

## MEMORANDUM

TO: NDI STAFF MEMBERS

FROM: AARON AZELTON

DATE: JULY 23, 2001

RE: WORKSHOP ON DESIGNING TRAINING AGENDA

On Tuesday July 17, the Citizen Participation team conducted a professional development workshop on “Adult Audiences, Training Agendas and You,” that included more than 20 Washington-based staff members. The workshop featured trainer Melissa Estok, a former NDI resident program director and current consultant to the elections team, and Senior Program Assistant Ashley Orton. The team designed the workshop to help Washington-based program staff members increase their understanding of how to design effective training programs, and of the inherent relationships between specific training objectives and activities, and the broader program goals.

Training activities form the backbone of many NDI programs. Although these activities are primarily carried out in the field by NDI resident representatives, Washington-based program staff members are often called upon to comment on draft training agendas, provide materials, identify trainers, and report on results. For these reasons, the Washington-based staff members require a fundamental understanding of how to design effective training activities, and of the inherent relationship between training objectives and activities and broader program objectives. The agenda for the session can be found pasted below.

The two-hour session on July 17 focused primarily on three areas of effective training program design.

1. Adult education principles
2. Participatory techniques
3. Agenda setting

Melissa and Ashley reminded staff members that most participants in NDI training programs are adults with established beliefs and opinions acquired during a lifetime of experiences. At the same time, however, direct experience with democratic principles and practices is often limited. In general, these factors suggest that the training approach include “democratic” methods that allow participants to relate new information and skills to their own experiences.

Drawing from Paolo Friere’s work, the trainers highlighted the differences between *traditional* education and *popular* education. One primary difference is that traditional education is top-down and autocratic and popular education is bottom-up and more democratic.

### **Traditional**

Informs  
Educates  
Teachers/Experts

### **Popular**

Inspires  
Transforms  
Facilitators/Equals

End is Specific	End often open or defined by participants
Need Credentials	Credentials not necessary
Content/Design comes from outside	Participants involved in determining context and design

Additional adult education principles include:

- Adults need to understand why they are learning something and believe that the learning process directly addresses their concerns and needs.
- Adults benefit from activities that allow them to relate new information and skills to realistic problems and previous experiences.
- Adults respond positively to a give-and-take training process; not a process where information is just poured in by the trainer.
- Changing the established behavior of adults requires more than simply providing information through a lecture.

In popular adult education, the trainer acts as a **facilitator**. This means that the trainer creates opportunities for learning by focusing activities and promoting participation and reflection. Facilitation does not mean telling the participants what they need to know and asking whether they agree. A facilitator is goal-oriented and guides the participants, but does not drive them.

When preparing a training program it is most often necessary to consult with program participants to determine training needs. Participant training needs generally revolve around their learning to do something new or something better. Generally, this requires a trainer to design a program that affects the knowledge, skills, or values of the participants. Training objectives can be defined by answering the following questions: **What do I want the participants to know?** (e.g., role of elected representatives); **What skills do I want the participants to develop?** (e.g., writing a campaign plan); **What do I want the participants to value?** (e.g., team-work and collective decisionmaking).

Once the objectives are defined it is then possible to determine the sequence of training activities and the most appropriate training methods. **Different training objectives necessitate the use of different training methods.** For example, a lecture may help a someone understand a game's rules, but it will not help them develop the skills needed to play well.

A training agenda provides the written plan for the training program. However, it does not simply list the topics being covered. Instead, an agenda also highlights the objectives and explains the content and methods for each training session. The agenda should also reflect how the sessions help to achieve the objectives. This means that there should be an explicit link between each session and the program objectives. Any training program organized around lectures will likely fail to keep the interest of the program participants and likewise will fail to affect their skills and values. For instance, lectures may be a good way to provide information, but a terrible method to develop decisionmaking skills or democratic values. To achieve a high level of participation and to increase the level of learning, incorporate discussions, break-out groups, exercises, games, visual aides, role-plays, and simulations into the training program.

