

Training the Trainer

Adult Education Methods

Training methods for Vision Zero workshops – a tool for trainers



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Training methods for Vision Zero workshops – a tool for trainers

1. How do adults learn on training courses and in workshops?

Adult education methods are there to initiate and shape learning processes. Methods are not an end unto themselves. They fulfil a function within a didactic framework of aims, content, media, materials and organizational conditions. The trainer's task in this complex context is to shape learning and workshop situations methodically. This collection of methods is meant to offer practical help.

Involving participants' questions and experience

One empirical fact is sure, adults learn no worse than children and adolescents. Adults' willingness and ability to learn depend on factors such as the length and quality of the education and training that has gone before. An individual's positive personal learning history reinforces willingness and ability to learn. More than children, adults learn voluntarily. This means they have the possibility to reject what is offered to be learned. Adults are not prepared to learn in preparation for a far-off future. They want and need to recognize a direct link between the subject matter and their occupational situation and accept that link as important. Put another way: the structures of what is offered to be learned must match the relevant structures of the participants. This must be borne in mind when selecting subjects, designing training courses and seminars, and selecting methods. Adults with occupational experience accept learning processes if they can actively participate in shaping them and include not only their personal questions and problems but also their knowledge and experience. Selecting methods for training courses and workshops should not just allow this, it should be encouraged.

Learning prerequisites in adult education are only then favourable when the content of a training course or a workshop relates to participants' problems and questions, has a high level of practical relevance and opens up new possibilities for action during the training course.

Dealing with heterogeneity

Groups of adults are generally more heterogeneous than, for example, groups of students. The age distribution is greater. There are more differences in terms of what is relevant for each individual participant and her or his occupational area. Furthermore, adults have absorbed certain personal learning styles. It is therefore important to address these different learning styles through the use of different methods, actions and social forms of interaction.

Participant orientation

A workshop trainer should get information about the workshop group as early as possible. Who is coming? What are the participants' expectations? Can I send off an e-mail with a few questions about the content of the seminar and have them answered (pre-processing)? What previous experience do the participants have? The more you know about your workshop group and the participants the better you will be able to plan your course and connect with the workshop content. A good approach is always to work on a concrete project, a statement of purpose or specific questions raised by participants – this is how you get practical relevance in your workshop.



2. Preparing workshops and sessions well

Ask yourself...

- What content is to be transferred?
- Which learning outcomes are important?
- Who is my target group?
- How is the event to be designed and planned?
- How do lecturers/trainers select the proper methods?
- How will the event be concluded?
- What should I do after the event? (certificates, minutes, etc.)

Teaching and learning methods support the learning process when they ...

- increase interest in material and content.
- make information more easily available and accessible.
- encourage the development of ideas and spontaneous thinking.
- lead to more intensive communication between participants.
- stimulate reflection and critical observation.
- stimulate and intensify shared activities.

Preparing workshops and events

Trainers and lecturers in adult education have a variety of didactic methods and models available that provide basic patterns for the teaching modules to be designed. Different flow schemes serve as the basis for the planning, design and execution of events, allowing trainers to work in a structured manner. In addition to such schemes, the following section will present a small selection of proven tools and methods that trainers and lecturers can quickly use.

Supporting teaching and learning processes

Special use of teaching methods in workshops depends on the relationship between the trainer, the participants and the event aims. Trainers should apply specific teaching and learning methods at the very beginning of planning for a workshop. During the learning process, trainers should be careful not to simply present one method after another. Trainers should think carefully which methods support the learning process in a meaningful way and which do not.

Other considerations on the choice of method

Other considerations must be taken when choosing teaching and learning methods. The group, group performance, conditions external to the situation but also the aims of the workshop all play a great role:

Participants: Many workshop participants are accustomed to being taught in a classroom situation. In order to make behavioural and experiential learning possible, this embedded and accustomed behaviour has to be broken down and gradually changed.

Trainers: A trainer should be comfortable with the method selected. However, trainers should also be prompted and encouraged to use new methods and try out new techniques. Initially, new methods should be tested in common or tried out in a preparatory workshop.

Situational conditions/institutions: The institution that the trainer works for should have experiential

and activity-oriented teaching and learning as a central tenet. Thus experiential and activity-oriented teaching and learning methods are not merely allowed but required. Furthermore, favourable physical conditions such as room layout for group work, media equipment, etc. for pedagogical activities are necessary.

