would be needed. The other very useful addition for either case would be a map of the exercise area. More information on generating maps and other props for the exercise will be presented later in this chapter.

### 7.3 Developing Timelines and Action Sequences

Tabletop simulations can last from less than an hour to several hours and can even be continued from one day to the next in some cases. In one UNHCR eCentre course on national and regional disaster preparedness, an evolving disaster response tabletop simulation was run for one hour each day of a five-day workshop. The themes or learning objectives for each day's exercise also evolved over the week. The first day's objective was to illustrate issues on preparedness, the second day's event focused on immediate emergency assessment, the third day on operational response, and the next day on longer-term response issues. To accomplish this, the timescale for each event had to change to best represent the activities and pressures for each phase of the exercise. The timeline and action sequence you set for your tabletop exercise should relate to your scenario and the specific learning objective of the exercise.

One common approach is to “compress” time in the simulation in order to simulate actual field pressures. For example, in one long-running UNHCR refugee emergency management simulation called the Suremia Simulation, each hour of the simulated emergency response represents one month of activities. The reasons for this time compression approach are threefold. In this simulation the accelerated timeline:

- Adds a great deal of immediacy and pressure to the participant roles and decision making.
- Illustrates the relationship between immediate decisions and longer term results appropriate for analysis of management level decisions and actions and an adequate interval to evaluate participants’ responses in terms of the results of their decisions. The simulation is designed to show that success or failure of management decisions can be measured by the resulting health and crude mortality rates of the population being assisted.
- Provides a long enough simulated time period to illustrate differences between immediate response and management of ongoing or chronic emergencies which was a learning objectives of the exercise.

In general, your event timeline should be adequate for the participants to carry out expected tasks. Some level of frustration and difficulty may be designed as a part of the simulation, but successful accomplishment of the simulated tasks must be possible. Participants will become disenfranchised and may give up if they believe or realize that the simulated task is actually impossible to achieve in the time allowed. Your options, then, are either to plan for the appropriate amount of time for the activities expected from the participants or, if time is constrained, reduce the activity or objective that participants are expected to accomplish in the time available.

Once the timeline is set based on one of the approaches above, it will guide the remaining exercise design. The timeline has opportunities for monitoring the activities of the participants and will guide you in designing the “game mechanics” for the players since there is almost always a time pressure in the simulation. The timeline is also a useful management tool for the administration or training team running the simulation. The distribution of updated information, changes in the scenario and other action prompts are generally tied to set times on the pre-set action sequence timeline.
An event timeline can easily be made that will help you monitor the flow of the messages that the exercise administrators will need to send in relation to each of the simulated events scheduled in your exercise. This can be a simple list, line by line per event or message, with each line starting with the time the event or message is to be staged, simulated or sent. The following example is typical of the level of detail to be included in the initial event timeline plan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15:00</td>
<td>All participants report to their working stations, review background materials and communicate with other roles to test exercise communications.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:25</td>
<td>Exercise scenario begins with accident in tunnel/underpass section of highway that results in multiple vehicle accident and beginning of Anhydrous Ammonia release from tank truck. (No reporting on this so far.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:30</td>
<td>Motorist reports traffic backed up at south entrance to underpass tunnel by mobile phone call to local police station.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:34</td>
<td>First officer arrives on the scene and reports situation to HQ by radio.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:45</td>
<td>Gas plume reported spreading to the southwest from release site over residential area—telephone calls from area residents report the smell and irritation to eyes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:50</td>
<td>Civil Defense orders ICS system implementation and Command Post to be initiated and situated upwind from incident site.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Civil Defense initiates evacuation order to area residents.Traffic problems interfere with ambulances arriving from the south.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16:00</td>
<td>Traffic opens from north side of tunnel; ambulances arrive on scene. Immediate staging area, triage site is initiated and in action at north end of tunnel. Rescue teams in protective suits enter tunnel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16:02</td>
<td>Media reporters approach scene and ask for interviews with rescuers and victims. Gas plume reported spreading due south from release site over highway due to change in wind direction. Evacuation of immediate tunnel area complete. Treatment on site at triage areas continues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16:20</td>
<td>Public information message provided to residents in plume area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17:00</td>
<td>Exercise ends. Participants take a break and regroup in main training room.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17:30</td>
<td>Exercise de-briefing begins.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The next step is to add details, scripts and other prompts and props to make the inputs of information into the simulation as realistic as possible given the artificial constraints of a training room or hotel meeting space. The following short example is taken from a UNHCR eCentre tabletop simulation guide designed for training participants in the basics of critical incident management (CIM) and exposing them to the actual pressures experienced in the field when major security events happen. Note the timeline information as well as the type of information shown to guide the administrators in feeding information into the developing crisis. This Information Script/Timeline Chart is designed to be shared with the entire exercise administration team for the overall management of the exercise.
### Scenario – Opening ceremony for new school for girls in Kher Khana (suburb of Kabul)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event/Information prompt</th>
<th>Info/Source &amp; script or Support Note #</th>
<th>To</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1:00</td>
<td>General Briefing – ALL TEAMS IN MAIN TRAINING ROOM – Distribute STARTEX NOTE in envelopes for each team (includes tel. contact sheet, staffing tables, tel. numbers)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:15</td>
<td>All teams take a 30 minute break, and are informed to proceed immediately to their starting locations – not the training room.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:45</td>
<td>Teams deploy to 4 rooms in assigned locations. Exercise begins – STARTEX</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 11:45-12:00 PHASE ONE – Hostage situation in Kher Khana District 11 new school for girls

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event/Information prompt</th>
<th>Info/Source &amp; script or Support Note #</th>
<th>To</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11:45</td>
<td>News reporter calls to ask for interview later in the hour. MIKE</td>
<td>Reporter asks for short interview statement about the JICA programmes in Afghanistan. Ask how the agency cares for staff in dangerous locations.</td>
<td>JICA Tokyo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:45</td>
<td>Radio call from MOFA field team driver to Embassy saying opening ceremony is starting. JIM</td>
<td>Radio call from MOFA staff member (Navruz Althar JK14) saying ceremony is starting and that he will call again in 5 minutes, after the brief speech by the Minister of Education.</td>
<td>Embassy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:45</td>
<td>Live news / Interview @ Tokyo MOFA HQ about general programmes in Afghanistan. HANI (w/camera assistant)</td>
<td>News team visits Tokyo office for interview on general situation in Afghanistan. CNN prompt 1 – Ask about new school building programme and recent successes; new programmes for girls’ schools in Afghanistan; update on security situation in Afghanistan.</td>
<td>MOFA Tokyo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:50</td>
<td>JICA staff radio distress call to JICA Kabul saying there is a bomber in the crowd at the ceremony and armed men. NAOKO</td>
<td>Naoko Shimazaki, Gender expert for JICA office in Kabul (radio call sign PV16) calls in distress by radio. “We have an emergency situation… there is a bomber … armed men … they are taking them inside the school! They took them in the school! They took them in the school!—interrupted by SHOUTING FROM ANOTHER ROLE PLAYER “SHUT UP – SHUT UP! PUT DOWN THAT RADIO!” Expert does not respond to radio call from office.</td>
<td>JICA Kabul</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:55</td>
<td>Live news / Interview @ JICA Tokyo HQ HANI (w/camera assistant)</td>
<td>News team visits Tokyo JICA office for interview on general situation and programmes in Afghanistan. Ask for “success stories” from interviewee; about relationship with military forces in the field, particularly policies for dealing with NATO forces. CNN prompt 2</td>
<td>JICA Tokyo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:55</td>
<td>Radio call (demands) from Hostage takers JIM</td>
<td>Hostage takers want a media Interview and will allow Embassy staff member to appear on television interview. They demand $1,000,000 and release of all prisoners currently being held by NATO / ISAF forces in Bagram</td>
<td>Embassy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The previous simulation which takes about an hour is from a longer exercise that runs approximately two hours. The subsequent part (not shown here) illustrates additional phases of the unfolding incident as more information becomes known. The timeline shown above has been supplemented to serve as a working reference for the administrators playing the roles of different information sources and to serve as a prompt to keep the overall information flow coordinated among different exercise information sources.

### 7.4 Developing Player Roles

The next step is to develop the player roles for exercises in which the participants will be acting in roles that are different from their own actual current jobs or responsibilities. This exercise is generally the same as described for writing guides for role play exercises as discussed in Chapter 6. As with other instructions, the role guides must be simple and straightforward to understand. It is generally advisable to provide only the needed background, available resources, and operational goals or objectives for the role player to accomplish as part of the role guides. In most cases it is better not to write in specific instructions regarding attitudes, moods or personalities that players should try to model because some participants will play them too strongly and may quickly become caricatures of counterparts or other responders rather than realistic simulated responders.

### Tabletop Simulation Design Checklist

This design checklist can be a useful reminder for developing simulation player role guides.

- Provide enough background information that players can make reasonably informed decisions, but be concise in the information you provide. Do not give extraneous information.
- Provide each player a reason to be interested and involved in the simulation – for example, the player’s mandate, responsibility, or personal objectives to be achieved in the exercise.
- Provide a list of resources that the player can use (tons of food, water, tents, warehouse space, or whatever resources would be needed and used by this role). Provide tokens or other physical symbols of these resources, so that when they are used, sold, or lent to others, they are physically gone and no longer available to the role player.
- Provide brief descriptions of other roles in the simulation and how they may be contacted.
- Provide maps or other diagrams to explain where the player is in relation to other players and important locations.
- Provide an explanation of “the rules of the game”, general timing and limits to participants’ actions in the exercise, if any.

### 7.5 Developing the Simulation Game Mechanisms

Every tabletop simulation has a “driver” or game mechanism that pushes the action forward and puts pressure on the exercise participants to respond. The basic game mechanisms for driving the action in these exercises are: time constraints, information prompts, and immediate or periodic performance feedback indicating the degree of success or failure from the participants’ actions.

**Time** Using time constraints to drive the action and put pressure on the exercise participants is a straightforward task. Explain in the role guides what it is the players are supposed to do and then, either through informational updates or the initial instructions, tell them how much time they have to do it. Make sure that all players have synchronized their watches or are can see a clock.
Penalties for failure to meet time deadlines must be severe enough to pressure the participants into action, yet not so severe that failure to meet the first timed objective demoralizes the players from carrying out the rest of the exercise. Examples include preparing proposals for funding, which if not submitted on time are not funded, or delivering food or other supplies to destinations, which if not reached in time result in bad media coverage or declining health of the population being served.

**Information** The information that drives the action is comprised of the written, spoken, faxed, radioed, telephoned or observed information that players in the exercise receive to explain to them what is being simulated. The messages should be realistic and represent exchanges between actual officials, whether they are involved in or being simulated in the exercise.

As an exercise designer it is important to remember that the messages need to provide enough information to drive the action of the exercise in the way you want the “story” to develop. This does not mean, however, that every message has to be correct, true or complete within the fiction of the scenario. In other words, some contradictory messages may be sent precisely to force verification of a likely incomplete or incorrect piece of information. Some messages may simply indicate a vague problem that then requires the responder to find out more information about that specific aspect of the scenario.

Remember that these messages are pre-designed to help run the exercise. Exercise administrators may decide to hold back key messages if the players themselves have already passed the point at which a particular event should have happened, or if they have solved the issue in another way. Administrators may also need to invent new messages immediately on the spot in order to redirect or refocus the exercise if it is going off course.

