

Planning a Training Event

Aims:

To consider all the factors which a trainer must take into account before running a training event

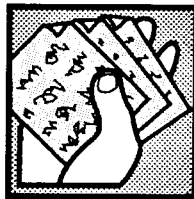
To practice setting out learning objectives as a key part of planning for training

Resources required:

Training room and small group spaces; flipchart, OHP and pens

- 3.1 'Checklist for planning a training programme' OHP transparency
 - 3.2 'Planning a training programme' handout
 - 3.3 'Learning objectives' OHP transparency and handout
 - 4.1 Training event planning sheets
 - 4.2 Planning priorities cards
- 'Learning log' sheets

1 Background notes:



No matter how good a trainer might be, the success of a training event is often a reflection of the degree of advance thought and preparation put into it. This chapter is designed to introduce participants to all the considerations which require attention before a course actually commences. There is a logical sequence to this preparation, which in time should become a natural part of most trainers' thinking. Where a course fails, it can usually be attributed to a lack of attention to one of the factors considered here.

Transparency 3.1 offers one checklist for the sequence of factors to consider in planning a training event. This is supported by the notes in handout 3.2. The transparency and self-explanatory handout can be used together to form a short lecturette and discussion prompt.

Of all these requirements, perhaps the most important is the specification of learning objectives. Learning objectives are a statement of what the participant is intended to learn or discover from the learning experience. The creation of learning objectives takes some practice: often the trainer is too close to her material to pick out the key learning elements, but for the participant it is important that he knows in advance what outcome he can expect from the training. This leads to better informed choices by the participant about the training, and better preparation by the participant for engaging in the learning.

OHP transparency 3.2 sets out the main requirements in

specifying learning objectives. These are:

Learning objectives are explicit

What the training is aiming to achieve should be stated fully. Covert aims must be avoided. If the trainer hides covert aims which subsequently appear during the course, these aims are likely to be strongly resisted by participants and the whole course may run into problems. For example, if a staff team has difficulties with discriminatory attitudes between some of its members, a training course which is ostensibly designed to 'develop communication skills' is almost guaranteed to encounter trouble if the trainer's real intention is to challenge members' discriminatory attitudes; those who engaged in the course to learn specific skills will resent this hidden agenda of exposing and challenging underlying attitudes and beliefs.

Learning objectives are written in simple language

This requirement follows on from the last. If the objectives are simply written, they are clearer and less ambiguous. Participants know in advance what they are engaging in and can understand the intended outcomes.

Learning objectives are capable of being assessed

This is most important. Both the trainer and the participants should be able to evaluate whether the outcomes have been met or not. This is easily done where the learning objectives relate to the acquisition of skills, but is more difficult where the outcomes relate to changed behaviour or heightened awareness of attitudes and values. Even in these areas, it is possible to set out objectives which are capable of non-quantifiable assessment.

A common way in which learning objectives are often presented is in the form:

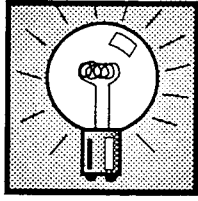
"By the end of this event, participants will" followed by one or more statements indicating what the participants will have gained from the event. This is a particularly helpful way of setting out learning objectives because it helps prospective participants to assess whether the training event offers what they want.

Examples of learning objectives which meet these criteria include:

- 'to be able to create learning objectives'
- 'to be aware of how adults learn most effectively'
- 'to know and use a range of training techniques'
- 'to understand and be aware of equal opportunities considerations'
- 'to be more confident in dealing with resistances to training'.

CHAPTER 5 :

2 Suggestions for using these materials

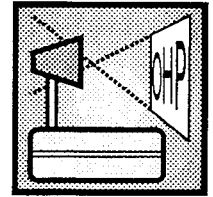


••• Notes

- 1 Introduce the session and its aims.
- 2 Lecturette on the importance of planning training events, the key questions to be addressed and the relevance of specific learning objectives using the Background notes (1) and OHP transparencies (3.1, 3.2, 3.3).
- 3 Invite participants to consider the application of these ideas to a training event of their own using the planning exercise (4.1). Distribute copies of the exercise instruction sheet and planning sheet.
- 4 As a summary exercise for the section, ask participants to consider the relative importance of different factors in planning a training event using exercise 4.2.
- 5 Distribute 'Learning logs'.
- 6 Plenary session to discuss the work undertaken, review any outstanding points, and collect evaluative information.
- 7 Close the session by reviewing its aims.

3.1 OHP Transparency

Checklist for planning a training programme



What are the training needs?

Who are the intended participants?

What are the learning objectives?

What is the time schedule for the training?

Who will deliver the training?

Will participants be involved in the planning process?

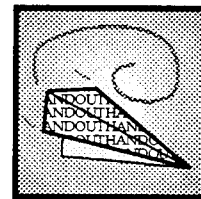
Which training methods will achieve the learning outcomes with these participants most effectively?

What material is to be included in the detailed programme?

Does the programme have a stimulating balance of suitable techniques and methods?

What are the practical requirements?

How is the training event to be assessed?

CHAPTER 5 :**3.2 Handout****Planning a training programme****What are the training needs?**

Why is a training event necessary? What are the reasons for mounting a course or for sending people on a training event? Is this part of a systematic assessment of training needs? How will this training contribute to the overall programme of staff development? What are the minimum requirements for any training event in this context to achieve?

Who are the intended participants?