Aims and content: Acquiring behavioural competencies, not the accumulation of knowledge, must be the central focus of a workshop or session. These competencies have to be described and outlined more clearly in the seminar planning and design stage. Methods should make it possible for participants to access new content more easily. Suitable methods serve to connect content with participants' experience.

Questions on the choice of method

The next time you are selecting special methods for workshops and events you should bear in mind the seven Ws:

W - What teaching?

For whom are we preparing the session?
How can the target group be described?

W - Why?

Why are we holding this event? What is the overall objective? Are there any matters still to be cleared up? If so, which ones?

W - Who?

Who is doing the planning? Who is preparing the event? What role are we playing in the whole planning process? Are we more involved or at a distance? Are we actively involved in the thematic framework or not?

W - What for?

Who are we planning and working for and

why? The persons at the centre should also benefit from the session.

W - What is the objective?

Which is the most important objective that we must take into account in preparing and carrying out (the event)?

W - Would the participants plan this seminar differently?

Assume the participants who are going to attend the event could plan this seminar. Where would they put the emphasis? What would be important to them? This change in perspective helps you to concentrate on points that are important for the participants.

W - Which instruments?

Which instruments or aides can we use to support the method? What influence do real external or institutional conditions have?



Formulating learning outcomes as necessary pre-requisite for monitoring success

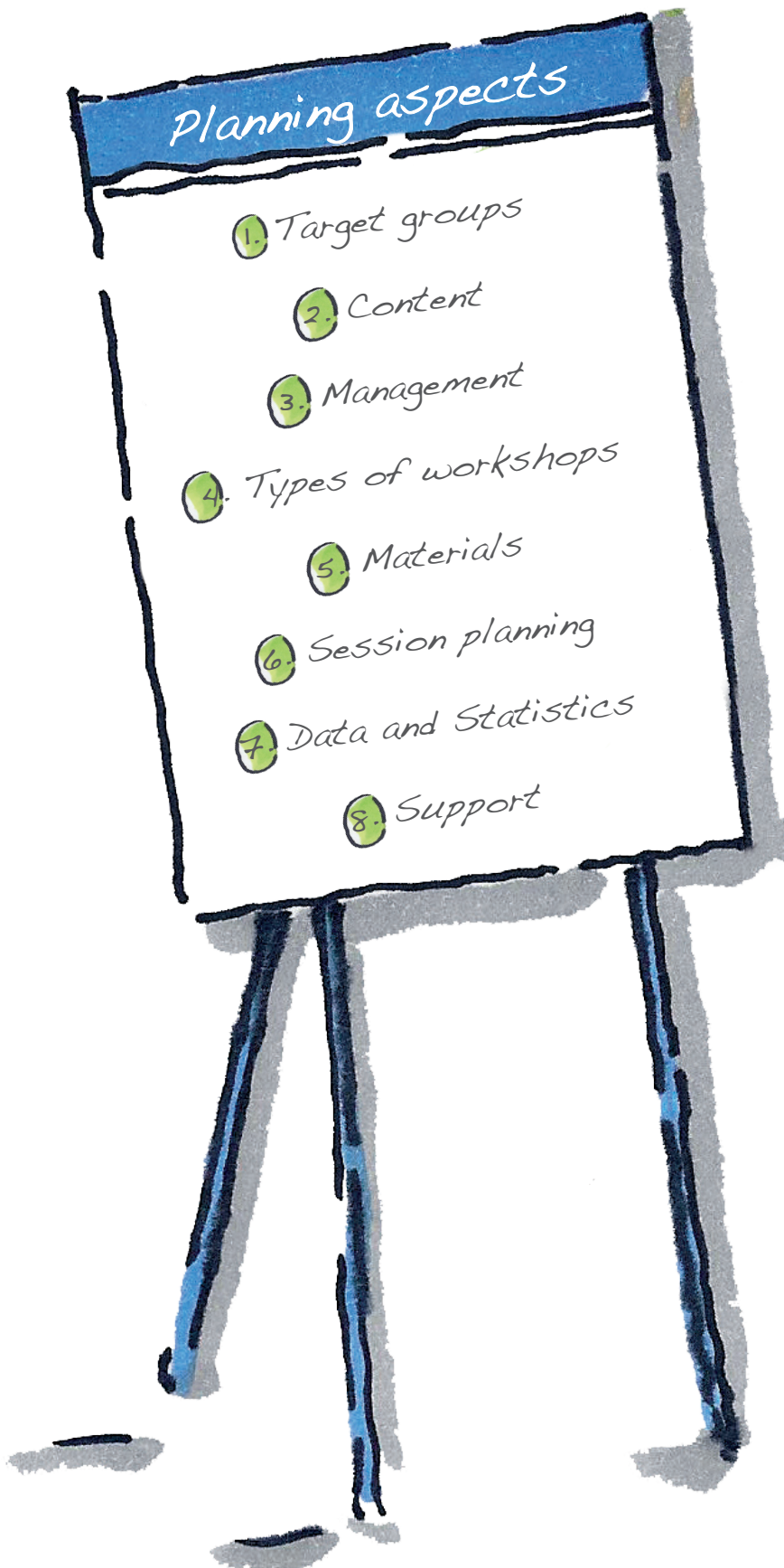
A trainer should consider the following aspects at the start of each workshop: at the end of the workshop what should have changed in participants' occupational practice? How should they leave the seminar? What should they do differently in their