Finally, remember that the players themselves will begin making and sending messages immediately as part of their activities in the scenario. It is important to monitor these as well as possible in order to verify that they are not sending messages that undermine or invalidate messages you intend to initiate by the exercise schedule.

Each message or informational note that is prepared for use in the exercise should contain the following information as a minimum:

- Source (who said it)
- Type of message – phone, fax, radio, interview, visual observation, etc.
- Content
- Destination (who gets the message)

These message components are explained below along with some cues for the designer writing them. The descriptions are based on material from *Exercise Planning and Evaluation* by the Emergency Response Institute Inc., Publication Number One, of their Exercise Design Series.

**Four Main Message Components**

1 – **Source (who said it)** This is an important aspect of the message since the source often affects how much the receiver will trust that the message is accurate. For example a message from the fire chief on the scene of an accident will likely be considered more accurate than a phone call from a hysterical witness who is reporting from his or her mobile phone.

The receiver may question whether or not the sender actually saw the situation or whether the report is only a rumor.

In some situations several incomplete messages from different sources may combine to create the real situation.
2 – Type of message

Think about how the information actually reaches the player receiving it. To the extent possible, try to duplicate realistic message pathways in the exercise as well. For example, calls coming from a Mayor or high public official should be made via telephone. A map of an area of an accident site should be faxed or sent as an email attachment.

The main areas where the message may become very artificial are cases where you wish to convey something an officer or responder actually sees without the event being mocked-up or modeled in some way. In this case a note, or a photograph or diagram, is simply handed to the person, and it reads, “This is what you see at the scene ….” These notes should be clearly marked to make sure that the player understands the message represents a FACT and not a rumor or second-hand information.

3 – Content

Is the message complete? Does it provide enough information for the receiver to take action? If not, have you developed additional messages or informational notes that do provide answers if the player makes other investigations or asks the right questions?

4 – Destination

Who would most likely receive the note or information? If the recipient is not the ultimate decision-maker, how will you be able to track that ensuing messages that lead up or down the chain of command lead to the desired action being taken?

Remember that the intent of all of these messages or memos is to set situations in place that require actions on the part of the players. Your messages may cause any of several actions (or non-actions) on the part of the players such as:

- Additional activities to verify the information
- Additional activities to coordinate or discuss with other responders what action to take
- Prioritization of the information as of more or less concern than other information to which the player is currently responding
- Decision and response

Feedback can come in many forms. One important aspect of the feedback is that it must be presented to the actors in ways that inform them that their actions have led to these results, but which do not necessarily make obvious what the right or wrong action or decision might have been.

For the refugee emergency management Suremia Simulation referenced earlier in this chapter, the main feedback game mechanism is that morbidity and mortality rates for the refugee population are calculated each hour (each simulated month in the game time). If the exercise participants have anticipated the growing humanitarian needs and moved the appropriate emergency response materials to the camps in time, then mortality rates improve. If there are bottlenecks or logistical failures and food, water, and shelter are not provided in time, monthly mortality and morbidity rates increase.

Other feedback options could include:

- Simulated media reports which either praise or blame the responders on the success or failure of their activities (for many emergency response workshops or media management exercises).
- Award or denial of simulated grants of funding based on quality of proposals submitted (in a preparedness, emergency response or development-oriented training workshop).
- Fewer security threats actually occurring if adequate assessment and preparedness decisions are made (for example in a security management workshop).
7.6 Developing the Tools to Manage the Simulation

Some kind of system must be in place for monitoring the overall flow of the exercise as it develops. This may be done with an exercise script or timeline or through the use of matrices of different types. Preparation of forms and materials to aid the administrators and evaluators to implement and monitor the exercise will help you run the exercise smoothly and get good evaluation feedback that the scenario felt real and that the learning experience was meaningful.

Failure to develop the exercise well, implement game mechanics and message prompts smoothly, or document players’ actions will focus attention on poor workshop logistics and its shortcomings rather than on the learning objectives you planned to address. Because exercises are often based on frantic emergency situations, keeping up with the dynamics of the exercise may be as challenging for you as for the participants. Good tools and references will help you keep ahead of the action.

List the tools presented in this chapter that will help you manage a simulation once it has begun.

- Concise scenario narrative—to remind yourself and other administrators of key information
- Scenario timeline or action sequence—to guide and coordinate exercise administrators’ actions
- Information script/timeline chart—with short scripts/messages to be delivered, by whom, when
- Copy of concise role guides—to be able to quickly answer questions and clarify instructions
- Game mechanism key deadlines for feedback—with times and expected actions or results for each deadline and penalties or rewards to be implemented for failure or success
- Duplicate copies of all printed messages or memos
- Maps—mentioned briefly, but discussed further below

Exercise administrators and role players meet in an impromptu control room to review the information flow to participants in a critical incident management exercise for the Japanese Red Cross.

These tools will help you implement the exercise more smoothly. Descriptions of some additional ones follow and should complete your set of exercise management tools. Prepare and organize all your tools before the exercise starts. For complex tabletop simulations, a separate room set up as an “Exercise Control Room” may be needed. If you have such a room, post your management tools on the walls or on whiteboards for immediate use by the exercise administration team during the exercise.
**Message or memo matrix**

The following example guide is a generic one that was designed for the international refugee influx emergency simulation “Suremia” described earlier in this text. Note in the example below that each month is represented by one hour of actual time. The format and general idea are extremely useful for organizing informational prompts or memos for any simulation.

**Example — Exercise Memo Control Sheet**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Administrator’s Guide to Simulation Messages and Memos</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MEMOS 1-4 should be sent in <strong>Month 2</strong>. These memos will put additional pressure on UNHCR, QMD, WFO and the Major Donor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEMOS 12-14 should be sent in <strong>Month 3</strong>. If the OSP agrees to the extradition the Simulation Administrator must pay OSP and UNHCR $500,000.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEMO 15 should be sent as soon as (but only after) the order from the OSP to extradite has been given.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEMOS 16 &amp; 17 announce the rainy season and cut off certain supply routes. The rains are expected in <strong>Month 5</strong> but you can start them early if you choose.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The chart below suggests times that memos should be sent.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>TOPIC</strong></th>
<th><strong>MEMOS TO HAND OUT DURING EACH MONTH</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Anytime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency in SE Asia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vaccine Buffer Stock</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plane Crash</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seizure of vaccine</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food supplies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extradition of deserters</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rains</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refugee relocation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Services Report</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non food items list</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population/Camps</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population Data to Gov.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCAD/Vaccine needs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To all SARR DCs re: food prep</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Maps

Obviously the kinds of maps you need will depend on the situation and scenario you are depicting. Consider each of the following. Which will you need for your next tabletop simulation exercise?

- Country or regional maps
- Provincial maps
- City map
- Neighborhood, district or immediate vicinity map
- Topographic map
- Major transportation routes
- Diagram/map of hospitals, emergency operation center location, incident sites, other key facilities
- Utility systems
- Hazardous or extremely vulnerable locations

Diagrams

Diagrams may be of many types, showing industrial processes at a plant, location of staging and triage areas as foreseen in local plans, or possible refugee influx crossing points. Whatever your scenario, you have to provide some graphic tools for dealing with aspects of scenarios and situations which cannot be achieved in reality in the workshop training venue—refugee camps, border areas, whole neighborhoods or cities, for example. You may also need a diagram or floor plan of your training venue, particularly if different rooms or areas will represent different organization offices, cites, or even different countries, in your scenario.

Communications chart

A communications chart is simply a listing for yourself and for exercise administrative staff of the telephone numbers, frequencies, faxes and other communications in use by the different players and other administrators. This will help you to be able to send messages to the right people at the right time, and to be able to check the action and call for clarifications immediately if needed during the exercise.
# Exercise Communication Chart

## Exercise Administration and Support Team

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Player/Role</th>
<th>Telephone</th>
<th>FAX</th>
<th>Cell Phone</th>
<th>Radio</th>
<th>E-mail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lead Simulator</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controller 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controller 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluator 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluator 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sim logistics support 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sim logistics support 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Film Team</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Exercise Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Player/Role</th>
<th>Telephone</th>
<th>FAX</th>
<th>Cell Phone</th>
<th>Radio</th>
<th>E-mail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Civil Dfnse 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil Dfnse 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red Cross 1</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Health Coord.</td>
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<td>Hospital Staff</td>
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<td>Fire/Rescue Unit</td>
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<td>Fire Dispatcher</td>
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<td>CD Command Post</td>
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<td>Etc., etc.</td>
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</table>
Other useful charts and lists

- Organizational response or coordination chart for exercise participants
- Exercise staffing/admin. chart
- Available resources chart
- List of players / roles
- List of administrative roles / people
- List of extras, playing victims, bystanders, etc.

Forms

- Message forms
- Observation forms
- Evaluation forms
- Message log
- Assessment forms
- Participant debriefing forms

Final exercise readiness checklist

Well developed tabletop simulation exercises that are conducted in training centers, or even hotels, can simulate to some degree different locations and stressors on the individual players in a fairly realistic way. Well-prepared props and materials and fully informed and ready exercise managers are also essential to the success of such exercises. The following readiness checklist is a manager’s reminder of the materials that may be needed for your next tabletop simulation exercise.

Tabletop Exercise Preparedness Checklist

For your tabletop exercise, be sure to have the following materials developed and ready to distribute.

- Background situation narrative
- Video or photographic briefing materials
- Room set-up for mass briefing of all players
- Individual role guides for all players
- Identification or role badges for all players
- Pre-designed regular informational updates or “situation memos” designed for each role along with a timetable for distribution
- Maps and organizational charts for the exercise
- Paper or pasteboard “chits” for money, ambulances, food, tents, or other relief items that are to be represented as physical supplies or assets during the exercise
- Budget/resource lists for all players
- Rules / timeline for the exercise event
- Available communications options for exercise, telephones, fax, email, paper message forms
- Role locations
- Room/door signs and handouts showing locations of remote roles/locations
- Exercise evaluation forms
- Lunch or snacks delivered to players on-site in different rooms or locations, if needed
Summary

Tabletop simulations are low-resource simulations that can be done in training rooms, hotel meeting rooms or training centers, without heavy equipment or large numbers of actors or other expensive props. They do, however, require time to design and develop well. They should be used when there is a need to change participants’ attitudes towards learning the workshop topics, or where the training would benefit from a chance for participants to practice what they have learned.

Develop an appropriate scenario for your exercise. Think through your learning objectives first and develop the scenario to help you and your participants to achieve them.

Develop a timeline and action sequence to support your scenario and make it real for participants. Careful development of this timeline will also assist you in completing the design and implementing your exercise.

Develop player roles for the exercise that provide all the information needed for participants to effectively undertake the role, but nothing more. Avoid extraneous information.

Develop the simulation game mechanism to drive the action and put pressure on the participants. These are usually time-driven, information-driven, or feedback-driven prompts.

Develop all of the props, maps and other tools you will need to implement the simulation. Review your readiness checklist to be sure you are fully prepared for your next tabletop simulation exercise.
Chapter 7
Self-Assessment Questions

Check T or F to indicate whether a statement is True or False

1. Tabletop exercises and simulations, functional exercises, drills and full scale exercise are all different names for the same kind of exercise.
   - [ ] True
   - [ ] False

2. Exercise scenarios should be developed from the overall purpose and learning objectives of the exercise.
   - [ ] True
   - [ ] False

3. Compressing the timeline of events in a tabletop exercise will have the effect of adding time pressure to decisions and actions of the participants.
   - [ ] True
   - [ ] False

4. Tabletop exercises generally do not require any maps, diagrams or other printed props to support the scenario.
   - [ ] True
   - [ ] False

5. For complex tabletop simulations, an exercise control room for the exercise administrators and additional role players, separate from the locations of participant role players, may be required.
   - [ ] True
   - [ ] False

Multiple choice. Mark ALL correct statements—more than one may apply.

