

Effective Teaching Strategies

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1. Style of Interaction of Activities

a. presenter to whole group: focus for learning is on the presenter or an activity they initiate

- lecturettes
- large group Q&A
- movies
- panels
- demonstrations
- stories/jokes
- overheads
- debates

b. presenter to individual group member: individual participants experience activity in a personal and unique way; presenter-directed

- assessments
- inventories
- individual questions
- fantasies
- gallery viewing
- talking during breaks
- worksheets

c. member to member- participants learn from and with each other

- small groups
- case studies
- fish bowls
- brainstorming
- unstructured large group discussions
- skits
- role plays
- open panels

Trainers need to use techniques from all three categories to provide as much variety as possible throughout the session.

[2. Tips for when to use different teaching techniques](#)

lecturettes: giving new information; need to cover material quickly; difficult material to grasp; need a break from participatory activities; want to make very clear points; keep lectures as short as possible; use effective visual aids to highlight key points

movies / slides / videos: can help participants focus on emotions; makes concepts more real to them; excellent for visual learners; use with the younger "video generation"; helps people to experience things through another's "eyes" / perspective; keep them short; do an energizer before; give participants an "advance organizer" of what to look for / major concepts / overview

debates: excellent tool to show differences in perspective/opinion; an effective challenge to break down absolute right/wrong thinking; helps members analyze / crystalize own values / beliefs; have speakers of equal skills or participants may not be able to fully appreciate all points of view; screen speakers; give them clear guidelines for the debate; have an assertive moderator; consider having participants be the members of the teams; challenge them to take sides that are different from their current perspective

panels: use when you want to display a variety of views / examples; shows breadth and depth of a subject; emphasizes that different is "ok" and normal; provides group members with a variety of role models; give clear guidelines for process; have an assertive moderator; consider having participants be the members of the panel; have an "empty chair" to represent views from people who can't join the panel; allow time for participants to ask questions / dialogue with panel

large group discussions: use when want to discuss / "process" an activity that all members experienced; use to gather new/different ideas; to process feelings; to give members a chance to "shine" and gain respect / recognition from peers; to develop speaking skills and confidence among members; get more participation; foster disagreements; allow members to challenge presenter; develop feelings of a "team"; presenter needs to have good group facilitation skills; set clear guidelines for process and rules for participation; monitor individual's use of air time; use open-ended questions; follow "SAGA" model for processing activities

small groups: way to "warm-up" members for further participation; get more ideas because there is more "air time"; fosters creativity; develops trust/respect among peers; gives a lot of members the chance to "shine"; acknowledges expertise/knowledge of members; solicits more ideas in less time; encourages less assertive members to talk; use for project development, case studies, values discussions; start with smaller numbers in groups and build to 5-8; wander among groups and "check-in"; assign a group leader if needed; if reporting back, have each group a few ideas so that last group has some left to share; encourage several people from each group to report out

individual time: gives members a chance to reflect and organize thoughts before sharing in larger group gives those less likely to compete for air time a chance to prepare; a time for members to be more honest with themselves/to reflect and tune into their feelings/inner thoughts; consider having them keep a journal both in and outside of the seminar; gives presenter time to regroup and prepare for next activity; give a clear time limit; allow them to move about the area; wander among participants in case they have individual questions/comments

demonstrations: teach new skills; lower anxiety of members; role modeling; have members experience something so that they can then tune into their feelings / thoughts for discussion; establishes a criteria for success; helps members see more clearly what you expect of them: use a step-by-step method; move slowly; break down into smaller parts; allow time for processing and questions; use visual aids to complement demonstration; have a step-by-step procedure for them to follow along

inventories / assessments: increases self-awareness; excellent "motivation grabber"; personalizes concepts/information; gives members specific examples to discuss / refer to; helps members tune into their feelings/thoughts; gives participants a common language; allow members to NOT disclose information if they choose; do assessment right before a break to allow extra time for those who read/write more slowly; be wary of bias and implicit assumptions in packaged assessments

skits / role plays: motivation grabber; excellent tool to promote active / participatory learning if members are involved; good for visual learners; helps people see things "through the eyes of others"; loosens people up; fun activity; actors experience feelings of characters; excellent way to teach reverse roles;

presenter needs good processing skills; use "SAGA" model to process; give clear instructions; encourage group to avoid oppressive comments/behaviors