occupational practice? Which processes should they encourage? Any decision about the success of a workshop is only then possible if these reflections are carried out prior to the start. The central question can be broken down into two further questions:

Which learning outcomes should participants put into practice in their occupational areas after the workshop?

What new behaviours should participants have learned after the workshop?

Drafts: flow plans for the planning process



Questions

1. Which main characteristics identify the target group?
2. Has the workshop content been prepared adequately?
3. Are all the necessary information about the participants available?
4. Is the selected workshop type suitable for the target group and the participants experience?
5. Are all the necessary materials available?
6. Are the workshop plan and the timetable complete?
7. What other announcements, data or statistics about the workshop should be provided?
8. Has sufficient support for special cases been organised for, during and after the workshop?

Detailed planning

The production of a detailed plan is “essential for survival” as part of the planning for events/workshops. This will bring together the programme and the individual work steps into one overall plan. Experienced trainers and lecturers normally have a detailed plan available. What follows is an example.

Produce a table like this to give the flow plan as detailed as possible for each day of the workshop. Build in buffer time and space for spontaneous changes. Start from the end and work your way backward to plan the time for your workshop. This will let you keep track of things.

Title of the event/workshop: Intercultural competencies

Time	Content	Expected outcome (used to be learning objective)	Method	Media	Person(s) responsible
13:00 – 13:15	Reception	Participants get to know each other.		Pin board, flip chart	Tom
13:15 – 13:45	Getting to know each other	Participants get to know each other	Partner interview and presentation in plenary	Copies of profiles; beamer, pin board ...	Tom, Mary
13:45 – 14:15	Exchange of experience, exciting and difficult situations in intercultural settings What have you experienced?	Raising awareness for the subject Linking to one's own experiences with the seminar topic	Teaching conversation Prompt cards		Mary





Method

What's this?

3. Methods for workshops and seminars

3.1. Warm-up/getting acquainted methods

PARTNER INTERVIEW

The workshop participants use the partner interview technique to get to know each other. Participants are paired off on a random basis, they interview each other and then introduce each other in plenary. The task instructions might look like this:

“Introduce yourself to your interview partner. What would you like to tell the group about yourself? Share with each other why you are taking part in the workshop and what sort of experience you can already bring to the subject. Then introduce your partner to the group.” Participants should receive a slip of paper with guide questions such as:

- Who am I?
- What is special about me?
- Why does this subject interest me?
- If somebody gave me EURO 100,000 I would...

These and similar questions about the workshop can be given to the participants. There should not be more than eight groups for this. The partner interview lasts between 10 to 15 minutes. Allow for between 20 to 30 minutes for presenting profiles in the plenary.

3.2 Methods for participants to share information among themselves



THINK-PAIR-SHARE

Think-Pair-Share (TPS) conversations are a good way to encourage intensive conversations among participants. The main aim is to set up personal contacts between participants. After a presentation two participants speak to each other. They place their chairs together and discuss the presentation. Each group can be expanded to three or four persons.

... pausing your talk at a suitable point. Ask your participants, for example, to exchange views with a neighbor about what they have just heard. Which questions remain open? Ask for comments after about 10 minutes. Then continue your talk. Afterwards you can start off the discussion in a second TPS round.