6. Which of the following are good reasons for incorporating a tabletop exercise or simulation in a training workshop?
   - [ ] A It simulates pressures and relationships between actors in the field in a way that a lecture or discussion cannot duplicate.
   - [ ] B It exposes participants to simulated field decision-making situations first-hand and provides them a chance to practice response strategies.
   - [ ] C It provides a very realistic experience in which participants can use field equipment in a highly developed and scripted field scenario with multiple actors, extras, and prepared field sites.
   - [ ] D It provides an affordable and achievable experience that is realistic enough to support a more in-depth investigation and analysis of field realities than can be provided by other means.

7. Which of the following items should be included in a tabletop exercise scenario narrative?
   - [ ] A Enough background information to allow participants to understand the context and general situation.
   - [ ] B A clear description of the specific scenario event.
   - [ ] C Any initial actions or events already taken that explain why the scene or situation is the way it is when the participants begin the exercise.
   - [ ] D Any elements or information that would allow participants to analyze or predict the spread or worsening of the situation being modeled.
Chapter 7
Self-Assessment Questions (con’t.)

8. Which of the following could be used as “game mechanisms” to drive the participants’ actions and decisions in a tabletop exercise?
   A. Time pressures and deadlines
   B. Information prompts from printed memos
   C. Feedback on participant actions, such as simulated media reports on participant actions
   D. Information from simulated telephone or radio calls from the exercise facilitators or role players

9. Message prompts or memos are often used to supply information to tabletop exercise participants which cannot be re-created realistically without a real site and multiple role players. Which of the following elements should be included in such memos?
   A. The information source
   B. Description of how the message would be conveyed in reality (radio, telephone, visual observation, etc.)
   C. Explanation of what the recipient is supposed to do with the information
   D. Destination or intended recipient of the information

10. Which of the following are correct statements about the relationship of the tabletop exercise action timeline to the participants’ actual responses to exercise scenarios?
   A. The timeline should provide adequate time to allow for the possibility of a successful response to the scenario event drivers.
   B. The timeline should allow adequate time to avoid frustration or heightened pressure on the exercise participants.
   C. The timeline should add a level of immediacy and pressure on decision-making by the participants.
   D. The timeline should provide enough time to guarantee that every participant will make an informed and correct decision.
1. F 6 A, B, D
2. T 7 A, B, C, D
3. T 8 A, B, C, D
4. F 9 A, B, D
5. T 10 A, C
Field exercises present a range of opportunities not available in the training room. You should be ready to look for and take advantage of such opportunities when they arise and to maximize the usefulness of the field exercises you decide to undertake. This does not mean that every workshop should have a field exercise component or that they are always worth the effort.

This chapter will show you:
- The advantages of conducting simulation exercises “in the field” instead of in the training room when possible.
- How to work with local people involved in the exercise through quick on-site auditions and briefings for simulation actors and extras.
- How to conduct the pre-exercise meeting with site owners or officials.
- How to provide adequate safety measures during the field exercise.
- How to make the exercise worthwhile for everyone concerned.

8.1 Advantages of Simulation Exercises in the Field

“I’m not crazy about reality, but it’s still the only place to get a decent meal.”

– Groucho Marx

The point of conducting an exercise in the field is to capture important aspects of reality that can be provided by the field location, people, equipment or structures that cannot be adequately conveyed in the training room. Like the “decent meal” described, no amount of talking about it achieves the same effect as actually experiencing it. There are some things that just cannot be accurately conveyed without actually being there. While field simulations are still short of reality, they can be much closer to it than classroom training.
What do you believe are the advantages to learning through field exercises, outside of the classroom setting?

There are several advantages to conducting field-based exercises aside from simply providing a “sense of reality”. The idea of a break from sitting in a training room is in itself a boost to the energy and morale of the group. This positive energy makes training easier, more effective and much more fun for everyone concerned.

Those learners who prefer the Activist or Pragmatist learning styles discussed in Chapter 1 will find their needs well met in this kind of exercise. They may be able to perform much better in the classroom setting as well, as long as they know that their training will be tested in the field.

Finally there are often opportunities for improved public relations and even media appeal in running dramatic field exercises. Working with local people and institutions to arrange field exercises puts the trainers and administrators as well as the participants in direct contact with local people who may wonder what the training is all about. The ensuing discussions, explanations, and occasional news stories that accompany these exercises are good opportunities for explaining your humanitarian work and mandate or mission to others in the community.

8.2 Consider Costs and Benefits of Taking the Exercise to the Field

While attractive for all of the reasons above, a field simulation may not always be the right solution for your training needs. They can be costly and may not deliver the resources you really need to achieve your training objectives.

One direct way to approach the decision of whether or not to undertake a field exercise is to do a traditional cost-benefit analysis. To do this analysis you will need to do some research—mainly about what is actually offered (and of use) at the field site and how much it will cost. Cost analysis in this exercise should consider both the actual monetary costs involved as well as the “opportunity costs” of what you could be doing with your training time if you do not do the field simulation. Remember that a good presentation, some active training room exercises, or a well-developed tabletop simulation might achieve all of your training objectives quite well. What does the field exercise offer that justifies the extra time and expense to move the participants to the field?

Possible Benefits

Some of the most common benefits of running field simulations are listed in the benefit analysis table below. Consider each one and decide whether or not there is a real benefit from using the site and situation available to you for a field exercise and whether or not you actually need this benefit to meet your training needs. This tool will help you make your decision and may possibly help you justify your request to others who may need to clear or authorize the decision. The column at the right provides follow-on questions you may want to ask to maximize the benefits that the site offers, and in some cases, how to overcome shortcomings of the site.
## Benefit Analysis Tool for Potential Exercise Sites

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefit</th>
<th>Further Investigation Required</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Does the site offer realistic terrain that effectively models site conditions where participants will work? | If Yes – Confirm that conditions are satisfactory at the time of year when you will actually use it. Summer/winter and dry season/rainy season variations may make some sites usable during the assessment, but unusable during implementation.  
If No – Are there other sites available that do meet your needs? |
| Are structures and infrastructure appropriate to the situation being simulated (or can they be made so for the purpose of the exercise)? | If Yes – Will you have access to these during the exercise, or might others require them at the same time?  
If No – Site is not suitable as is. Can tents, temporary systems, or other solutions adequately improve the site to meet your needs? |
| Is the site relatively close to the training venue and can it be reached within a reasonable timeframe? | If Yes – No problem  
If No – Can training space or lodgings be provided on site to combine other training activities? This might make a long trip to and from the site more acceptable. |
| Is suitable equipment available on-site to recreate key scenarios and allow participants realistic options and choices in their actions? | If Yes – Ask for a listing of all associated costs, and investigate liability issues associated with four wheel drive vehicles, trucks, and other vehicles and expensive equipment.  
If No – Can necessary equipment be rented or brought in from other locations, and at what cost? |
| Are actors and extras available locally to play roles and interact with the exercise participants? | If Yes – What are their language capabilities? How will this affect the simulation? Will translation of training materials or on-site actors’ scripts and statements be needed?  
If No – Can others be found who can be transported to and from the site economically? |
| Will you have free use of the site to simulate dangerous, loud or threatening situations, if required? | If Yes – Ask for listing of all associated costs, and investigate safety and liability issues associated with explosives, weapons, and mock security incidents.  
If No – Do other factors make it worth using this site?  
If not look for another one. |
| Is there a reasonable degree of safety and are there provisions for real-life medical emergencies available on-site? | If Yes – No problem.  
If No – How dangerous are the activities you will simulate?  
What degree of risk can you or your organization tolerate in this regard? See the safety checklist on page 134 of this text. |
| Will the site and its owners or officials be suitable in terms of public reputation and association with your organization? | If Yes – No problem.  
If No – Do not use this site unless negative associations can be mitigated in some way. Discuss this aspect with senior management of your organization. |
Possible Costs

As indicated in the table above, there may be very significant costs associated with field simulations. The location may be privately or publicly owned property or the grounds of an agency, police or military training camp or base. In some cases grounds and use may be free of charge given as an in-kind donation. In many cases, either some or all of the associated costs will need to be paid by the organization using the site for the training.

While it is attractive to use helicopters, aircraft or other heavy equipment offered by a national emergency response agency as part of a realistic field simulation, you should always ask about the cost first before raising expectations. Trucks, boats, helicopters, paid actors, and real and simulated ammunition for soldiers can all be very expensive. Costs vary significantly around the world and from situation to situation (even in the same country). All estimated costs should be made clear before agreeing to a field simulation.

The following items could all result in significant costs and should be considered and budgeted for in deciding whether or not to conduct the exercise.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM or SERVICE</th>
<th>COST ISSUES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rental or use fee for site, building, or area</td>
<td>Ask if these costs may be waived, particularly when some of the other costs below are to be paid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rental for vehicles (cars, boats, aircraft)</td>
<td>Compare options between vendors. Aircraft of any type will always be quite expensive, even if you are only required to pay for the fuel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fuel</td>
<td>Compare prices offered by other local suppliers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rental for radios or other communication equipment</td>
<td>If the exercise will be run several times, consider buying rather than renting. Three or four rental uses may be enough to buy the equipment outright.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Payment for salary or honoraria for staff at the facility</td>
<td>Determine local norms for this.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Payment for actors and extras</td>
<td>Determine local norms for this, also local labor laws may be involved – check them!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moulage or other special effects</td>
<td>Consider doing it yourself if necessary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food for participants, actors, extras, counterparts, etc.</td>
<td>Determine local norms for this.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signs and other markers</td>
<td>Determine local norms for this.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambulance or clinic fees</td>
<td>Determine local norms for this.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insurance</td>
<td>This may be an organizational policy question. Investigate who would pay in case of a serious accident.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ammunition (real or blanks)</td>
<td>This can be quite expensive. Make costs clear before agreeing and set limits.</td>
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</table>

The final decision on whether or not to run a field simulation will depend on your specific learning objectives and the field opportunities that are available and their cost. The points above should at least guide you in asking the right questions when making your decision.
8.3 Working with the Field Site

Designing field simulations will require all of the design steps and most of the materials for tabletop simulations that are described in the last chapter. Scripts and background story information will still need to be designed and drafted; game mechanisms or drivers will still be needed to push the simulation action along and the tools and forms you will need to run and manage the overall simulation will be similar. The main difference is that you will also have to deal with real locations, roads, buildings and the maps and diagrams that must relate to the actual locations of the participants and the physical features of the site.

The site

The site should approximate the actual field experience or situation you are trying to simulate. If you are conducting a workshop on emergency refugee camp design and management, are there areas that look like rugged border areas with few nearby houses, infrastructure or services? Consider the exact actions you will ask the exercise participants to carry out. If they are being asked, for example, to assess three different sites and to make recommendations for the best one for a refugee camp, are there three empty areas available? Are these off limits for any reason? Will empty and open sites today actually be used as a market area or cattle feeding station on the day you plan to use them?