To assess the success of the training program, it is critical to have a plan, which should be written into the agenda. Assessment should not be a last-minute discussion of participant likes and dislikes, but a planned process that requires participants to reflect on what they learned and how they learned. Do not simply ask the participants, “Was it useful?” It is also important to find out **why** the training was useful and **how** the participants intend to use what they learned in the “real” world.

There are a number of ways to assess the program’s effectiveness. Some formal methods include questionnaires and short written reports from the participants. Less formal methods may involve participants interviewing each other, or engaging in a structured discussion about the program.

Some of the most practical assessment activities, however, require the participants to **apply what they learned**. This means the participants actually demonstrate, in some way, their ability to use the knowledge, skills, and values developed during the training. For instance, the participants may have to produce a plan, an activities calendar, a persuasive message, or they may have to solve a problem. (Of course, the products created will depend on the training objectives and topics.) Additionally, when participants apply what they learned, they reinforce the learning process. Even when the participants do not do an acceptable job, the trainer can help them learn from their mistakes.

Some additional principles to keep in mind when organizing a training agenda include:

**Begin every training program by explaining what the objectives are and why they are important.** Adults need to understand what they are doing and why they are doing it. An explanation of the objectives also helps create appropriate participant expectations.

**Develop consensus around the agenda by reviewing it with participants and asking them if they have questions or comments.** This process also helps mitigate any anxieties the participants may feel when they arrive at the training program.

**Establish some ground rules for the group’s operation during the training program.** The rules should answer two questions: 1) how will the group interact; and, 2) what are the different roles and responsibilities of the participants and trainers.

**Model relevant behaviors during the training program.** This means, be respectful, attentive, supportive, open, tolerant, etc. Behavior modeling is particularly important when trying to help participants develop more “democratic” values.

#### Checklist for Training Design

- Have you consulted the participants about the program’s purpose and process?
- Is there a timed agenda that lays out the training objectives, content, and methods?
- Does the training site provide a comfortable environment with no distractions?
- What are the plans to identify and address the anxieties of the participants?

- Will the participants have the opportunity to relate new issues and ideas to previous experiences?
- Are lectures avoided and interactive methods promoted?
- Does the program allow participants to practice what they learn?
- How will you assess whether the participants learned anything?
- What follow-up will take place? When? How?

For more information or materials about training design, please contact Aaron Azleton ([aaron@ndi.org](mailto:aaron@ndi.org)) or Ashley Orton ([aorton@ndi.org](mailto:aorton@ndi.org)).

## ADULT AUDIENCES, TRAINING AGENDAS AND YOU

### Training Plan

Objective: Enhance the ability of program staff to design and evaluate training activities.

Audience: NDI Washington-based program staffs interested in helping field staff develop training agendas, identify trainers and report on results.

Trainers: Melissa Estok, Consultant, formerly NDI Resident Program Director  
Ashley Orton, NDI Program Assistant

1:00- 1:20pm Introduction

1. Ask participants to list burning questions on flipchart as they arrive.

*Burning Questions/Primary Expectations*

- 1) How to put together a “fun” training agenda?
- 2) How to design an interactive training and find a balance between plenary sessions, group activities, etc.
- 3) How to strategically plan a session that allows for sufficient time and maximum results
- 4) What are some techniques that can encourage adult learning?
- 5) How do you learn from a training/program/curriculum, which is not working?

2. Discuss/review participant experience.
3. Ashley Orton leads welcome icebreaker.
4. Aaron Azelton remarks.
5. Name timekeeper.