Method

What's this?

Just try ...

OPENING EVENT

New information is passed on in very unusual ways in this exercise. Participants are asked to put up signs and markings on worksheets that have been attached to pin walls in the workshop room. See below for examples of signs and their meanings:

? = There are still open questions

♥ = This is very important

✗ = A particular content has been rejected

💬 = Reason for rejection

Other notes can be written on the pin boards and work sheets. After remarks on the work sheets have been noted down, they must be worked through one by one. Further information should be provided in questionnaires. Using hearts as highlights make comments really stand out. Rejections are indicated by speech bubbles. No other interpretations or evaluations are allowed.

... using these methods, for example, in the warm-up for the second day of a seminar. Give participants 10–15 minutes time to work with the work sheets and pin boards. They can also form small groups for this (no more than three persons). Discuss the signs that have been put up in the plenary.

Method

What's this?

Just try ...

Method

What's this?

LEARNING STROLL

Learning strolls are discussions between people while they walk. Groups of two to four persons walk around a suitable area and discuss prepared questions. During the learning stroll a few key terms are recorded on cards. After approximately 10–15 minutes all participants return to the trainer and receive either additional questions or questions that take them further. After an additional 10 minutes all participants return and stick their cards on the pin board in the workshop room. Each group comments on their answers and results.

Participants should receive a slip of paper with guide questions such as:

- Who am I?
- What is special about me?
- Why does this subject interest me?
- If somebody gave me EUR 100,000 I would...

These and similar questions about the workshop can be given to the participants. There should not be more than eight groups for this. The partner interview lasts between 10 to 15 minutes. Allow for between 20 to 30 minutes for presenting profiles in the plenary.

Just try ...

... preparing several questions for a theme. Put each question in an envelope. Prepare no more than three envelopes per group. Use the learning stroll after the lunch break. This gets your participants moving and helps them to get over the “carb coma” better.

3.3 Methods to activate participants



After the lunch break, activators help you “activate” again the participants for the workshop. Movement makes the brain ready once more for new activities. Activators are also fun to do!

ZIP ZAP BOING

This exercise brings a lot of life back into a group quickly. Participants become wide awake. All participants form a circle. Each person say “ZIP” to the person on the left, one after the other. After a few minutes all participants have to say “ZAP” to the person on the right, again, one after the other. Then a participant can get the instruction to say either “ZIP”, “ZAP” or “BOING” to any other of the participants in the circle. The participant to whom “BOING” is said must either symbolically refuse the “BOING” with his hands or reply with a “BOING”.

This exercise is fun and makes all participants wide awake very quickly.

Method

What’s this?

CHAIR TIPPING

As many chairs as there are participants are put in a circle. Behind each of the chairs stands a participant. Each participant rocks her or his chair so that the chair is only standing on its two front legs. The chair back is held in the right hand and each participant watches the back of the next person in the circle. Then the chairs are released and each person has to reach for the nearest chair. No chair may touch the ground with its back legs. In this exercise it quickly becomes clear that someone in the circle has to give directions. It is left up to the participants to find out who should take over this role. The movement has to be co-ordinated. This is very good as a warm-up exercise.

Method

What’s this?

Method

What's this?

VARIATIONS IN GROUP FORMATION

In the course of a workshop, it often happens that participants have to be put into two or more groups. Assigning participants to groups can be done in a wide variety of ways.

- Participants can be offered cards showing different colours, numbers or patterns to draw. Participants with the same element on their card (number, colour or pattern) form a group.
- Participants are asked to write the day and month they were born on a small slip of paper. They find someone for the second group by standing up, going around and comparing dates of birth. Their partner is the one with the closest date of birth.
- At the entrance there are flowers (or sweets, leaves, chocolate or coloured dots) on offer. There are two sorts from which participants choose and form groups accordingly.

3.4. Methods of monitoring learning success and ensuring transfer



LEARNING CARDS

This exercise is a playful way of monitoring a workshop's learning success. Two groups are formed. The trainer prepares six to eight questions per group on each subject that has already been discussed in the workshop. The groups play against each other. They throw a die to decide who begins. The group with the highest score answers the first question. The group members have to discuss the question. Then the members of the other group have to decide whether the question has been answered correctly. If so, the group that answers gets the number of points on the die recorded as their score. Then the second group has to answer a question, and so on. If the groups receive the same number of points, then the group that got the number of points first loses two points.