If the simulation is to involve road travel, are different exercise locations far enough apart to simulate that they may be quite distant? For example, can shouting, shooting, or other actions at one site be heard or seen from another site? Are the roads actually suitable for travel between locations even in the rainy season?

Also check any needed communications equipment in the actual field locations where they will be employed. Check that cell phones and radios work and that local police, army units, or others are not using the same frequencies you will be using in the exercise. Since many field simulations are done specifically for the purpose of re-creating dangerous incidents it is important that others who might hear radio distress calls for help do not believe them to be real emergencies. It is not amusing to have the local police show up with guns drawn to stop your road carjacking simulation!

Signage and mapping

If the site or sites have been found to be suitable, and scheduling has been checked to verify that there will be no other use of them at the same time as your exercise, the next question is about signage and mapping. Are maps available that you can use to modify and add fictional (or real, but not necessarily local) place names? If players will be required to move around the site as part of the simulation, they will need realistic maps to find their way.

Ask if maps are available. Maps at 1:50,000 scale will provide an adequate level of detail for most exercise design needs, although more detailed area maps may be required for some simulations. If your site is on a military base, police training grounds or other similar security-related institution, detailed maps may not be provided or allowed for security purposes. Preparation of such maps may even constitute espionage and be criminal offenses in some countries or situations. You must ask this question specifically to be sure that no problems will arise at the last minute after other commitments for use of the site have already been made.

For areas where maps are allowed, but not available ready-made, you can create your own maps using GPS devices and noting the recorded tracks and key points of interest in the simulation area. Internet based geographic search engines and databases are also useful, particularly Google Earth, which provides excellent details for many locations throughout the world.

For most field simulations, signage will be required to direct participants to various locations or scenarios in the field. For instances where maps are not allowed or required as part of the
simulation learning objectives (for example to practice map-reading skills), detailed signage in the field may suffice for keeping participants on track and in the correct areas.

Clear signage will also help keep other people, who are not a part of the exercise, out of the action areas. This is important since their presence may spoil the reality of scenarios that have been carefully planned. If you are simulating serious security incidents (shooting, ambushes or carjacking, for example) you will also want signage to keep uninformed bystanders from becoming genuinely afraid or interfering in the action.

8.4 Working with Local Residents, Counterparts, Actors and Extras

Another advantage of field simulations over classroom exercises is the ability to simulate interactions between your participants and real people. For your simulations, you may want to plan for lost children, refugee families, displaced people, crowds, mobs, villages, camps, protesters or even advancing rebel forces. This can be done in your exercise, and done quite well, if some basic preparation is done first. You are really only limited by your exercise budget and your own imagination.

Auditions

For simulations that require many people with speaking roles or who will be required to interact directly with the exercise participants, you will need to screen the actors so that those who are the most shy and retiring are not cast in the role of angry rioter or violent and screaming victim. If you are recruiting people to play these parts locally, be sure to investigate any local norms or requirements that may need to be respected. Whenever possible, arrange to have the pool of people found, organized and brought to the site by a local counterpart who is familiar with local requirements and niceties in this regard (for example, payment requirements and any local regulations or taxes, provision of lunch and snacks, normal starting and quitting times, breaks for prayers, or any other locally important issues).

Hiring professional actors is usually not an available option for field exercises. You will need to recruit local people to play needed roles. What qualities make a good role player?

Once you have a pool of people to work with, you can meet with them as a group and then screen them by abilities. Your task will be to match the people to the roles so that they are comfortable with their roles and the overall reality of your simulation is optimized. The following are examples of some qualities or characters you could need in a simulation and the means to screen for the best matched person for each type of role. A general recommendation is to first review with the group the types of roles to be played and ask for people who have either done this before or who feel they would be comfortable to play the role. The tips below should help you choose the best person for each type of role to be played.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roles</th>
<th>Screening / Audition tips</th>
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<tr>
<td>Crying or screaming accident victim</td>
<td><em>Example – First Aid Training Exercise Scenario.</em> You need three serious accident victims to play loud attention-grabbing people at an accident scene; two others who also need attention will be more quiet. Call for a show of hands of those who believe that they can cry and scream in pain on cue. Encourage the group to volunteer until you have at least as many victims as you need. If six or seven indicate a willingness to try, tell them they will have a crying contest. Explain that they should be absolutely as serious as possible, and that they should not laugh or giggle even though they may find the exercise funny. Ask everyone else to remain as quiet as possible. Ask each one to cry and/or scream out in pain for about 30 seconds. Use a watch and time them. After all have completed the task, select the most convincing. Tell those selected that they will have heavy make-up or moulage to simulate serious wounds and blood which may stain their clothing so that they can dress accordingly on the day of the exercise. Provide assistance for clean-up afterward.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dead or comatose victim</td>
<td>Anyone will do; however, try to avoid very young children or those who are actually frail or infirm as “dead” role players are often required to remain still for long periods of time. For some situations, such as victims of a building collapse to be partially buried in rubble or those tangled in storm debris, you may consider the use of mannequins or realistic dummies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refugee; displaced person; panicked, stressed or desperate disaster victim</td>
<td><em>Example – People playing the parts of the disenfranchised and or displaced</em> in a human rights, IDP, or refugee emergency management training. <em>These are important dramatic acting roles.</em> Language ability is an issue, as is the ability to quickly understand the role, and a dramatic flair to play emotions realistically. Ask each volunteer to explain their family situation, describe something about themselves, or a current news topic. Listen to the way they speak and their ability to respond to questions “on the spot”. Roles may be gender and age specific, so you will also need to screen for these attributes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counterpart officials, police, soldiers, ministry representatives</td>
<td>For these roles, wherever possible, choose people who in real life are close to the roles they will play.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guerilla soldiers or rebels</td>
<td><em>Example – security training.</em> These roles are often played by soldiers or police. Soldiers often enjoy getting a chance to play the “bad guys”. Take care in giving guidance about how mean or physical they will be allowed to be with exercise participants. Additional specific guidance on this point is offered later on page 130. The military training that they are used to may have different standards for what levels of aggressive and threatening behavior are permissible. Review your expectations with them in detail.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violent criminals</td>
<td>Same as above.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crowds</td>
<td><em>Example – emergency response or security training.</em> Those who have been screened out of the other more individual and dramatic roles generally end up in the crowd or mob roles. They need to be briefed about their roles, and given cues for things they might say or do. Typically one or two people are given specific roles as “crowd leaders”. They should be chosen in the same way as for the “dramatic” roles above.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media interviewer</td>
<td>This roles requires a person with excellent speaking skills and the ability to be assertive when needed. It is often worth taking the trouble to find an actual news reporter to play this role. If so, they can also effectively be asked to give advice or observations in the exercise debriefing afterwards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support office staff or translators for exercise participants</td>
<td>For some simulations, particularly where local population and exercise role players and actors do not speak the language of the workshop participants, translator role players may be needed. This is a highly skilled role, so these translators may need to be actively recruited or advertised for if you are to find adequate role players. Local university students may be a good option.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Once the role players are identified, you will need to record their names and cell phone numbers or other important contact information. If a local counterpart is organizing the local role players on your behalf, they should collect the same information in order to be able to assemble and manage the group.

Scripts and role descriptions

Each role player with an individual role will need a script and short background information statement. You may also include guidance on how each role player should be dressed; for example, in uniform, civilian clothing, or torn and rough clothing, depending on the impression you want you create (see the example on the next page.)

Before the exercise is implemented, plan for a rehearsal in which groups of role players who will act out their roles together have a chance to recognize one another and harmonize their stories and actions. Prepare cards of short scripts they can refer to, but emphasize that they should remember the information and act it out dramatically, not simply read prepared responses from the cards.

Location of role players on the exercise site

Once the site is known and drawn out in plan or diagram form, you can use the plan for organizing the administration of the exercise. Depending on what kind of simulation exercise you are designing, you may want to deploy victims and other stand-bys, witnesses, local responders, etc. to the scene of the incident being simulated. It will help to prepare in advance a map of where you want everyone to be. This map can then be correlated with the players and administrative name lists so that everyone knows where he or she is supposed to be and when.

Positioning of props and victims is usually straightforward. The goal is to make the scene as realistic as possible. For example, in the case of vehicle accidents, place the victims inside or near the vehicles. In the case of an air crash, place victims near the simulated aircraft fuselage. In the case of refugee border crossing, simulate a border area in an uninhabited area of the site with low or no local traffic.

**WARNING** In placing the victims and other role players on the scene and during their initial instructions, always take care that the safety of the person playing the role of the victim comes first. Do not cause a real emergency by the actions of your simulated exercise!

Do not place victims in areas where they will be in danger from moving vehicles or equipment in the case of simulated building collapse, for example. One alternative for presenting this kind of situation is to use dummies or mannequins for locations that might actually be dangerous for a live person.

Concerns of psychosocial safety also arise when dealing with very young children. Including children in your training can add realism and highlight important learning points related to age-specific needs in emergencies. However, caution is required when the simulation involves situations of extreme violence or distress. Very young children may not be able to fully understand that what they are perceiving around them is play-acting. The high emotion of the simulation can easily leave young children distressed—in the worst case possibly traumatized. For this reason you should be especially careful about where they are placed during the activity. Explain the situation fully to their parents or guardians and ensure you have their permission for any roles. Further ensure that the caretaker remains nearby throughout the simulation.
Once the decision is made for your site plan, mark the location of victims and extras on the plan. This can now be used to help control the overall exercise as it develops and can also be used to help direct all of the people to the places they need to be at the beginning of the emergency.

### 8.5 Conducting the Pre-Exercise Meeting On-Site

If possible, you should organize a general administrative pre-meeting and a brief rehearsal with key counterparts who will be involved in the implementation of the exercise. In many cases, especially when physical props, such as tents, mock camp sites, mock disaster scenes, etc. need to be put in place, the pre-meeting may be done several days in advance of the event, but the rehearsal will need to be done the day before, or possibly just prior to the simulation, as it is often difficult or impossible to keep these elements on site longer than a day or two. A detailed listing of everything to be supplied should be provided to everyone concerned.

#### Administrative pre-meeting

Schedule the meeting at a time when all or most of the players can attend. It is important to meet with the most senior person responsible for the overall site and equipment. If the counterpart providing the site and equipment is a military or national civil defense force, meet with the senior officer responsible for the exercise.

**Question**

*What issues should be reviewed and clarified in the pre-meeting? What issues would concern you the most?*
At the meeting use your action/sequence plan to talk through the exercise and the way the scenario(s) will unfold. If this is the first time to run the exercise, you will want to meet and walk through each site or exercise area physically as well as review them using charts or maps. Explain each key action to be simulated and name an individual with key responsibilities for each. This can be anyone, from your own administration team or from the counterpart or hosting agency, but it is critical to have a name and phone number contact for each key component. Once you have gone through each step/component, ask for questions or any needed clarifications. Draft a contact list of everyone at the meeting as well as a list of the responsible people for each element of the exercise.

**Rehearsal meeting**

The rehearsal meeting is your chance to confirm that the agreed equipment is in the right place and to make any last minute adjustments. It is important to assemble the actual role players and actors on site at this time to be sure they know where they will be during the simulation and to acquaint them with features of the site that they may use to advantage in the simulation.

For roles with important speaking parts and where the actual content of the scripts must be conveyed accurately, a brief review of the scripts is required. If possible you can also conduct a quick role play with the actors to give them a practice round in responding to the kinds of questions that the participants are likely to ask. For crowds and other large groups with elderly people and young children, a detailed review with everyone is not usually necessary. A review of the basic scenario and a few practices with the whole crowd pushing or shouting can be useful in illustrating to them how violent or passive you want them to be in the exercise. In most cases there will be a few “crowd leader” roles. These should be treated the same as the other speaking roles described above.

