

Designing Effective Training Workshops for TechDis

By Professor Phil Race on behalf of TechDis



Unlocking Potential

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Introduction

About the Author

TechDis have commissioned this booklet from Phil Race, a Senior Academic Staff Development Officer at the University of Leeds. Phil is a trainer, staff-developer and writer. His areas of interest are teaching, learning, training and assessment.

He aims to improve and enhance the quality of people's learning, by helping teaching staff to develop their methods and approaches, and by helping students to develop their own learning skills. Phil designs and leads highly interactive training workshops for university and college staff, and for trainers in commerce and industry.

Phil's recent publications include:

- ▶ The Lecturer's Toolkit: 2nd edition (2001)
- ▶ 2000 Tips for Lecturers (1999)
- ▶ Enhancing Student Learning (1999)

Purposes of this Template

- ▶ To identify key process aspects of effective training workshops;
- ▶ To help workshop facilitators to devise intended training outcomes for workshops;
- ▶ To provide templates to enable workshop facilitators to design effective workshops;

- ▶ To provide workshop facilitators with a range of techniques for gathering and analysing feedback from their workshop participants;
- ▶ To provide tools to help workshop facilitators to reflect during and after each workshop, and adjust future provision on the basis of this reflection.

Format and Style of this Template

- ▶ Practical tips, which can be used as checklists, relating to all the key stages of planning, implementing and reflecting on training workshops.
- ▶ Pro-forma checklists, to copy for each workshop being planned, and completed as action-planning tools, evaluation tools, and reflection tools. Photocopiable formats of the checklists are available as appendices at the end of this document.
- ▶ Short and succinct elements of rationale, explaining the overall approach being recommended for effective training workshop design.

Planning the Workshop Content

Issues for TechDis

The content for the TechDis training workshop programme will develop around a wide range of needs and issues, for example relating to:

- ▶ Increasing awareness of the overall need to respond to special educational needs and disabilities in education and training provision;
- ▶ Developing educators' and trainers' skills relating to specific techniques linked to screen-design, handout-design, and the design of educational and training materials, to widen their relevance to those with particular disabilities or educational needs;
- ▶ Increasing workshop participants' awareness of the recent legislation changes which are linked to special educational needs and disability, in particular 'SENDA' - the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act of 2001, which came into effect in September 2002, repealing the 'education exemption' element of the 1995 Disability Discrimination Act (DDA).
- ▶ Helping workshop facilitators to develop a range of workshops and activities to help their participants to adjust their

own education and training processes to at least achieve 'compliance' with SENDA/DDA, and at best to develop their practice to exceed such compliance.

In general, however, this template is intended to address the process dimensions of designing, facilitating and reviewing training workshops, rather than the specific content covered by such workshops. The guidance in this template is intended to be generic, and to extend well beyond the particular subject areas of addressing disabilities and special needs in education and training provision.

Effective Training - a Brief Digest

It is widely accepted that for training to be effective, workshop participants need to be actively engaged rather than simply 'receiving'. In other words, there is little place in a good training workshop for extended 'lecturing' by the presenter, or even for significant episodes of direct presentation. Short elements of presentation, however, can play useful parts in a training workshop, for example:

- ▶ To set the scene before launching participants into an activity;
- ▶ For raising awareness of the context relating to a forthcoming activity;

- ▶ To help participants to get the 'big picture' and map out in their minds the various components of handout materials and other resources in their workshop pack;
- ▶ To debrief in plenary the outcomes of an activity which participants have engaged in.

So how does effective training work?

Characteristics of successful training workshops include:

- ▶ Participants know that they're in the right place at the right time. They know that they've chosen the right training workshop, because the outline programme was just what they needed (or wanted). They know that their time will be well spent. They know that they're not just going to be sitting listening to things they already know, or things they don't need to know. They're going to be learning - and enjoying learning.
- ▶ Participants know where they're going. They're clear about what they're intending to learn during the session, and why they need to learn this. They can see how what they will take away from the training workshop will be useful in their day-to-day job. They're also getting the chance to express what they want to learn, over and above what they may need to learn. They are confident that as far as is reasonably practicable, the training workshop will address what they want to learn alongside what they need to achieve.
- ▶ Participants are busy for substantial parts of the workshop duration. They're

learning by doing. They're learning by practising. They're learning by having a go at things. They're learning by making mistakes, and finding out why (in a supportive, encouraging learning environment of course). They're learning by repeating things until they become good at doing them.

