Basic methods used in the training

2014-1-FR01-KA200-002362

Disclaimer:
This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication [communication] reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union

Brainstorming

A brainstorming session is a tool for generating as many ideas or solutions as possible to a problem or issue. It is not a tool for determining the best solution to a problem or issue. Effective brainstorming can be accomplished by following simple brainstorming do's and don'ts with the group.

Before beginning any effective brainstorming session, some basic rules must be set. Once the basic rules list is generated, be sure to gain consensus that the session will be conducted according to them, and post them in a highly visible location in the room. The group can create their own rules if the method is used extensively, but there are four key rules that are useful whenever you are conducting a brainstorming session:

1. **There are no dumb ideas**. Period. It is a brainstorming session, not a serious matter that requires only serious solutions. Remember, this is one of the more fun tools of quality, so keep the entire team involved!
2. **Don't criticize other people's ideas**. This is not a debate, discussion or forum for one person to display superiority over another.
3. **Build on other people's ideas**. Often an idea suggested by one person can trigger a bigger and/or better idea by another person. Or a variation of an idea on the board could be the next "velcro" idea. It is this building of ideas that leads to out of the box thinking and fantastic ideas.
4. **Reverse the thought of "quality over quantity."** Here we want quantity; the more creative ideas the better. As a facilitator, you can even make it a challenge to come up with as many ideas as possible and compare this team's performance to the last brainstorming session you conducted.

Other brainstorming preparation questions:

- Who will lead or facilitate the brainstorming session?
- Who will participate in the brainstorming session?
- Who can write very quickly to record the brainstormed ideas without slowing down the group?
- Where will the brainstorming session be held?
- What materials are needed for brainstorming (easel, paper, white board, pens, etc.)?
- What is my brainstorming session desired outcome?

5 Whys

Motto: “If you don’t ask the right questions, you don’t get the right answers. A question asked in the right way often points to its own answer. Asking questions is the ABC of diagnosis. Only the inquiring mind solves problems.” – Edward Hodnett

5 Whys is a technique used for analysing a situation and finding the root cause of a challenge. By repeatedly asking the question “Why” (five is a good rule of thumb), you can peel away the layers of symptoms which can lead to the root cause of a problem. Although this technique is called “5 Whys,” you may find that you will need to ask the question fewer or more times than five before you find the issue related to a problem.

Benefits of the 5 Whys

- Help identify the root cause of a problem.
- Determine the relationship between different root causes of a problem.
- One of the simplest tools; easy to complete without statistical analysis.

When Is 5 Whys Most Useful?

- When problems involve human factors or interactions.
- In day-to-day life and institution; can be combined with other methods to find solutions.

How to Complete the 5 Whys

1. Write down the specific problem. Writing the issue helps you formalise the problem and describe it completely. It also helps a team focus on the same problem.
2. Ask Why the problem happens and write the answer down below the problem.
3. If the answer you just provided doesn’t identify the root cause of the problem that you wrote down in Step 1, ask Why again and write that answer down.
4. Loop back to step 3 until the team is in agreement that the problem’s root cause is identified. Again, this may take fewer or more times than five Whys.

Simple example of 5 Whys

Problem Statement: You are on your way home from work and your car stops in the middle of the road.

1. Why did your car stop?
– Because it ran out of gas.

2. Why did it run out of gas?
– Because I didn’t buy any gas on my way to work.

3. Why didn’t you buy any gas this morning?
– Because I didn’t have any money.

4. Why didn’t you have any money?
– Because I didn’t have my purse on me.

5. Why did you not have your purse on you?
– Because got up too late and left home too hastily.

Role play

Role-play training is an important part of our training program. Some people find it difficult to take these exercises seriously. That is a real shame, because if done right, role-play simulation can be one of the best learning techniques, participants of a well thought-out role-play simulation can learn and experience things no book or computer program could ever teach them. Although you, as a trainer, can't force people to "love role-playing", you can adopt a structured process that encourage participants to engage and learn from the exercise.

Start with these simple steps:

Step 1. Know your course participants

Before creating your role-play exercise, you need to know whom you will be training, and therefore whom you will be asking to participate in your role-play simulation. Knowing the power balance and hierarchy within a group is crucial if one is to conduct a successful exercise.

Step 2. Keep it familiar

Nobody likes generic simulations! When writing your case and roles (i.e. briefing material), you have to make sure that the subject and context of the simulation is familiar to the participants of the role-play. There are two good ways of doing that:

A) Base your custom role-play on an actual case that happened locally, but not actual anymore. Just make sure that you pick a case that is at least 5 years old and that you change the names and numbers involved. That way none of the participants will (most likely) remember the actual case.

B) Take a generic role-play simulation and "tweak" it. Find a relevant case that fits your general needs and simply edit it, until it fits your exact needs. There are many examples available in books or on the internet

Step 3. Organize

Lay out a plan for the entire role-play facilitation process. If you don't provide structure to the exercise no one will and the whole thing will go south really fast.

You need to think about how much time you need to go through each step of the role-play process. How should the participants be matched? How long should participants be allowed to study their briefing material? How much time should there be for actual role-playing? Are you going to have one long role-play session or several shorter simulations with breaks in between? How much time should you set aside for the debrief? A well-structured process will not only help you as a trainer but also show participants that you know what you are doing.

Step 4. Brief participants

Before the actual role-playing begins participants should have time to study their briefing material and fully understand any rules and caveats you as a trainer might impose on the exercise.