1:20- 1:40pm Giving Feedback on a Training Agenda

1. Facilitate role-play using agenda #1, the “bad” agenda.
2. Ask how a DC staffer gives feedback.

*Pointers on giving feedback:*

1. Point out the Good Stuff
2. Ask questions
3. Give a Rationale
4. Talk me through it
5. Connect your suggestions to what they have

6. *Suggestions practical and applicable*
7. *Recognize they know the context*
8. *Use back-up (resources) – sample*
9. *Trying to avoid the last minute*
10. *Establish relationship*

Melissa Estok emphasized that it is important to have a mix of trainers and a trainer from the local culture, who is sensitive to cultural differences. Aaron Azelton remarked that it is helpful to have a partner with whom the trainer can exchange ideas.

11. Review flipchart with agenda #2, the “good” agenda. Point out that we will discuss adult education theory, effective training techniques and basics for training design before reviewing the second “good” agenda.

1:40- 1:55pm      Part One: Adult Education Theory

#### TRADITIONAL V. POPULAR EDUCATION

Informs ----- Inspires

Educates ----- Transforms

Teachers/Experts---Facilitators/Equals

End is Specific-----End often open

Need Credentials to Teach-----Credentials not necessary

Content/Design comes from outside---Participants involved in determining context and design

1. Demonstrate traditional education with funnel, placing two participants into position in which one is tossing/feeding information into head of other.

*Traditional Education*      v.      *Popular Education*  
*Funnel*      v.      *praxis circular\**

2. Demonstrate popular education by using the “code” from Where there is no Doctor.\*

*-work with illiterate campesinos*

*-they learned more when “classes” designed around real issues, current circumstances, leading to greater control over their lives, enabling them to contribute to community progress*

3. \*Review praxis of Paulo Freire. Where adult education provides people with greater continuous control over their lives, enabling them to contribute to the social and economic progress of the community, you have real TRANSFORMATIVE education.

*Reflección – Acción- Conscientización [Reflection- Action- Awareness]*

4. Consider limitations at NDI:

1- *Formality*

2- *Results driven programming*

1) professionalization and 2) results-driven programming. Be aware, CONSCIENTIZAR for the long term.

Aaron Azelton pointed out there are ways to deal with it: there is a place for experts. All methods have a practical purpose, depending on the objective.

5. Cornerstone principles stemming from Freirian education-- there are no experts, training should have an egalitarian approach, the participant has as much control over content as facilitator/trainer/animator.

1:55- 2:15pm      Part Two: Effective Training Techniques

1. Presentation on experiential techniques:

Learn through hearing—20-30% retention

Learn through hearing and seeing—50-60% retention

Learn through hearing, seeing and doing—80-90% retention

Other attributes: respect for participants, less pressure on facilitator

On the “negative” side, Preparation time is increased

Using a code to spur discussion

Brainstorm other experiential techniques: Skits, roleplays, simulations...

2. Brainstorm on participatory techniques

Adult attention span?? 8 to 10 minutes!!

Ashley’s exercise to demonstrate a illustrative icebreaker

Other techniques include introductory and energizing icebreakers, brainstorming, case studies, small group work, debates, fishbowl, turn to your neighbor, pop quizzes with prizes, team competitions.

KEEP OBJECTIVES IN MIND

Participatory Techniques

Adult Attention Span?

-----minutes

Examples:

1. *Icebreakers- introduction, illustration, energize*

*-giving away codes*  
*-context is important*

It is easier to deliver a skill in the context of work. For example: how to write a press release. The participants write a press release, put the skill into context and see how they can apply it. The country/cultural context is important. It is necessary to have both an outside trainer and a local one, who is a cultural expert.

2. *guided practice*
3. *games- (recall)*
4. *role-plays*
5. *skits*
6. *simulations*
7. *field trips*
8. *demo and response*
9. *testimony*
10. *story telling*
11. *brainstorming*
12. *practice and feedback*
13. *fishbowl*
14. *debates*
15. *drawing pictures*
16. *info scavenger hunt*

3. Review of special considerations: think about your own baggage, think about cultural appropriateness!

The participants were asked to identify some of the problems: age, gender, and in some cases, ethnic background.