- ▶ Participants get a lot of feedback on their 'doing' as above. They get feedback from each other. They get feedback from the trainer or facilitator. They get feedback from the handouts, on-screen resources, and so on used during the training session.
- ▶ Participants have the chance to make sense of what they're doing. They don't just follow instructions blindly, or follow a recipe. They think why they try things, why things work, what exactly happened when they tried something, what else happened, and so on. In other words, they digest what they're doing, and digest the continuous feedback they receive on what they're doing.

This template for designing training workshops aims to help you to ensure that each and every step along the way of planning, designing, facilitating, and reviewing your training workshops will be fine-tuned to ensuring that participants' experience of the event will be as described above - active, focused, productive, relevant, and enjoyable.

Drafting a Workshop Outline

A workshop outline should ideally set the scene for a training workshop, so that intending participants are enabled to:

- ▶ See what the workshop is about;
- ▶ Find out what the workshop is intended to do for them;
- ▶ Work out what sorts of activities they are likely to be engaged in during the workshop;
- ▶ Establish the timescale of the workshop;
- ▶ Decide, on an informed basis, whether or not to enrol for the workshop.

Perhaps the most serious dimension of critical feedback about training workshops relates to participants who feel that the workshop did not achieve what had been advertised.

Therefore, whatever else a training workshop addresses, it remains important that everything that was on the advertised agenda is covered, and done so quite demonstrably and overtly. This means that it is better to ensure that the published agenda is entirely realistic and achievable, rather than being too aspirational and ambitious.

To achieve these aims, a workshop outline usually needs the following elements:

- ▶ **Title of the overall workshop**
- ▶ **Rationale -**
setting the scene or context

- ▶ **Intended workshop outcomes -**
establishing what the participants should be able to achieve by the end of the workshop;
- ▶ **Workshop outline programme -**
setting out the approximate timescale of each phase of the workshop;
- ▶ **‘About the facilitator’ -**
a brief biographical note where necessary.

Example

The following example is meant simply to indicate the format and structure of a one-page workshop outline, and is based on a typical half-day workshop which could be used to train trainers in some fundamental principles of training workshop design.



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Workshops that work

Half-day workshop led by Fred Smith

Thursday 17 April 2004: 0915-1300

Conference Room 2: McArthur Suite, Lovell's Hotel, Station Road, Norchester, NCI 2AB

Rationale

Training workshops need to enable participants to become better able to do things which are relevant to their own needs or ambitions. This workshop will help you to explore how best to design your own training workshops, based on sound principles of effective learning in group contexts.

Intended workshop outcomes

After participating in this workshop, you should be better able to:

- ▶ design training workshops to be interactive and productive learning experiences for your participants;
- ▶ express intended learning outcomes for your workshops so that participants can clearly see what they may gain from such workshops;
- ▶ produce a workshop outline, which will be a useful yet flexible framework around which to fine-tune the workshop on the day.

Workshop outline programme

- 0915 Coffee and registration
- 0930 Introductory post-it exercise: *'designing training workshops would be much better for me if only I could...'*
- 0950 Five factors underpinning successful learning in training workshops: *presentation and discussion.*
- 1020 Exercise in pairs: *drafting intended learning outcomes for a training workshop.*
- 1040 Report-back: *discussion of intended learning outcomes design.*
- 1100 Coffee/tea
- 1120 Exercise in small groups: *designing activities for participants to do in workshops.*
- 1140 Crossover: *producing a workshop outline for a training workshop.*
- 1200 Exhibition: *posters showing workshop outlines produced by groups.*
- 1215 Revisiting the intended learning outcomes of this workshop, and adjusting them.
- 1220 Workshop feedback from participants.
- 1225 Action planning round.
- 1230 Close of workshop; buffet lunch.

About Fred Smith

Fred is an experienced trainer, working in commercial and industrial organisations as well as with various educational and local government institutions. He has published widely on the design of training workshops, and is known for keeping workshop participants busy and engaged.

A blank copy of this template can be found at Appendix I

Planning a Training Workshop for Active Learning

The notes below should help you to put together the main framework of your training workshop in a logical and coherent way.

The Title

For obvious reasons, it is best to keep the overall title short.