Which people have been identified as requiring this training? Will they be self-selecting or instructed to attend? What will be their motivation to participate? How many people will be attending? How much knowledge and skill do they already possess? What will be their expectations of the event?

What are the learning objectives?

What are the specific outcomes of this training event? Do they meet the criteria of being explicit, written in simple language and capable of being assessed? Have participants been informed of the learning objectives prior to their arrival at the event?

What is the time schedule for the training?

How long will it take to deliver a course which meets the learning objectives? For how long can the organisation afford to release people from their normal work duties? Should the training event be continuous or spread over several days/weeks?

Who will deliver the training?

Will the training event be led by a member of the organisation's own staff or by someone from outside? How are external trainers to be selected? Will the trainer require additional time to prepare new course materials?

Will participants be involved in the planning process?

Are there opportunities to negotiate learning outcomes and course content with some or all of the intended participants? Can a 'learning contract' be agreed between trainer and participants to strengthen commitment to the learning? If this is not possible before the event, how will participants be able to make suggestions about the course in its early stages?

Which training methods will achieve the learning outcomes with these participants most effectively?

Given the existing knowledge and abilities of the participants, which training techniques should be selected for delivering the content? What is to be the balance between trainer inputs, sharing of participant experiences, and practical exercises? Is there a sufficient range of stimulating methods within the event?

What material is to be included in the detailed programme?

How are the learning outcomes, course content and training methods to be integrated into a cohesive programme? Is all the material relevant? Are there any significant gaps in the programme?

Does the programme have a stimulating balance of suitable techniques and methods?

Having devised the initial programme, does it contain a good mix of different techniques? Will it hold the interest of participants? Is each method suitable for the time of day when it is scheduled to occur (e.g. using warm-up exercises at the start of each day; avoiding lectures immediately after meal breaks when participants are less awake)?

What are the practical requirements?

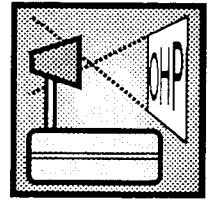
Where is the event to be held? Have arrangements been made for meals, parking, childcare, interpreters, cleaning, etc.? Is there to be a charge for the training event and has a procedure been created for invoicing and collecting money? Have full instructions been sent out to all participants in good time?

How is the training event to be assessed?

What methods will be used to assess the progress of participants both during and after the event? How will participants let the trainers and organisers know of their reactions to the event after it is finished? How will the trainer know what improvements to make in any future repetition of the event?

3.3 OHP Transparency/Handout

Learning objectives



Learning objectives state what a participant and/or the training group will learn from the training event

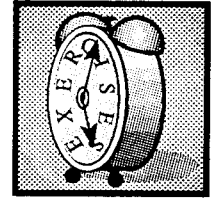
Learning objectives are:

- explicit
- written in simple language
- capable of being assessed

CHAPTER 5 :

4.1 Exercise: trainer's notes

'Planning your Training Event'

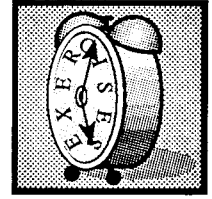
**Purpose:**

To practice planning a training event using real examples.

Process:

- 1 Explain the purpose of the exercise and ask participants to divide into pairs.
- 2 Ask one participant in each pair to recall a training event he has recently prepared or is currently preparing.
- 3 Each participant in turn talks through his ideas for the planning of this event using his partner as an external consultant, reflecting on the suggestions and introducing points requiring clarification and further attention.
- 4 The participant defines the specific learning outcomes for this training event.
- 5 The results are recorded on the 'training event planning sheet'.
- 6 The paired participants swap roles: the first person becomes the consultant to the second person's planning and recording.

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CHAPTER 5 :**4.1 Exercise****Training event planning sheet**

Complete whichever questions are relevant, but always complete the section on learning outcomes

Title of training event:

Who is to be trained?

Why do they require training?

What is to be taught?

What are the specific learning outcomes?

1

2

3

Which methods are to be used?

Who is to be the trainer?

When is the training to occur?

Where will it occur?

How is each outcome to be assessed?

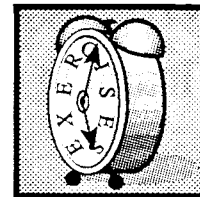
learning objective 1:

learning objective 2:

learning objective 3:

4.2 Exercise: Trainer's notes

'Planning Priorities'



Purpose:

To consider the relative importance of different factors in planning a training event.

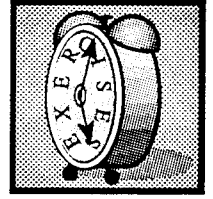
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Process:

- 1 Explain the purpose of the exercise and ask participants to form into small groups of 3 or 4 people.
- 2 Distribute a set of planning priority cards to each small group.
- 3 Ask each small group to discuss the importance of each card in planning a training event, and to place the cards in rank order of importance (allow 30 minutes).
- 4 When each group has finished, encourage participants to look at the priority rankings of other small groups.
- 5 Bring participants back together as one group and summarise general findings or observations on a flipchart.

CHAPTER 5 :

4.2 Exercise

Planning priority cards

Involving participants in
planning the course

Identifying the trainer(s)

Finding a suitable venue

Deciding on the
training methods

Fixing a date
for the course

Recruiting participants

Setting learning objectives

Assessing participants'
existing knowledge
and abilities

Devising assessment
materials for the course