Newsha Moraveji and Amanda Smith shared that it is better to clarify questions and expectations at the beginning of the training.

## 2:15- 2:45pm      Part Three: Basics for Training Design

Pass out “good agenda” and follow the suggested process for giving feedback through questions.

1. Assessments: Did trainers assess needs, strengths, attitudes, motivations, learning preferences? How? Other ways to assess include interviews, questionnaires, observation, focus groups, community mapping.

*What? -audience skill levels, timeline, past experience, need, current skills/behaviors, environment (context)*

*How? – review evaluations of previous training, questionnaires, applications, focus groups, informal conversations/interviews*



Some of the questions that need to be addressed:

-Is it apparent there is an assessment?

-Who asked for it?

Anya Mc Murray from the LAC team related the experience from the Latin American leadership program in trying to assess the levels of background participants in the training LAC is considering. Is it better to identify participants with a common level of skill development, as LAC has done, or try to bring together a group with a diverse level of skill competency?

2. Did trainers revisit their overall goals before setting objectives for this particular training activity? You need to revisit the bigger picture, your program goals as you plan each training activity. One event needs to be a component part of the whole.

*Revisit your overall goals*

*Program ---> project -----> training activity*

Aaron Azelton emphasized how important it is to make sure the training fits in the program and NDI's overall goals.

3. Your objectives should dictate the content.

*Turn objective into content*

- *Try to use/create an experience*

4. Objectives and content together will demand certain techniques.
5. Reviewing the structure for the basics: time, venue, logical flow, appropriate facilitators.

- *Use your Citizen Participation Team*

6. Check in, evaluate, check in, evaluate...

- *during the activity, immediately after the activity, later, follow up*
- *debrief trainers*
- *process evaluation info*

*Consider the objectives for your evaluation*

Melissa emphasized the importance of evaluation and check-in with the participants during training. She described how she used to bring a ballot box to NDI trainings and encourage participants to drop in their burning questions, if those questions were not being addressed, or if the participants did not feel comfortable asking them in public. Throughout the workshop, she would periodically check the box and respond to the questions

Aaron stressed the importance of follow-up evaluation how the participants are using their new skills. Follow-up allows the measure the impact of the training. For many of the trainees taking the first step is the most difficult one, and it is important to identify what inhibits the participants from using their skills.

## 2:45- 3:00pm Evaluation and Closing Remarks

1. Review burning questions.
2. Consider future interests and suggest follow-on activities.

Amanda Smith asked how strictly the training agenda should be followed. Melissa pointed out that this depends on the objectives. The agenda can be open.

Tara asked how important it is to show the academic aspect of the training and emphasizing adult learning theory. Ashley Orton pointed out that this depends on the audience and some audiences respond very well to theories. Aaron Azelton remarked that training programs, such as the Civic Forum, are based on education principles and behavioral science.

3. Walking Evaluation-- Participants jot down likes, dislikes on flipcharts before leaving.

Comments on Walking Evaluation:

### *1. Rating the usefulness of each topic*

- *role-play to discuss DC v. field roles*
- *adult education theory – traditional v. popular*
- *training techniques- experiential, participatory*
- *basics for designing a training program*

### *2. How would you evaluate the design and delivery?*

*Some of the comments:*

*-Well-organized and thought out*

*-Excellent. Very much modeling what you are hoping to teach group facilitators*

*-informative and entertaining*

*-easy to follow and hopefully retain*

*-excellent- clear and conducive to learning*

*-great presentation- liked the flow between “lecture” and interactive*

*-great- wish it had been part of my orientation*

*-taught by example*

*-this is all very interesting, but it will work not a country environment. ☺*

### *3. What would you improve for the future?*

*-see agenda ahead of time*

*-practice making agenda*

*-a chance to put together an agenda*

*-more context for brainstorming on techniques*

*-depth over breadth...I would prefer to know three different ways to actually draft an agenda-*