An example of a title which would be far too long is:

‘The implications of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act on the delivery of online learning in Construction and related disciplines’

The roles to be played by a well chosen title are often best achieved by having a short main title, with a slightly longer sub-title, giving useful extra detail about the ‘slant’ of the event. For example:

‘Construction Education: online learning - implications of SENDA’

Sometimes it’s worth putting a twist in the wording of a workshop title, to draw more attention to a particular aspect which will be addressed by the training event, for example:

‘Construction Education and SENDA - keeping it legal!’

Rationale

Essentially, this should explain why the topic of the workshop is likely to be important to the target audience for the training. The ‘Rationale’ as set out on the workshop publicity material should set the scene, but very briefly - it can be expanded upon at the start of the training event if necessary. If the Rationale is too long on the publicity material, the effect can be to ‘dilute’ the impact of the event, or even to put people off booking up for it. In practice, it is best to compose the Rationale after designing the intended learning outcomes, and after planning the rest of the event programme. This is because it is only after doing these things that there is likely to be a clear picture of exactly how this particular event actually fits in to the overall picture being addressed by the workshop.

Intended Learning Outcomes

These may equally be called ‘Intended Training Outcomes’. In effect, they boil down to the same thing - statements of what workshop participants should be able to achieve by participating in the workshop. In commercial, organisational and industrial contexts, the use of the phrase ‘intended training outcomes’ is commonplace, but in some educational

organisations (not least universities, colleges, distance learning providers, and so on) there is some reluctance to accept the word 'training' in this context, and 'intended learning outcomes' may be found more acceptable to these particular target audiences.

These outcomes are in effect the 'objectives' of the training event, but the term 'intended outcomes' has latterly become preferred in general - perhaps because 'objectives' were sometimes perceived as being too restricted or narrow.

It is vitally important to get the intended learning outcomes right! This means that they should not be composed quickly or lightly, but should be re-worded and re-formulated several times during the planning of a training workshop, until they have become a clear and unambiguous way of describing exactly what those participating in the event can realistically be expected to achieve.

Intended learning outcomes should be:

- ▶ **specific** - in other words they should spell out exactly what workshop participants will be able to do after taking part;
- ▶ **measurable** - participants' learning gain should not just be 'in their minds' but should be reflected in their actions after the training event, in ways that can be seen and (if necessary) quantified;
- ▶ **achievable** - in other words the intended learning outcomes should not be 'noble aspirations' but practicable targets, realistically possible within the timescale and scope of the training event;

- ▶ **realistic** - the intended learning outcomes should not be over-ambitious for the context and timescale of the training event, nor the participants' levels of competence and experience;
- ▶ **time-specified** - it should be possible to specify which of the intended learning outcomes will have been achieved during the training event itself, and which will remain to be developed as workshop participants continue to develop in their own work the learning that they take from the training event.

These five characteristics of well formulated intended learning outcomes are sometimes summarised by the acronym 'SMART' for 'specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-specified.



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Tips on Formulating Intended Learning Outcomes

- 1 **Avoid words such as ‘understand’ or ‘know’ or ‘appreciate’.** Such language is too vague. Rather than specify that ‘by the end of the training workshop participants should understand so-and-so’ it is much better to focus on what they should have become able to do with the learning which they have gained during the event. In other words, peoples’ ‘understanding’ can only be quantified in terms of their actions, and a good training event should be designed to impact on participants’ practice, not just their thinking or knowledge.
- 2 **Make it clear that the outcomes relate to the participants themselves.** While it is perfectly possible to state intended outcomes as those of the event itself (in other words, for example, ‘the objectives of this workshop are to explain the relevance of SENDA to computer-based learning design’) it is better practice to address the intended learning outcomes directly to the participants (for example, ‘after participating in this workshop, you will be able to take into account a range of special educational needs in screen design aspects of computer-based learning’).
- 3 **Design intended learning outcomes partly on a ‘need to know’ basis.** For example, work out for yourself what your workshop participants need to achieve through your workshop. Check out their training needs, not least with typical members of the target group for your training event. When a training event clearly addresses what participants need to become able to do, its success is assured.
- 4 **Adjust learning outcomes to include what participants may also ‘want to achieve’.** Often, the ‘need to know’ agenda and the ‘want to learn’ agenda coincide. However, there are usually additional aspects which participants want to learn, whether or not they actually need to achieve them. Wherever possible, represent both in your intended outcomes. ‘Wanting’ to learn something is a much more powerful driver than merely ‘needing’ to learn it, so it is worth doing whatever you can to ensure that at least some of your intended learning outcomes will address participants’ ‘wants’ and not just their ‘needs’.
- 5 **Make the intended outcomes personal rather than remote.** For example, it is worth making the most of ‘you’ and ‘your’ in the outcomes, rather than simply stating ‘participants will be able to....’.
- 6 **Don’t state too many intended learning outcomes at a time.** Five or six such outcomes are enough! If the list of intended outcomes is too long, the programme will appear too formidable - especially if it is just a two-hour training event!