The “learning cards” exercise can also be varied somewhat. In one variation the groups formulate the questions themselves. This exercise is particularly useful at the start of the second day of the workshop.

...spreading out several round Metaplan cards on the floor just like in a game of Ludo. Do not use more than 15 Metaplan cards. Give each group an object through which they advance the number of points on the cards.

MINI COACH

Feedback techniques give a learning-oriented style to the feedback method that allows the analyses of the experience of those affected or of outside third persons as efficiently as possible.

- The purpose of this exercise is for participants to give each other mutual support to reach set objectives. This exercise can also be used to provide valuable training in coaching. At the end of a workshop all participants are divided into groups of two. The first person in each group must first describe exactly which objectives she or he wishes to reach. Then the other person sets out her or his important objectives. Following on from the workshop, each should telephone the other on a weekly basis for information on how far the objectives are being reached. Later they can also talk about other subordinate objectives. This follow-up exercise after a workshop can also be done in written form.

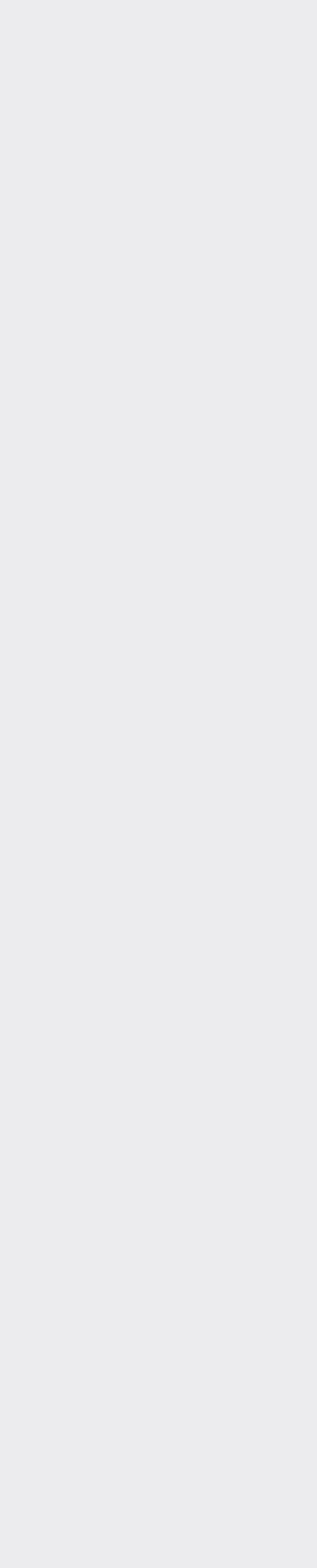
Method

What's this?

Just try ...

Method

What's this?

- 
- Pairs can be formed using, for example, animal cards. Have participants write down their favourite animals on cards. Those with the same animals form pairs, cats with cats, dogs with dogs, etc. These persons then promise to continue to work together as described above. This is one way of maintaining contacts and connections long after the workshop is finished.

3.5 Methods for engaging with content



LECTURES · TALKS

Lectures and talks are thoroughly suitable for the quick and clear transfer of information. There is normally one lecturer while the rest of the participants are the audience. The quality of such a lecture/talk is largely dependent on the rhetorical skills of the lecturer/trainer. Lectures and talks are supported with media such as overhead projectors, beamers and boards. Warning! Lectures and talks forming part of a training course or a seminar should never exceed 20 minutes in length.

Method

What's this?

TEACHING DISCUSSION

A teaching discussion is a presentation and a dialogue developed with the participants at the same time. It is suitable for introducing and developing a subject. A conversation between lecturer and participants is gradually woven out of short inputs and questions and answers. Questions and the search for answers activate and encourage participants to engage with a subject intensively. The lecturer can either guide a learning discussion along planned lines or encourage peer discussion. No more than 30 persons can participate in a teaching discussion. The length should be no longer than an hour.

... to find a few questions suitable for your event and flesh these out. Give your participants a few minutes time to think about the questions. Then ask for short and precise answers and involve as many participants as possible in the discussion.

Method

What's this?

Just try ...