fish bowl: have one group in the center of a circle of observers; the inner group can discuss a topic / do a demonstration / role play; give observers clues for what to look for; allows some members to personally experience an activity while others can closely observe; excellent tool to point out issues / problems for processing; simulates a "real" situation; use "SAGA" model to process

fantasy: members close eyes and get into a relaxing position as facilitator has them go through some relaxation exercises and then reads descriptions that participants try to visualize; encourage them to "focus on their feelings"; gives participants chance to personalize information/issues; slows down pace; stimulates feelings and different points of view; simulates a "real life" situation; take care not to put people to sleep; avoid using this activity after a meal or in late afternoon; keep it short; know that some people have trouble relaxing and visualizing

brainstorming: energizing; fun; solicits many different ideas very quickly; sets tone for participation; increases creativity of responses; do not allow critiquing of ideas until all thoughts are expressed; be a "gate keeper" and encourage all participants to offer ideas

case studies: excellent activity to help participants to apply new knowledge / skills; give each small group the same or different "real life" scenario / situation to solve / work through; have groups report back to large group

analogies: use to emphasize a point / concept; gives visual learners a mental image; use in conjunction with visual aids; use same theme for a gimmick at end: quote, certificate, gift, etc; use theme in title of seminar

jokes: be careful when choosing your material; always have joke related to content of seminar; screen material for language, concepts and inferences which might be offensive

simulations: small group activity that simulates "real life"; helps participants practice new skills, knowledge and concepts; can be used as motivation grabber or to assess current performance level

overheads: best for graphics, cartoons, short quotes, directions, and key phrases; keep legible, use large letters / graphics; use colored markers; number transparencies to keep them in order

psycho-social dramas: similar to a role play or skit, but facilitator stops action at a climax and processes intense feelings of participants; have participants develop possible solutions to the skit in small groups

interviews: interview "real" people or participants in role plays

soliloquy: one-person role play / skit that reveals his / her innermost thoughts to the audience; can be done during a skit if other actors "freeze"

worksheets: give participants "fill-in-the-blank" worksheets / outlines to take notes on during lecturette / group discussion; can be structured with a specific amount of blanks, or open-ended for personal note-taking

triads: groups of three participants for discussions and skill practicing; one is observer as other two practice new skill; after feedback session, participants switch roles

games: use as review or pre/post test; Family Feud; Jeopardy; What's, My Line; Trivial Pursuit; Password; Hollywood Squares; Wheel of Fortune; \$10,000 Pyramid; Beat the Clock; bingo; Quizzard; etc.

body sculpture: participants use nonverbal/pantomime behavior to express feelings / reactions to a stimulus from facilitator; have them add to the "sculpture" one at a time and explain the meaning behind their actions

collages: participants make a collage out of magazine pictures / words that have some related theme; have them explain collages to group

dramatic reading: participants and/or facilitator reads powerful short passage, statistics, quotes, etc., as participants read along silently

individual quiet reading: participants have alone time to read / reflect on powerful passage, quotes, statistics, etc; process reactions in large group

open panel: have open seating on a panel and allow participants to join the panel and present their views, challenge other panelists, etc.

costumes: will add excitement to role plays / skits; very effective if facilitator makes a surprise appearance after a break in character

paper bag skits: participants develop role plays / skits along a specific topic and are given a bag of props to use

group questions: small groups develop questions for facilitator / panel members; takes pressure off of individuals to come up with creative and thought-provoking questions

mystery activities: give participants a task to accomplish without giving them the purpose or any clues to the expected outcome

reaction panel: get volunteers to be panel members who give personal reactions to audience after a group activity, such as: lecture; debate; movie; etc.

individual coaching: facilitator wanders among participants who are engaged in individual or group work; offers personal comments and coaching as needed

discovery learning: facilitator develops a task / discussion for participants where they develop and discover knowledge / skills / attitudes "on their own" without direct intervention from facilitator

newsprint: use large and legible lettering; vary colors; avoid long passages / details; only highlight key words / concepts; number each item; when using a newsprint pad write on every other page to avoid any "bleeding through" of images from other pages; have same information in handouts; use a tab of masking tape to identify prepared pages in the pad for quick access; if posting pages, turn up the bottoms and tape to wall until ready to use; be very careful to use correct spelling, avoid jargon and abbreviations, etc.

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