- 7 **Make sure that the intended learning outcomes are not just 'aims'.** The outcomes should be sufficiently specific, so that participants will be clearly aware of the extent to which they have actually achieved them by the end of the training event. With 'aims', it is usually only possible for participants to have begun to work towards them during an event, rather than have actually achieved them. Intended learning outcomes should be quite specific and self-contained.
- 8 **Check that the intended learning outcomes do not appear trivial.** This sometimes happens as a result of well-intentioned efforts to make sure that the outcomes are specific, achievable and measurable, rather than broad or general. Each intended learning outcome should be seen as worthwhile in its own right by members of the target audience for the training event.
- 9 **Work out what you really mean by the intended outcomes!** It can be very worthwhile to look at each outcome in turn, and apply the phrase 'what it really means is...' and then draft out two or three alternative versions of the original outcome. Very often, at least one of these alternatives will be much better than the original version.
- 10 **Road-test your intended learning outcomes with members of the target audience.** Ask them to tell you what they think that the intended outcomes actually boil down to in practice. This can help you to fine-tune the outcomes even further, so that they are as understandable and self-explanatory as possible to the target audience.
- 11 **Always check your participants' views of their achievement of the intended learning outcomes.** For example, if you've designed three intended learning outcomes for a particular training event, list them on the workshop feedback proforma, with boxes or columns for participants to tick indicating which outcomes they feel they have 'completely achieved', or 'partly achieved' or 'not yet achieved'. This can help you to re-focus the workshop next time round, for example to go further into aspects of the workshop which led to 'not yet achieved' views from participants.
- 12 **Continue to evolve better intended learning outcomes.** For example, after running a successful training workshop, ask participants to jot down on post-its what they feel they have actually achieved at the event. Some of their responses are likely to be worth using in future as a basis for the intended learning outcomes of the same event next time round.

Tips on Designing Workshop Outline Programmes

The title, rationale and intended learning outcomes are of course important elements of the overall programme. However, the outline programme needs to present a realistic yet flexible map of the overall event. In particular, it's important to get the timing right. Any experienced workshop facilitator will confirm that however experienced you become at designing workshops, the most difficult thing to manage remains the timing. This is not least due to the fact that a training workshop is not

just a lecture or a performance by the trainer, where every aspect can be pre-planned and pre-timed. Part of the trick of designing an outline timetable is to provide a suitable skeleton which can be fleshed out in reality in a number of different ways, depending on exactly what a particular cohort of participants do on the day.

Let's look at designing such an outline by comparing two ways of going about the task, for a half-day training event, and thinking about the implications of the design. (Many of the same factors continue to apply to longer - or shorter - training events).

Programme 1	Programme 2
	0915 Coffee and registration
0930 Introduction, workshop aims	0930 Introduction, participants' expectations
1000 Exercise 1 - individual then pairs	1000 Exercise 1 - individuals then pairs
1030 Discussion arising from Exercise 1	1030 Discussion arising from Exercise 1
1100 Tea/coffee	1100 Tea/coffee break
1110 Presentation on topic 2	1120 Setting the scene for group exercise 2
1130 Exercise 2	1130 Exercise 2
1200 Plenary report-back and discussion, matters arising, workshop evaluation, action planning,	1200 Report-back from groups - two minutes each, then discussion
1230 Close of workshop	1220 Action planning round
	1225 Workshop evaluation pro-forma
	1230 Close of workshop - buffet lunch

Why is Programme 2 better than Programme 1?

- ▶ The 0915 'coffee and registration' is likely to ensure that most participants are present and ready to go at 0930. The 0930 session in Programme 1 is likely to be interrupted by people coming in late and settling in.
- ▶ 'Participants' expectations' in Programme 2 helps to get the session off to a 'soft start' - in other words anyone coming in late hasn't missed anything crucial from the facilitator, but at the same time people who are punctual and present are being valued by having their own expectations (hopes, fears, and so on) taken into account and listened to by the facilitator.
- ▶ The tea/coffee break of 20 minutes in Programme 2 is much more realistic than 10 minutes in Programme 1. A short break is likely to be followed by a late re-start; a longer break increases the probability of the overall programme keeping to time rather than slipping. Participants are much more aware, than most facilitators realise, of whether or not a programme is running to time - they may have appointments to go to immediately after the event, or trains to catch, and so on.
- ▶ There are too many 'things' in Programme 1 from 1200-1230; time slippage is inevitable, and the short but important element of 'action planning' may not get done at all.