INDIVIDUAL WORK

We use the term “individual work” to describe a person thinking systematically about a subject on her or his own. To achieve this, clear instructions and essential questions about the subject are given to the participants. They have some time to reflect on the subject. Learning programmes are also referred to as individual work since the participants work on their own. The advantage of individual work is that, in addition to concentrated work, participants can also appreciate their

Method

What's this?

Just try ...

own ideas, find their own connection to a subject and discover knowledge that is already available. Time allowed for individual work will vary with the extent and depth of exercises. It can also be very short, e.g. only three minutes. In any case the exercises should be on paper and distributed to the participants.

... giving clear instructions on how to reflect on specific questions relevant to the subject of your event. Look for central questions that you can put to the participants of your workshop. Then give the participants sufficient time to think about the subject systematically.

Method

What's this?

Just try ...

WORKING WITH A PARTNER

Just like in individual work the lecturer/trainer gives instructions and questions to work with on a given subject, the only difference being that participants are asked to work in pairs. This way participants get to know each other better, interact socially and discuss a subject through exchanging their opinions and interests. Results are subsequently presented in the plenary. Partner discussions should last no longer than 10 to 15 minutes. The plenary part should last 20 to 30 minutes depending on the number of participants. The task structure should be given out in written form or you can display all the important basic information on a pin board or flip chart.

... using working with a partner to enable participants who do not know each other to get to know each other in a group. For example, ask the participants in a group to produce a profile of each other. Then a participant is introduced to the larger group by their partner.

Method

What's this?

GROUP WORK

In group work several individual steps in a learning task are carried out by several participants together. Groups of three to six participants discuss pre-prepared questions about a subject and consider answers to specific problems. Following group reflection and discussion, the results are presented and collected in the plenary. Accordingly group work falls into three phases:

1 Plenary phase

The lecturer/trainer explains the task. The lecturer/trainer stipulates how the groups are to be formed and sets the time and room.

2 Working in small groups

The group obtains information, evaluates and works on the task. Then it prepares a presentation.

3 Plenary work

Small groups present their solution proposals. Comparisons and evaluations take place in the plenary. Finally the group work results are summarised.

Prepare the learning task questions well and plan for between 10 to 45 minutes for group work according to the extent of the task. Each group should have at least five minutes to present results in the plenary. If a discussion is anticipated take account of this accordingly in your scheduling.

... putting several participants of the workshop together in groups either on a random basis or by special selection.

Just try ...

CASE WORK

This didactic method presents practical cases for the participants to search for, discuss and select possible solutions. The situation that is presented is normally taken from a real work or occupational context, is complex and comes with problems to challenge the participants in their search for solutions. You can carry out case work either as a teaching discussion or in the form of group work with the participants. You should allow for 30 minutes just for familiarisation with and analysis of the case. You should plan for 45 minutes for subsequent discussion in plenary. Prepare the case description on paper to distribute to the participants.

... to find a problem that is frequently encountered and which fits in with your workshop subject. Confront your participants with the case. Have your participants generate solutions working in small groups. Alternatively you can use questions to start a teaching discussion or encourage a discussion in plenary that searches for, discusses and selects solutions. If a real solution exists for your practical case, obviously this should be presented at the end.

Method

What's this?

Just try ...

Method

What's this?

Just try ...

PROJECT WORK

Project work deals with complex tasks taken from real life or the world of work for participants to work on independently. The project subject can either be set by the lecturer/trainer or selected by the participants themselves. The objective, planning, execution and evaluation of the project will be guided by the participants' interests and experience and carried out independently. The lecturer/trainer does not interfere in the execution of the project and only becomes involved if participants have queries. Project work is normally done as group work. It normally stretches over a long period of time.

... setting your workshop subject as a project for your participants. Form groups and ask your participants to present results at the end in the plenary. Do not stipulate how results are to be presented. Make sure your participants have a variety of media and materials to present their results. Ensure that sources of information and project materials are freely available.

3.6 Methods for closing a seminar or workshop



CLOSING EVENTS

At the end of workshops there are a variety of methods to enhance the value of what participants have experienced and will take with them. Build on these experiences by enhancing how participants will remember what happened in the seminar.

A piece of cord

- Prepare a piece of cord and have a pair of scissors ready. Each participant can cut off a piece of cord and then make a knot in the cut-off piece. These knots represent thoughts about further wishes for the workshop. The cord and the knots will serve to always remind the participants of the workshop.