**Note for those playing “Bad Guy” roles**

Many simulations and field exercise scenarios may include “bad guys” such as guerilla forces, armed bandits, violent looting crowds or hostage takers, to name a few. To be effective, it is important to have these roles played realistically. This often includes shouting, pushing and shoving or brandishing weapons. However, there are **limits to how rough players should act**. The chart at right delineates some limits to aggressive acting. These should be made clear to role players and enforced during the exercise.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Limits to aggressive actions by role players</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Acceptable actions</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loud, angry, aggressive or threatening tones of voice are expected and may be necessary to bring realism to some scenarios.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is generally acceptable to touch participants within certain limits. The powerful effect of human touch to intimidate, reassure or elicit other responses depending on the situation is often a significant revelation of simulations. For example, putting a hand on a participant’s shoulder to intimidate or suggest dominance is allowable, as is pushing and shoving that does not cause pain or physical damage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depending on the situation, certain actors may be required to carry weapons, display them in a threatening manner and fire warning shots (blanks only).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*UNHCR eCentre Photo*  
Army personnel playing the role of guerrilla hostage takers in a field security simulation.
8.6 Tools for Managing the Field Simulation on Exercise Day

All of the tools described in the last chapter for running a tabletop exercise are applicable here so will not be repeated. There are, however, a few other management tools that you may need to add for a moderately complex field simulation exercise.

**Required resources chart**

This kind of chart is important in situations where various people and organizations are responsible for providing different resources required for the exercise. In this case a prepared listing of all required resources will strengthen overall exercise coordination and will avoid duplication and gaps in provision of needed props, services or materials. This list is usually made in a matrix to allow for quick scanning and reporting on resources for the whole group of participating organizations.

In some field simulations like functional and full-scale exercises, where your exercise participants are actually playing themselves in their own area of operation, these charts may not be necessary since the organizations will likely be using their own real resources in the exercise. In some cases where the actual resource is too valuable or critical to use except in an actual emergency, these key resources may have to be explained or described artificially on the site as if they were really there.

**Required resources for each event (date, location, name of exercise)**

The following example is an excerpt from a simplified resource matrix used in a UNHCR eCentre Field Simulation for the Humanitarian Field Security workshop.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCENARIO</th>
<th>To be provided by the military</th>
<th>To be provided by UNHCR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First aid practice</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 actors to play wounded victims: 1 man, 1 woman, 1 child</td>
<td></td>
<td>4 stocked first aid kits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 cars — any type to represent car wreck</td>
<td></td>
<td>rubber gloves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large tent or shade nearby with 12 chairs for debriefing/discussion</td>
<td></td>
<td>rolled and gauze bandages (2 each)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Land Cruisers for participants</td>
<td></td>
<td>field dressing (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make-up to simulate lacerations and heavy bleeding: fake blood, 3rd degree burn, simulated wounds</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambush</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 men dressed in “irregular” unofficial military clothing (red head bands, torn or ragged t-shirts, camouflage fatigue pants)</td>
<td>2 Land Cruisers for participant teams</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weapons (blank ammunition): 2 RPGs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 AK 47s; 4 small arms (pistols)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 impromptu barricades using barbed wire roles (3) and branches or stones for impromptu barricades</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large tent or shade nearby w/ 12 chairs for debriefing/discussion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crowd / mob negotiation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actors in civilian clothes 30 men; 20 women; 10 children +/- Shed platform or tent area mock-up to look like distribution area: 4 tables</td>
<td>UNHCR field signage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large tent or shade nearby with 12 chairs for debriefing/discussion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land mine demonstration</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstration mines Antipersonnel mines (5-10); anti-tank mines (2-4) stake mine with tripwire (1-2)</td>
<td>Nothing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minefield signage One each of various minefield signage mock-ups: piled stones; red paint; printed signs; crossed sticks; cans/ plastic bags on fence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large tent or shade nearby w/ 12 chairs for debriefing/discussion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It is often useful to have prepared lists with all assigned roles prepared so that players can “sign in” to the exercise as they arrive at staging areas or enter Command Posts, etc. These forms will also help those responsible for transporting people in making sure that people are where they need to be at the right time. The list should include all administrative roles/people acting as exercise monitors, controllers, evaluators, etc.

The master players list can also be used for sending follow up reporting and evaluation information after the exercise has concluded and evaluators have made their reports and recommendations.

**Field communications chart**

A moderately complex field exercise may include many actors and scripts; instructions for vehicle operators and drivers, support logistics for medical support, lunch arrangements, and water for the players. There is a risk that too much detail can actually burden and confuse partners. In other words, the overall exercise controller needs to be able to give everyone the document or support that they need, at the instant they need it, without overburdening anyone with things they do not need. A complete paper (hard copy) file with ready handouts should be prepared and components distributed to players and managers on an “as needed” basis.

However, a simple exercise overview document should be prepared for all exercise administrators and key counterparts. This overview is often in the form of a communications chart, but may also be enhanced to show general timings and a simple sketch of the overall area. An example is provided below from a UNHCR eCentre field security training simulation. The first chart is an overview of the action and timings for the simulation, the second is the general contact and communications information for all key players.

### Tools

**SIMULATION TIMETABLE – for Date, Location, Exercise Name**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>RESPONSIBLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0630</td>
<td>Radio Check and Roll Call</td>
<td>Team (R1-R4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0815</td>
<td>BRIEFING in Training Room</td>
<td>Jim Good / Lynne Bethke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0900</td>
<td>Bus Departs for Exercise Staging Area</td>
<td>Participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0930</td>
<td>Quick briefing and orientation at field staging area</td>
<td>Lynne Bethke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0945</td>
<td>Teams begin to move to starting positions</td>
<td>Participants/Scenario Referees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1000</td>
<td><strong>Step 1</strong> All teams Advance to next Scenario</td>
<td>Participants/Scenario Referees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1100</td>
<td><strong>Step 2</strong> All teams Advance to next Scenario</td>
<td>Participants/Scenario Referees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1200</td>
<td>LUNCH</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1230</td>
<td><strong>Step 3</strong> All teams Advance to next Scenario</td>
<td>Participants/Scenario Referees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1330</td>
<td><strong>Step 4</strong> All teams Advance to next Scenario</td>
<td>Participants/Scenario Referees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1430</td>
<td><strong>Step 5</strong> All teams Advance to Live Firing Demonstration</td>
<td>Participants/Scenario Referees (Mike leads)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1530</td>
<td>All teams return for Group Debrief at staging area</td>
<td>Participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1545</td>
<td>Group Debriefing</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1630</td>
<td>All teams return to Hotel by bus</td>
<td>Participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1700</td>
<td>All teams arrive at hotel</td>
<td>Participants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*DRAFT DATE 2 JUNE (destroy previous drafts)*
Radio Channel / Team / Scenario Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Scenario 1</th>
<th>Scenario 2</th>
<th>Scenario 3</th>
<th>Scenario 4</th>
<th>Scenario 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>FIRST AID</td>
<td>AMBUSH</td>
<td>MOB</td>
<td>LANDMINE</td>
<td>LIVE FIRE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>Team C</td>
<td>Team F</td>
<td>Team T</td>
<td>Team W</td>
<td>NONE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1100</td>
<td>Team W</td>
<td>Team C</td>
<td>Team F</td>
<td>Team T</td>
<td>NONE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LUNCH</td>
<td>1200</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1230</td>
<td>Team T</td>
<td>Team W</td>
<td>Team C</td>
<td>Team F</td>
<td>NONE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1330</td>
<td>Team F</td>
<td>Team T</td>
<td>Team W</td>
<td>Team C</td>
<td>NONE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1430</td>
<td>FINISHED</td>
<td>FINISHED</td>
<td>FINISHED</td>
<td>FINISHED</td>
<td>ALL TEAMS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Channel Allocation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHO</th>
<th>Call Sign(s)</th>
<th>Channel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Team C</td>
<td>C 1-9</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team F</td>
<td>F 1-9</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team T</td>
<td>T 1-9</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team W</td>
<td>W 1-8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REF @ Accident (Jim – R7)</td>
<td>R7 (tel:081-014-6023)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REF @ Ambush (Kjell – R5)</td>
<td>R3 (tel:081-014-7520 )</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REF @ Crowd (Mike – R1)</td>
<td>R1 (tel:087-989-1359)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REF @ Mines (Hani– R6)</td>
<td>R6 (tel:084-357-9903)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio support to participants from Xynas Base</td>
<td>H Base (Kjeld) (tel. 089-033-4456)</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4, 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roving Referee (Lynne–R4)</td>
<td>R1 (tel:084-327-2943)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logistics Control (Nat–R3)</td>
<td>R3 (Nat) tel: (081-803-8777)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Exercise Counterparts — Capt. Boonarong — 085-218-218

- Ambush & Live Firing: Lt. Sanglowee (tel: 042-423-987)
- Land Mine: Major Prechar (tel: 032-245-998)
- Accident & reg. roadblock: Lt. Komkrit (tel: 082-635-704)

8.7 Provide Adequate Safety Precautions

Safety should always be a primary concern in field exercises and simulations, not only for the workshop participants, but also for the actors, role players, counterparts and local population who may inadvertently become involved in the exercise. The following field exercise safety checklist is a good tool to use to review the safety preparedness for the event.
Field Exercise Safety Checklist

Tools

- Identify and locate the nearest local medical facilities and assess their capabilities. You may need them should a real emergency arise.
- Provide for adequate vehicles or an ambulance to transport victims in case of emergency.
- Establish communications protocols in the event of an accident or other emergency, possibly including an emergency channel and use of a code word to signify a real emergency.
- Receive clearance to use radio frequencies from local authorities and know who may be monitoring them.
- Provide enough drinking water for all players, extras, and participants. In many locations dehydration is common.
- Conduct a pre-exercise safety briefing for everyone involved, including
  - Instruction on communications and other safety protocols as above
  - Reminder to drink a lot of water in hot climates
  - Reminder to use sunscreen and insect repellant where required
  - Instruction to dress appropriately
- Inquire beforehand whether any participants have significant relevant illnesses or medical conditions and take appropriate precautions (which may include excluding them from the exercise)
- Review specific safety risks of any equipment being used such as pyrotechnics, heavy equipment, ammunition (remember even with blanks, close shooting can cause hearing damage); take appropriate precautions.
- For emotionally intense simulations you may want to consider someone who can deal with personal stress issues such as a welfare counselor or other support person.
- Place instructors or other responsible people at each action site in the field simulation both to evaluate the exercise and for safety reasons.

8.8 Make the Exercise Worthwhile to Everyone

Field exercises can take a lot of time and effort. If you decide to run a field exercise try to find ways that everyone involved benefits and feels that their participation was truly useful. In exercises where you are working with a counterpart agency or organization, ask them to conduct a joint debriefing of the exercise with you. Give them the chance to share their observations about the exercise and to evaluate the actions of participants and the overall value of the exercise to their own learning and organizational development.