Nothing turns off (already reluctant) participants like having to stop the role-play half way through because someone misunderstood the rules! All participants need to me 100% clear about the rules from the get go! You should set off extra time for this, because there is always someone who "doesn't get it."

Step 5. Observe and take notes

Some trainers like to get involved in the actual role-play, but it is better to be an observer only. As a trainer you should sit back, observe and take notes – do not interfere.

Let people interact. Your most important job as a trainer during this period is to take notes. How are the individual participants handling the simulation? Are they moving towards the desired outcome?

Step 6. Debrief

Once the role-play is over it is crucial to conduct a well-planned debriefing. The debriefing of participants is where 50% of the learning actually happens. This is where participants get to reflect and learn from what transpired during the role-play.

You need to think carefully about what questions you ask and how much time you dedicate to each issue – and whatever you do, take notes! Sometimes it might be a good idea to focus on what participants did wrong – sometimes that approach would be downright counteractive. Forgetting about a serious issue and then scrambling to include it before your session is over is also something that will leave participants annoyed and not looking forward to your next exercise.

Step 7. Write a brief or lessons-learned report

As the participants leave the room, you are (hopefully) left with a bunch of detailed notes. Notes that tell you all you need to know about where participants were, where they are now and how they got there.

These lessons-learned should be gathered into a brief or lessons-learned. Such a brief or report should/could (depending on the situation), be shared with the participants of the course and/or used as a basis for further activities.

Case studies

A case study is a representation of a real-life or life-like situation. It is a representation rather than a description because it does not have to be text-based and it can contain multiple resources. A case study is a model that includes a sufficient level of detail for the learning and teaching purpose. The model is a situation or scenario based on events in the real-world. Although narrative case studies are the most common form of case study, they do not have to be limited to text-based descriptions. A case may represent a single event or provide an account of a series of actions over a period of time.

It is a method of problem-based learning that encourages trainees to actively engage with material, cooperate with peers and receive feedback. It provides an opportunity to practice skills such as problem solving, interpersonal and teamworking skills Objectives in using case materials should be action-oriented for best results, eg. to explore, to analyse, to discuss.

Elements of a Case Study

- Scenario (the context): it should be based on a real life or realistic situation, some facts may have been changed to preserve anonymity or to simplify the case;
- Statement of the issues (the focus of the case): within a typical scenario, there are a number of possible issues to consider, so it is the trainer's job to define which ones to tackle when working on the case study;
- the task (the open problem): ask simple questions that determines how the group is going to deal with the case, the target that they need to reach, trainees need to be given clear instructions about what they are required to do with the case material;
- any resources needed for the task- this can be concrete data, legal regulations or similar parameters that give the framework for the case;
- additional supporting materials (artefacts) such as documents newspaper articles or videos may also be provided.

Activities using the case study can include for example:

- ❖ Analysis: trainees can individually analyse the main issues in a situation.
- ❖ Role play: trainees are assigned roles in the case study to explore different views.
- ❖ Webquest: trainees search the Internet to find further information about an issue.
- ❖ Diagnose a problem: trainees diagnose the underlying problem based on the case material. This requires them to identify the relevant and irrelevant data in the case.
- ❖ Jigsaw: trainees are each assigned a section of a larger case study or separate tasks within the case and then have to bring the findings together in a workshop or presentation.

Creating and using a secret Facebook group

Steps of setting up the group:

1. Make sure all training participants are registered on Facebook and that everybody is friends with at least one other training participant.
2. Click the green Create Group button.
3. Give the Group a name and choose the icon with the dropdown arrow.
4. Add any members who are your Facebook Friends by typing their names. You'll see their account pop-ups; select to add them to the member box. Ask them to add others you are not friends with.
5. Select the Privacy Setting and click the Create button.

Nobody on Facebook can see a secret Group other than those in the Group. This Group will not appear anywhere on your profile, and only those within the Group can see who the members are and what is posted.

Useful tips for the group

1. Write a Great Intro Blurb

On the right hand side of the group page is a section called 'About'. As your group will be secret, this blurb is only visible to members. The place where you set the basic focus, tone and expectations of the group is the intro blurb. You are limited to 3000 characters so make them count. It is also recommended to mention when the group was started, who started it and who the current admins are, just for transparency sake. You should also cover any member admission conditions you may have in place so that it is clear and there are no embarrassing declinatures (or worse, ejections) required.

2. Write Clear Guidelines & Pin Them

It is very important that group members have clear rules they can reference if they have a question about how the group operates and what your expectations are of them as members. There are several ways to create the guidelines/rules. Once they are created it is best to go into the 'files' section of your group and create a Facebook document with the guidelines in it. Once you save the document, it will automatically create a post to the group referencing that document and you can then pin that as the top post. When that post is clicked, members are then taken to the document which is much more readable than a standard post would be. It is also easier to update later should it be required than a standard post.

In mixed training groups it is very important to set communication rules as people participating are usually in a hierarchy, they have an everyday communication, but Facebook uses other standards. The most important rule of thumb is that a teacher or a parent is an equal participant to minors, eg. it is never acceptable to correct a spelling mistake in a comment.

3. Intervene Early

If you see a post/thread running amok and generally causing a major disruption to the group as an Admin, intervene early. You can be firm without sounding heavy handed. It is also an important prerequisite to choose your Admins carefully.