My stone

- Collect stones before the seminar. At the end of the seminar each participant takes one of the stones and paints a symbol on it. The candidates then take home their stone with them as a memento. Many participants reported that their stones lay on their desks for a long time and often reminded them of the content of the workshop. Remember to have suitable felt pens that can be used to decorate stones.

Sparklers

- At the end every participant gets a sparkler. Each candidate is asked in turn to formulate their feedback on the seminar for as long as their sparkler is burning. At the start of each person's feedback the sparkler is lit and the person can speak for as long as the sparkler burns.

Ball of wool

- This exercise is used at the end of a workshop to consolidate contacts. One person starts holding one end of the wool thread in one hand and hands the ball of wool on to a person of her or his choice. As she or he does this, wishes or remarks to the person opposite her or him.

Method

What's this?

Method

What's this?

Just try ...

The exercise is also an opportunity to exchange business cards as a way of saying goodbye. The ball of wool can also come back to the same person more than once. More and more threads are spun between participants and contacts become denser and more intertwined.

FURTHER METHODS

This list of methods is by no means complete! There are many more methods for workshops, seminars and events. Try to expand and extend your knowledge by studying further themes.

... learning more about methods and techniques on your own and systematically working your way up to the next professional level.

4. Creating places for energy, passion and inspiration!

Select, plan and organise your events based on your participants' needs. Think about which needs you want to stimulate with a learning event. Stimulation factors correspond to needs that you can weigh in relation to your workshop.

Need for social integration

e.g. network your participants, encourage exchanges among participants, force networking by inter-mixing groups, ...

Need to experience competence

e.g. have your participants produce something on their own, have a group competition, ...

Need for autonomy

e.g. offer your participants options or parallel subjects, offer them design possibilities, allow them to influence the programme design (when to take breaks, for example), ...

Need for good content

e.g. offer your participants something new, interesting and unusual about the subject, structure content and make it understandable, ...

Need for good packaging and presentation

e.g. surprise your participants with unusual methods (theatre methods, for example), unusual workshop and event types, hand over parts of the moderating to participants, build in experiential elements, ...

Need for "take-away"

e.g. by your participants taking away with them knowledge, ideas, suggestions and solutions, products that they have produced themselves or small souvenirs as mementos, ...

Seminar participants will be active in seminars and workshops if ...

... it is possible to take discussions further between themselves and about the group subject.

... networks can come alive in the group and participants can begin to support each other. Networking must be encouraged.

... every one of the participants feels responsible for the workshop's results.

... there is enough time for discussion and communication. This creates a good atmosphere.

... it is abundantly clear that change is not a linear process but a circular one.