Ask for feedback at the end of the exercise from the extras and role players. Let them express in their own words how the exercise participants interacted with them and the impression they made. This debriefing is also a good place for you to explain to everyone involved why such exercises are run – to improve humanitarian performance. Explain that their participation in the event will help organizations like yours to do better work in the field and even save lives. Thank everyone involved and let them know that their participation was truly useful and meaningful.
Summary

There are advantages to conducting simulation exercises in the field instead of in the training room. They can give a greater sense of reality to exercises and also may present a good opportunity to explain the training programme and the larger goals of your organization to the local community.

Do a cost-benefit analysis to decide whether or not to undertake a field simulation. The costs may be significant, but if the exercise is done well, it will make a far greater and more memorable impression upon the training group than a tabletop exercise or lecture.

Work with the attributes and constraints of the field site. Take advantage of useful opportunities and find creative ways to work around difficulties. Always conduct a walk-through site visit with those in charge of the site and clarify allowed uses and scheduling of site areas. Be prepared to do simple mapping of the site if necessary and allowed.

Work closely with counterpart authorities or site managers to plan and organize responsibilities for carrying out the exercise. A careful pre-meeting with counterparts and a "dress rehearsal" before the event will provide real benefits both for making last-minute changes to the design as well as to the overall smooth running of the exercise.

Take care when working with and preparing local people involved in the exercise by having quick on-site auditions and briefings for local simulation actors.

Use basic management tools like schedules, time charts, maps and communications diagrams to be able to control the overall event, and to be able to troubleshoot problems quickly if they arise.

Field exercises and simulations can expose you and your participants to greater safety risks than classroom training. Take care to provide adequate safety precautions for all stakeholders involved in the field exercise.

Make the exercise worthwhile to everyone concerned. Do this by taking the time to explain the value of the exercise and to thanking everyone involved.
Chapter 8
Self-Assessment Questions

Check T or F to indicate whether a statement is True or False

1. Simulated gunfire using blank ammunition used by soldiers or actors in field simulations is completely harmless.

2. On-site signage and site mapping are important aspects of designing and managing field exercises.

3. Auditions for screening field exercise extras and role-players are so time consuming and unreliable that they are of little value in preparing for complex field simulations.

4. Even soldiers, police and others with similar training who are very experienced with their own field simulations should be briefed about the limits they should respect in terms of acting aggressively towards the exercise participants.

5. Communication charts, staffing lists, and other documentation should be on hand in hard copy for those needing last-minute directions or explanations.

Multiple choice. Mark ALL correct statements—more than one may apply.

6. Which of the following would be useful to include in a field simulation communications chart to help exercise controllers manage the action?
   A. Time line of key events or scenarios to take place in the exercise
   B. Call signs for exercise trainers and monitors
   C. Telephone numbers for nearest clinic or medical support
   D. Channel allocation for all channels to be used in the exercise

7. Which of the following should be included in your safety checklist for an active field exercise that simulates dangerous situations and emergency events?
   A. Provision of vehicles to move real accident victims to medical facilities if necessary
   B. Clearance for radio frequency use
   C. Code words or phrases to distinguish real emergency needs from simulated emergency calls
   D. Pre-exercise safety briefing
8. Which of the following tips should you use in assigning roles and deciding where to place role players and extras on the simulation field site?

A. Do not place those playing comatose or dead victims in roadways or other areas where they may actually be at risk of a serious accident.

B. Use very young children to play comatose or dead victims as they are not required to have any speaking part.

C. Do not place children near their parents or guardians at the simulation site as parents will usually interfere in their children's role playing.

D. Use simple auditions to determine which people can best play outraged, panicked, or desperate and screaming roles.

9. Which actions below should not be allowed by those playing aggressive roles in the field simulation?

A. Touching and pushing participants

B. Shouting at participants

C. Hitting participants

D. Insulting participants’ ethnicity

10. Which of the following would be considered benefits of a proposed field simulation site?

A. Site is located a long way from the training venue.

B. Amateur actors and extras are available locally to play roles.

C. The site is similar to locations where the exercise participants will actually work.

D. Site does not offer any services such as electricity or water, infrastructure, available buildings or other support.
Designing Participatory Workshops

Chapter 8 Answer Key

1. F 6. A, B, C, D
2. T 7. A, B, C, D
3. F 8. A, D
4. T 9. C, D
5. T 10. B, C
After completing the previous chapters, you should have a solid understanding of how to design and implement a dynamic and effective participatory workshop. However, even with the best planning and preparation, some things go wrong. Certain elements will need adjustment when exposed to the scrutiny of a real audience. In the worst case, problems may be so big that participants are unable to meet their learning objectives. What went wrong and why? How do you make corrections to improve the next time? This chapter looks at ways to plan for feedback and evaluation in your design process so that every workshop is better than the last.

This chapter will give you some useful advice on how to:
- Plan appropriate timelines for developing and implementing workshop events or series.
- Design elements into pilot workshop events that give useful feedback for future workshops.
- Keep stakeholders in the loop of the design process throughout the life of the workshop cycle.
- Use monitoring and evaluation to learn and improve from every workshop.
- Design surveys and analyze results to learn the right lessons from your evaluations.

### 9.1 Planning Timelines for Workshop Events

A brief review of Chapter 2 will remind you of the importance of meeting and working with other stakeholders in the design of your workshop. Discussing workshop learning objectives and outcomes in a meaningful way takes time. The process usually takes a few weeks and involves initial discussions and multiple rounds of drafting objectives and agendas before an agreed design takes shape. More time is needed as sessions are developed and exercises designed. How long does this all take?
Imagine you must design a participatory workshop on a topic or theme that is not new to you, but for which you have no ready-made materials. The event is the *Disaster Mitigation Workshop* (introduced earlier in this course—please review pages 27 and 45 to reacquaint yourself with the details of the workshop). The general idea has been agreed on with other stakeholders, but the basic design and development is up to you. Three different topic experts have been identified, each with important input for the development of the workshop.

There are approximately 200 managers who meet the criteria for participation in the workshop. Therefore, senior management has determined that the workshop should be replicated as an overall training initiative that will reach all of them within the next two years. The 200 participant target group is comprised of mid-level managers who will all be required to complete the workshop. You have agreed with your training unit and senior management on the following basic criteria for this initiative:

- Due to the large number of managers and the extent to which the organization can afford to have them attend training, not more than 20 will be together in any one workshop.
- The workshop event can last no more than four days.
- The design must be highly participatory, using some presentations and lectures on the core concepts of the programme, but the sessions are all expected to be lively and “hands-on”.
- Include a core exercise as a cornerstone to the training. This is likely to be a well-developed tabletop exercise since it is difficult to arrange field exercises in several regions of the world where workshops will be offered.
- You and your team will conduct all of the workshops yourselves, as there are no other trainers available to do simultaneous trainings within the organization.

On the two-year calendar provided, describe your design and development timeline. Include any important landmark dates or events and plan the approximate dates for the workshops you will schedule. You must train the 200 managers and formally complete the programme in the two year period. Today is January 1st of year 1. Good luck!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Event or accomplishment — Year ONE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JAN</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEB</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAR</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APR</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAY</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JUN</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JUL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUG</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEP</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OCT</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOV</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Your timeline may differ from the one on the next page, depending on your assumptions and the relative speed with which your organization can respond to administrative challenges such as this new training initiative. Also, every organization has different busy and slow administrative (usually budgeting) periods and different approaches to holidays and breaks in the calendar year, which must also be addressed. Whatever your assumptions, you should have allowed adequate time for the development of the first pilot workshop and additional time for incorporation of lessons learned after the first pilot event into the future workshops.

After the initial changes resulting from the pilot workshop event, it can be assumed that the subsequent changes and lead times for each event can be reduced, as pre-workshop activities and communications become routine. You should have also included some time for an end of programme or project review so that the design team and management can learn from the overall process as well. The example on the next page is not the only right answer, but it does illustrate the concerns and issues discussed above.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Event or accomplishment — Year ONE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JAN</td>
<td>Time line approved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Developed agenda &amp; learning objectives approved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEB</td>
<td>Draft session plans completed &amp; circulated to team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAR</td>
<td>Tabletop simulation exercise development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APR</td>
<td>Pilot materials reviewed &amp; made ready for workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PILOT WORKSHOP for 20 participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAY</td>
<td>Pilot workshop review &amp; proposals for corrections/modifications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Deadline for review comments on revisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JUN</td>
<td>Corrections &amp; revisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Corrections &amp; revisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JUL</td>
<td>2nd workshop for 20 participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2nd workshop review &amp; proposals for corrections/modifications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUG</td>
<td>Deadline for review comments on revisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Corrections &amp; revisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEP</td>
<td>3rd Workshop for 20 participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Corrections &amp; revisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OCT</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOV</td>
<td>4th Workshop for 20 participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Year end project review, corrections &amp; revisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Month</td>
<td>Event or accomplishment — Year TWO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JAN</td>
<td>5th workshop for 20 participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Corrections &amp; revisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEB</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAR</td>
<td>6th workshop for 20 participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Corrections &amp; revisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APR</td>
<td>7th workshop for 20 participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAY</td>
<td>Corrections &amp; revisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JUN</td>
<td>8th workshop for 20 participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Corrections &amp; revisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JUL</td>
<td>9th workshop for 20 participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUG</td>
<td>Corrections &amp; revisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEP</td>
<td>10th workshop for 20 participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Corrections &amp; revisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OCT</td>
<td>Optional date or “catch-all” workshop for 20 participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOV</td>
<td>Review of workshop evaluations and working group meeting on lessons learned.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEC</td>
<td>Final report and lessons learned document distributed to stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Break!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9.2 Workshop Development and Piloting

If the workshop is expected to be run more than once, or is part of a series of related workshops, then the first running takes on special importance. This is because the initial, or pilot, event is an invaluable opportunity to test materials and approaches in front of a real audience and make corrections.

The first and most important thing to remember about pilot workshops is that some corrections are normal and inevitable. No matter how well you have prepared your content and presentation methods, you will always learn something new when they are put before the scrutiny of real participants. Knowing this in advance can help avoid becoming overly defensive to criticism or feeling that all your preparation and hard work has not been appreciated.

Usually when an event is a pilot, this fact is no secret to the participants. Organizers should not try to hide this fact, but equally they should be careful about overemphasizing it. Stressing that this is a new initiative can be tempting as it seemingly reduces expectations of a “perfect” event and encourages forgiveness of minor imperfections; but this can have unintended consequences. Sometimes it can actually lead people to be more critical, as they are now on their guard to scrutinize for shortcomings, or to doubt or mistrust points that are actually fully valid. In general, as with all other parts of the workshop, the best strategy is to be confident in your assertion that what you have prepared is meaningful and relevant to the participants’ needs—and then do your best to live up to those expectations.

That said, it is particularly important to design adequate evaluation time and processes into the pilot event, and to actively encourage participants to give constructive criticism. Again, it is usually better to “raise the bar” of expectations rather than to lower it during the pilot; you will likely get more in-depth and more useful comments about how to meet these higher expectations.

Finally, pilot events can go wrong because of the choice of participants for the pilot event. For example, more senior managers and training specialists may be selected as the initial test audience because their opinions are seen as being particularly valuable and insightful in the design process. This may be true, but if the actual target audience is significantly different than the pilot workshop audience their needs may be different as well. The evaluative comments at the end of the pilot may tell you more about how to meet the needs of the pilot group than what is best for the real intended audience.

9.3 Keeping Stakeholders in the Loop

As you begin to hold pilot events and review sessions, keep the initial stakeholders informed of the progress in the overall design and evolution of the workshop event. After significant changes are made in your design, take the time to resend materials to those who provided key expert information in the earlier stages. They may offer useful insight into your modifications, or may see things from a different perspective. There is often an inherent bias on the part of workshop designer (you) to change things to be easier to present or to be more exciting for the workshop participants. While these are positive attributes in general, by pursuing them too vigorously you may lose some of the key information to be communicated or may over-simplify approaches.

Another way to keep management and expert stakeholders informed and in the ongoing design process is to invite them to join the workshops as monitors or observers. They can offer on-the-spot advice and guidance to the design team and can also answer participants’ questions about policy issues and concerns from an authoritative position. This is a useful exercise but may have some drawbacks that will need to be addressed in order to gain the full benefit from such observers.
How can workshop observers from senior management alter the nature of the workshop event they are observing?

In some instances when senior management observers are present, workshop trainers and organizers may subtly shift the training dynamics and norms to engage and impress the observers rather than focusing on the needs of the workshop participants. To avoid this, it is a good idea to set some ground rules and discuss the relative roles of observers and “participant observers”.

Consider preparing an evaluator’s guide for workshop observers to explain the kind of critique or evaluative information you feel will be most useful in improving the event. Also share the prepared learning objectives with observers so that they can usefully compare their personal assessment with the learning objectives. In many cases, poor evaluations of workshops or workshop sessions are due to disagreement (or simple misunderstanding) over the learning objectives rather than the success or failure in meeting them. Finally, schedule a post workshop meeting with observers to take advantage of their insights.

9.4 Workshop Evaluation Sessions

Imagine that the workshop is over and you feel satisfied. No one asked any questions you could not answer and everyone said the training sessions were very good. Lunches and breaks were served on time and the coffee was hot. The group seemed happy. Success! … or not? How can you really tell whether you met the training objectives, and whether the workshop was worth all of the effort? The only way to find out is through evaluation.

Practically speaking, what are the reasons for spending the time to evaluate workshops at all?

Evaluation is (or should be) a standard component in most workshops. At its best, it provides a good chance to review what was done, and to propose ways to make each workshop better than the last. At its worst, it can become simply another bureaucratic administrative form to fill out at the end of the workshop.

There are four good (but different) reasons to carry out workshop evaluations:

- To improve the design of the training
- To make choices among training options
- To learn lessons for future training
- To promote overall accountability
Kirkpatrick’s four levels of evaluation

In *Techniques for Evaluation Training Programmes* (1959) and *Evaluating Training Programmes: The Four Levels* (1994), Donald Kirkpatrick proposed a standard approach to the evaluation of training that has become the de facto standard in the training field. Simply stated, the four levels are:

I. Participant reactions and efficiency
II. Changes in learning (knowledge and skills)
III. Changes in the participants’ on-the-job behavior
IV. Impact on the organization

Kirkpatrick’s four levels of evaluation model is a widely used and respected guide throughout the business, academic and human resources community world-wide. There are numerous online resources and articles available. Two fairly concise and basic resources can be found at:

- [www.businessballs.com/kirkpatricklearningevaluationmodel.htm](http://www.businessballs.com/kirkpatricklearningevaluationmodel.htm)
  - This site provides a simple explanation of Kirkpatrick’s four levels and has a very simple and downloadable evaluation form that relates directly to the four levels.

- [http://fsjones.myweb.uga.edu/evaluation/index.html](http://fsjones.myweb.uga.edu/evaluation/index.html)
  - This page is a simplified and very graphic presentation of the details, use and limitations of Kirkpatrick’s four levels from the University of Georgia.

Useful online search terms:
- Donald Kirkpatrick
- Kirkpatrick’s 4 Levels
- Learning evaluation theory
- Student feedback
- Training evaluation

What to evaluate?

What aspects of the workshop can be evaluated at the first level of evaluation?

At the first level, all of the following lend themselves to being evaluated:

- Training content
- Training methods
- Learning environment
- Training materials
- The trainer
- The participants

Training evaluations help the trainer and training administrators determine the training’s relevance, performance, efficiency and impact. While professional evaluators have identified four distinct levels of training evaluation, very often we only deal with the first level of training evaluation. Look at the sample “end of workshop evaluation” form below. Standardized forms are the norm since most workshops are run at least annually and in some cases several times per year. It is useful to compare different offerings of the same workshop using the same survey tool. Read through the sample form and think critically about what kinds of questions the participants are being asked.
Example Workshop Evaluation Form

Surname ___________________________________ First Name ____________________________________

☐ Male ☐ Female Functional Title _________________________________________________________

Duty Station or Office Location ___________________________________________________________________

Organization ________________________________________________________________________________

Workshop dates: 3-8 June 2007  Safety in the Field (SIF) Workshop

Venue: Pranburi, Thailand

Overall Workshop Organization/Administration
(To be filled out at the end of the workshop)

Please circle to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Don’t agree or disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Subject matter was adequately covered</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Content was suitable for my background and experience</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Programme was well-paced</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Handouts were relevant</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Participants were encouraged to take an active part</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) The programme met my individual objectives</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) Programme was relevant to my job</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8) I would recommend this programme to my colleagues</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please rate the following, as applicable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect or area of the workshop</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Bad</th>
<th>Terrible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9) Lecture method</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10) Small group sessions</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11) Film/video</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12) Meeting space</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13) Meals/refreshments</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14) Overall organisation</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15) Other participants</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

16) Was the seminar length: ☐ correct? ☐ too short? ☐ too long?

17) Were there: ☐ just enough participants? ☐ too few? ☐ too many?

form continued on next page
18) Do you feel that any particular subject received too much or too little time in this workshop?

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

19) Do you have any suggestions that you feel could improve this course?

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

20) Any other comments?

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

21) What is your overall rating of this course?  □ Excellent  □ Good  □ Average  □ Bad  □ Terrible

________________________________________

Please return this form to the Workshop Co-ordinator at the end of the workshop.

In your own words, what kinds of questions were being asked of the workshop participants in the form above? Would they help you in making changes to the workshop event if it is to be run again in the next few months?
This first-level workshop evaluation assesses the effectiveness of the workshop and provides some input that can improve future trainings. At this level and using this prepared form, the participants are given an opportunity to provide feedback on the quality of the workshop design, training activities, training environment and training content. One concise way to think about workshop evaluation is based on a logical flow from what happened to what should happen next time. This progression can be summed up as description, analysis, and finally, prescription.

- What happened and how does this compare with what was expected? (DESCRIPTION)
- Why and how did it happen or not happen? (ANALYSIS)
- What should be done about it? (PRESCRIPTION)

The example evaluation form shown above includes questions relating to each of these three kinds of information. Generally, after reviewing these completed forms the workshop coordinator or organizer prepares a written report including all of the points in the evaluation form as well as the organizer’s overall analysis and proposals for changes or corrections where necessary.

In many cases your workshop training team will consist of several people: topic experts, trainers, facilitators, and visiting case study presenters or others. In such cases each trainer may want to review his/her own evaluation in order to improve future performance. In this case the written evaluation form shown above may not provide enough information. Look at the sample daily session evaluation form below. Note that it asks both quantitative judgment questions about each session as well as giving participants an open-ended field to write whatever they please. This form is useful in distinguishing between the perceived importance of the session content and the method/manner of presentation.

These forms should be explained to the participants at the beginning of the workshop. Participants will forget to fill these out in the rush to end the day, go shopping or meet their friends, so remind them each day to think about the experience of the day and not to wait until the end of the workshop. You can collect these together with the overall written evaluation at the end of the workshop.
Day Four — Wednesday — Skills Training

What were the most useful parts of this training day?
WHAT?

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

WHY?

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

Was anything not useful on this training day?
WHAT?

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

WHY?

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

Please evaluate the today’s sessions using the scale provided. The first scale measures your satisfaction with the usefulness of the content; the second measures how effectively you feel the content was presented. The highest score is 5; the lowest score is 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>CONTENT</th>
<th>PRESENTATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.1— Travel Security Skills</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2— Office &amp; Residential Security</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3— Technology - Communications &amp; GPS</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4— First Aid and Immediate Life-Saving</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5— Security Reporting &amp; Information Management</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Anything else you would like to add?

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________
Evaluation methods

You have probably experienced filling out a workshop evaluation form of some type at the end of a workshop. The form may have been as detailed as the ones presented as examples above or may have been very open-ended, with very little structure. Such forms are probably the most common method for workshop evaluation, but are they the best? What other options are available to help you and your organization learn from and improve upon your workshop experience?

What different evaluation methods have you experienced in or after workshops in the past?

There are several methods of evaluation for workshop training events. The techniques listed below can provide useful and actionable results.

- Individual participant evaluation sheets (like the examples shown above)
- Group consensus evaluation techniques
- Testing performance indicators
- Back-at-work questionnaires
- Follow-up interviews
- Follow-up meetings

Post-workshop tests and exams can be applied to content that is knowledge or skills-based, but are less useful for testing learning in the attitude domain. It is clear enough to determine whether a participant knows a fact or can complete a specific task, but it may be impossible to determine whether or not a participant has adopted an attitude or motivation that he/she will carry with them to the workplace. This concern can only be addressed by follow-up interviews or surveys that actually require observation or reporting some time after the participant has had the opportunity to apply new learning on the job. While post-workshop activities like these are useful, administrators should be aware of the resources required to conduct these follow-up interviews.

Another other evaluation tool is the group consensus evaluation technique. This requires small groups of four or five participants to write out their agreed on findings on flipcharts. It is generally recommended that they list a few positive as well as a few negative comments. For ease of reading by the larger group, it is best to draw up the format or template of the flipchart beforehand with spaces marked with a plus sign for positive comments and a minus sign for negative comments (see template on next page).
After the groups have written each of their evaluative comments in the form of a complete and specific statement, the flipcharts are arranged along a wall or in a large circle if you have moveable stands. Columns are provided at the right and left of each statement for the overall group voting. After the flipcharts are posted with the completed positive and negative statements, add titles to the columns on either side labeled “Agree” and “Disagree”. Once this is done ask each participant to place a tick mark in either column using a marker or pen.

After everyone has voted, the areas of consensus will emerge quite clearly. This approach is useful because it allows you to distinguish observations that reflect the thinking of a majority of the participants from those which may be forcefully stated by an individual but not shared by the group as a whole.

Deciding which techniques to use usually depends on how much time you can afford to spend and to what degree you are truly interested in the results. If time is very limited and you do not foresee running the same workshop again, or have little interest in advising/informing others who may be carrying out the same training, the basic questionnaire at the end of the workshop is sufficient.

If you are dedicated to improving the workshop as an evolving process or intend to conduct several more of the same workshops, you may choose to devote more time to the evaluation process. The following listing matches different evaluation techniques to Kirkpatrick’s four levels of evaluation.

**Level 1 – Participant reactions and efficiency**

*Evaluation methods:* Group discussion, questionnaire, open-form evaluation sheets collected at the close of the workshop. (See the evaluation form for this course.)

**Level 2 – Knowledge and skills**

*Evaluation methods:* Group discussion, formal questionnaire, end-of-course test, instructor grades, self-reporting.

**Level 3 – Changes in on-the-job behavior**

*Evaluation methods:* Pre- and post-testing to measure change, formal self-reporting, questionnaires, control groups for comparison, follow-up on-site visits, observation or interviews.