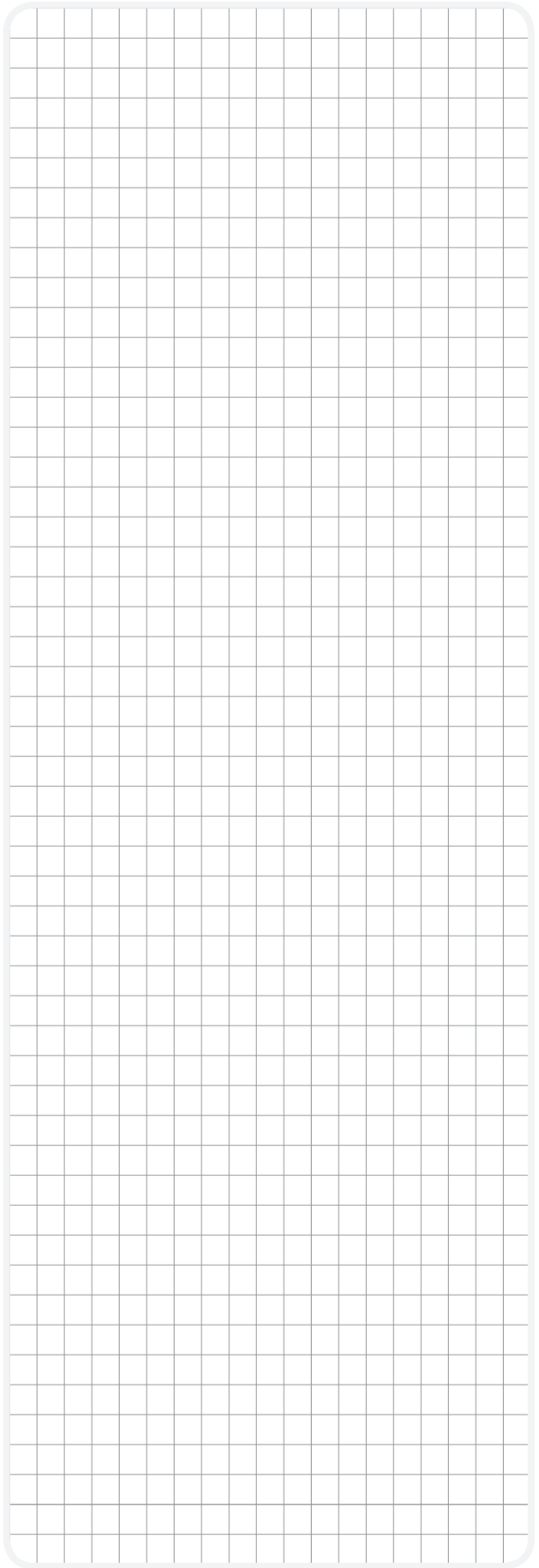
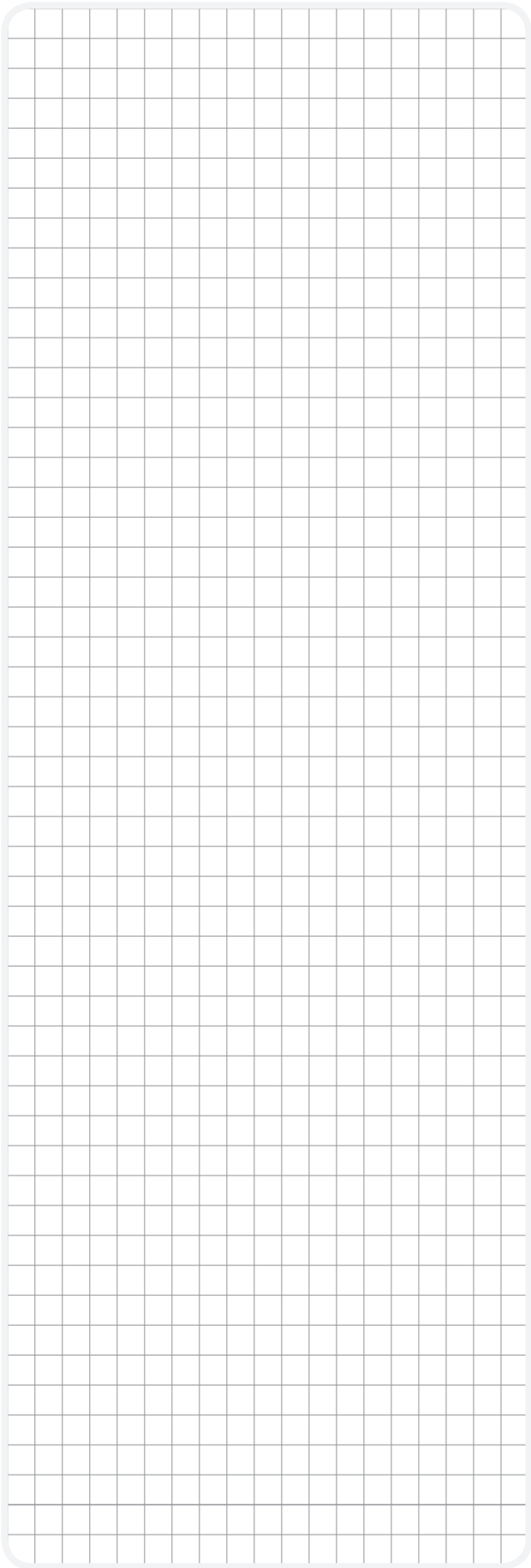
... larger groups are broken down into smaller groups that can work with each other in separate rooms.

... insecurities can also be talked about during the workshop. Learning and change can also be strenuous and uncomfortable.

... it is accepted that some questions will remain unanswered. Not every question can be answered. We have to learn with each other how to deal with insecurities.

For your notes:

This image shows a full page of blank graph paper. The grid consists of small, uniform squares formed by thin gray lines. The paper has rounded corners at the top and bottom edges. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the page.



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