**Level 4 – Impact on the organization**

*Evaluation methods:* Baseline indicators, trend data analysis, control group vs. cross-control group comparisons.
9.5 Learning the Right Lessons from Evaluation

Finally, it is important that you learn the lessons that are of most value to you as a trainer and to the organization overall. Are your efforts making a difference? Is participant satisfaction with the workshop an accurate indicator of whether the learning objectives were met?

Review the description of the “workshop to avoid” on page 34. If you were a participant, you would probably consider this workshop a failure. Think about the underlying reasons why the workshop failed and then answer the questions below.

List the three most important reasons why you are dissatisfied with this workshop.

List three key recommendations you would make to the workshop organizers on how to improve the workshop.

Four reasons why workshops fail

1) Workshops fail when the information or skills training offered are of poor quality, logically weak, too vague, too basic, or just plain wrong. This can sometimes be the simple and painful truth—we all make mistakes. When true, it is the fault of workshop organizers, designers, trainers and facilitators. Generally, if people are unhappy with their experience in the workshop it is considered a failure. This encourages trainers to balance workshop content with their workshop environment and to find ways to keep participants satisfied along with helping them achieve the learning objectives.

2) Workshops fail when the participants in the workshop are poorly matched to the workshop content and objectives. Experience shows that, perhaps second only to the actual quality of the workshop content, this factor is the most critical in determining success or failure of a training event. The correlation is simple: people who can clearly see that what is being presented is relevant and useful for their daily work pay attention and absorb a great deal; people who cannot do so lose focus and interest, no matter how good the instructors or the content may be. Workshops should be designed to serve a particular target group of participants.

Once a workshop is designed, future participants should be chosen because they are the ones who need and can most benefit from the training. In fact, however, a number of other factors are commonly considered in participant selection. These may include the need to include important partners (some of whom may be cooperating in or otherwise supporting the training initiative) and the desire to achieve diversity (by region, organization, expertise or gender), both because it is an organizational principle to do so and because this contributes to more lively workshop interaction. As workshops often have many stakeholders, there may be equally numerous criteria for selection, some of which may not be clearly stated from the beginning.
While factors such as those above are generally legitimate, problems can arise when a manager loses sight of the original focus due to the complexity of managing several competing objectives. A good training manager must be alert to this process and proactive in addressing it with stakeholders. Where stakeholder expectations regarding participation are not clear, these are best discussed and clarified before inviting the next group of participants. This is not always easy and requires good communication skills, persistence and tact. The key point to emphasize is that nobody wins by providing training for people who cannot benefit from it. A workshop that poorly matches contents to the invited participants will only waste resources and will leave nobody satisfied.

3) Workshops fail when physical space, timing problems and other logistical problems are so profound that participants cannot focus on the learning objectives. Although relatively rare, some workshop conditions are so disagreeable that neither participants nor trainers can effectively focus on the training issues at hand. Typical situations that add to problems in this category are:

- Weak projectors in situations where the presentations depend on PowerPoint or other projected information.
- Sound problems, where participants cannot hear the speaker or be heard by others.
- Extreme temperatures, either extreme heat or cold.
- Long session time overruns that end up with participants concentrating on the next meal rather than the content currently being presented.
- Content-to-activity ratio is so skewed that participants are actually bored, or feel they are wasting time.

4) Workshops fail when the objectives are confused or when participant expectations and actual implementation of the workshop are radically different. Examples of this kind of failure are relatively common and are generally avoidable through clear pre-workshop communication and participant targeting. If participants are invited to the workshop with the promise or expectation that they will receive practical tools for better analysis or assessment of their programs, but instead are provided with basic presentations about core principles, they will be rightfully unsatisfied, even if the actual information provided is quite good and of use to them. The fact that what is delivered is not what was advertised or expected can lead to rejection of the material or the whole initiative.

**Question**

Why is it important to distinguish the particular reasons why a workshop has failed?

Failure for any of the reasons listed above can lead to a very palpable feeling of dissatisfaction in the training room and poor written evaluations after the fact. This is an important fact to recognize, since we often misinterpret unhappiness and the feeling of failure as proof of wrong workshop content or methods only. Be sure you are specific enough in your evaluations to distinguish why participants are unhappy and whether or not this failure applies to features that can easily be corrected or whether they relate to much deeper underlying content and design flaws.
Do you believe that dissatisfied and unhappy participants at the end of the workshop always mean that the learning objectives have not been met?

Generally, when workshop participants are unhappy, there are problems with the workshop design. Your task is to find out why they are dissatisfied, without becoming defensive about the workshop design or your own training skills. While it is generally true that participants are unhappy when they fail to meet their learning objectives, it is also true that some workshop content and methods that provoke the participants and leave them temporarily unhappy are entirely successful in meeting the learning objectives. This is especially true in the case of workshop content and activities that put people into touch with their own shortcomings or the failures of their organizations, which can leave them feeling hurt and defensive at the time but which may be necessary to cause longer-term reflection and change.

Why some workshops succeed

At the most basic level, workshop success is simply achieving workshop learning objectives. Even so, we are often unsure about why a particular workshop or event feels good and why participants are happy about the event. Is it possible that they just had fun without learning anything?

Workshops feel successful when:

- Participants feel that they receive information, training, skills or new ways of thinking about and approaching problems that are of real value in direct application to their lives (usually but not only restricted to work).
- Participants believe they have accomplished something of value (overcome a difficult challenge, learned important new information or formed new friendships or bonds with colleagues, for example).
- Participants have learned something truly useful.
- Participants can demonstrate the knowledge or skills that they have learned (see the chapter on Skills Training for a discussion of evaluating skills training sessions).

Do you believe that happy and congratulatory participants at the end of the workshop always mean that the learning objectives have been met?
**The happiness factor**

In short, workshops seem like successes when everyone leaves happy, and conversely are considered failures when the participants leave unhappy about their experience. Generally speaking, adults are rational (to some degree) in their evaluation of learning experiences. They have the ability to distinguish between fun but low value, and fun and valuable experiences. Written participant evaluations often surprise trainers when participants leave a fun and interactive discussion session full of energy at the break, but ultimately write in their written evaluations that the session was entertaining, but really not very useful for them.

There are other cases where usefulness and happiness do not necessarily correlate. For example, a high-level manager attending a core management skills training, may be caught off guard by others’ negative evaluation of his or her skills. It is possible that this person, in the evaluation report, will find the workshop event to be “very unprofessional, poorly managed, and obviously not very helpful.” That same person may, however, later behave differently to avoid similar criticism in the future. On the other hand, the manager who was not evaluated by peers, or perhaps who received bland and polite evaluation remarks that overlooked actual faults, may write a glowing evaluation of the training event. The attitudes or behaviors of this person may not change in any way. What was the value of the workshop for this manager?

Workshop content and activities that put people into touch with their own shortcomings or the failures of their organizations often leave them feeling hurt and defensive. It is natural in some instances that people seek to discredit the process that led them to this painful realization. It is often this very unhappiness with a new realization that leads to self- and ultimately system-wide change. Improvement comes through acknowledged dissatisfaction with the previously existing norm.
Plan appropriate timelines for developing, implementing and evaluating workshop events or series. Plan enough time for review and critique before the first pilot event and adequate time to actually incorporate needed changes that may become known in the pilot event.

Design pilot workshop events that give useful feedback for future workshops. Plan extra time for evaluations and discussion of the content and methods and ask questions that will directly support your improvement of the workshop.

Keep stakeholders in the design process informed of evolution of the workshop throughout the life of the workshop cycle.

Use monitoring and evaluation to learn and improve from every workshop.

Design surveys and analyze evaluation results to learn the right lessons from your evaluations. The evaluation must be more specific than simply identifying whether or not the participants were satisfied.
Chapter 9
Self-Assessment Questions

Check T or F to indicate whether a statement is True or False

1. Your organization’s administratively busy times of the year, such as budgeting or review periods, should be considered in designing timelines for training workshops.

2. Designating an initial workshop as a pilot event can subtly change both expectations as well as the training audience for the workshop.

3. Kirkpatrick’s four levels of evaluation relate directly to the four learning styles proposed by Honey & Mumford.

4. The end-of-workshop written evaluation form is the only evaluation mechanism that truly reflects the impact of the training.

5. When workshop participants end a workshop frustrated and unhappy, it is a sure sign that they have not met the learning objectives.

Multiple choice. Mark ALL correct statements—more than one may apply.

6. Which of the following are common reasons why workshops fail?

A. The quality of the training materials or core content is weak, inappropriate or poorly structured.

B. Participants learn too much.

C. Participants are poorly matched to the workshop content.

D. The workshop environment or physical space of the training venue is so limiting or uncomfortable that participants cannot focus properly on the content.

7. Kirkpatrick’s four levels of training evaluation are:

A. (1) participant satisfaction and efficiency (2) changes in learning (3) changes in behavior on the job (4) overall impact on the organization

B. (1) participant satisfaction and efficiency (2) trainer satisfaction and efficiency (3) senior management satisfaction and efficiency (4) organization-wide satisfaction and efficiency

C. (1) changes in knowledge (2) changes in skills (3) changes in attitude (4) changes in performance on the job

D. (1) changes in the participant (2) changes in the office (3) changes in the organization (4) changes in the value of the organization’s work
8. Which of the following are appropriate reasons for conducting a workshop evaluation?

A. To improve the design of subsequent workshops.
B. To make choices among different training options in the workshop.
C. To learn lessons for future training in general.
D. To promote overall accountability in the implementation of the workshop.

9. Which of the following situations might make a pilot event less useful as a testing ground for improving a new workshop design?

A. Pilot workshop participants are selected using the same criteria as the target group for which the workshop was designed.
B. Pilot workshop participants are more expert on the workshop topic area than the target group for which it was designed.
C. The pilot workshop includes many high-level observers.
D. The pilot event provides more time for critical evaluation than is planned for the routine or “normal” workshop design.

10. Which of the following could reasonably be evaluated by the participants at the end of a workshop without the need for follow up, interviews or surveys at a later date?

A. The impact of the workshop on their performance on the job
B. The learning environment
C. The training materials
D. The trainers and facilitators
### Chapter 9 Answer Key

1. T  
2. T  
3. F  
4. F  
5. F  
6. A, C, D  
7. A  
8. A, B, C, D  
9. B, D  
10. B, C, D

### Pretest Answer Key

1. F  
2. F  
3. F  
4. F  
5. T  
6. F  
7. F  
8. F  
9. F  
10. F  
11. F  
12. T  
13. F  
14. F  
15. T  
16. F  
17. T  
18. T  
19. F  
20. T  
21. T  
22. F  
23. F  
24. T  
25. F  
26. T  
27. F  
28. T  
29. F  
30. F
UNHCR eCentre Learning Module Evaluation Form

Designing Participatory Workshops

Date you finished this module ___________________________________________________________

How much time do you estimate that you spent in completing the module (whether or not you did the exercises and answered the included questions)?
___________________________________________________________________________________

Describe your previous experience with workshop design or facilitation.
___________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________

How did you find the content level of this module?
☐ Too simplified ☐ Easy ☐ About right ☐ Complicated ☐ Too difficult

How did you find the language and structure of the module?
☐ Too simplified ☐ Easy ☐ About right ☐ Complicated ☐ Too difficult

How useful were the exercises and self assessment tests in the module?
___________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________

How valuable do feel this module will be for your own personal or professional development?
___________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________

Do you believe that you will use any aspects of this module in your work in the next year?
___________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________

Any additional comments:
___________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________

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Or, if you prefer, email your answers to these questions to: jptocen@ unhcr.org