- ▶ The 'buffet lunch' in Programme 2 is likely to encourage all participants to stay until the end, rather than slip out early to go to appointments or catch trains and so on. Furthermore, the discussion that participants may have over the buffet lunch is likely to further deepen their learning achievement arising from the workshop, and gives them an opportunity to follow up (with each other and with the facilitator) matters arising which had not already been handled during the session itself.



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Getting Participants into Groups

Most training workshops involve at least some group work. It would not be unreasonable to plan to have three small-group episodes even in a half-day training event. If there's more than one small-group episode, it becomes advisable to ensure that participants don't remain in the same group each time. Advantages of deliberately rearranging the group composition include:

Any domineering (or awkward, or prejudiced, or overly-experienced, or other) participant does not remain with the same fellow-participants for too long - the influence is distributed rather than contained.

The amount participants learn from each other is increased when, over a series of group elements, they work with most other people in the room, rather than just a few.

It can be useful to get as many as possible of the participants to know each other better - especially if they're likely to be working together again, or if they have similar experiences to share, and similar problems to address in their work.

One way of pre-planning group composition is to use (for example) three-part codes on name badges or labels, for example one Greek letter, one normal letter, and one number, as follows.

$\alpha A1$	$\beta A2$	$\gamma A3$	$\delta A4$	$\epsilon A5$
$\alpha B2$	$\beta B3$	$\gamma B4$	$\delta B5$	$\epsilon B1$
$\alpha C3$	$\beta C4$	$\gamma C5$	$\delta C1$	$\epsilon C2$
$\alpha D4$	$\beta D5$	$\gamma D1$	$\delta D2$	$\epsilon D3$
$\alpha E5$	$\beta E1$	$\gamma E2$	$\delta E3$	$\epsilon E4$

Give these labels out randomly (and ask participants to write their names on them, especially when it will be useful for them to become more familiar with each others' names). Then you can split them quickly and easily into three entirely different group configurations, each with five groups of five, as follows:

- ▶ Grouping by Greek letters
- ▶ Grouping by normal letters
- ▶ Grouping by numbers

By adding yet one more code, for example this time the symbols ∇ , \clubsuit , \diamond , \heartsuit , \spadesuit yet another configuration would be possible, by the end of which the participant with the code $\alpha A1 \diamond$ would have met and worked with all other participants out of 25 shaded in the diagram below. Continuing to add one further code would cause just about all of the participants to work with each other in five successive group configurations.

$\alpha A1 \diamond$	$\beta A2 \nabla$	$\gamma A3 \spadesuit$	$\delta A4 \heartsuit$	$\epsilon A5 \clubsuit$
$\alpha B2 \clubsuit$	$\beta B3 \diamond$	$\gamma B4 \nabla$	$\delta B5 \spadesuit$	$\epsilon B1 \heartsuit$
$\alpha C3 \heartsuit$	$\beta C4 \clubsuit$	$\gamma C5 \diamond$	$\delta C1 \nabla$	$\epsilon C2 \spadesuit$
$\alpha D4 \spadesuit$	$\beta D5 \heartsuit$	$\gamma D1 \clubsuit$	$\delta D2 \diamond$	$\epsilon D3 \nabla$
$\alpha E5 \nabla$	$\beta E1 \spadesuit$	$\gamma E2 \heartsuit$	$\delta E3 \clubsuit$	$\epsilon E4 \diamond$

Setting Tasks

Effective training workshops are essentially 'learning-by-doing' occasions, so one of the most important aspects of designing successful workshops is setting suitable tasks for workshop participants. The following guidelines are intended to help you to formulate tasks well, and brief workshop participants effectively.

Paper Based, On-Screen, or Verbal Briefings?

Each of these ways of briefing workshop participants has both advantages and disadvantages. These can be summed up as follows.

Paper-based briefings – for example in handout materials, or separate sheets or slips of paper	
Advantages	Disadvantages
Participants have the exact words of the briefings in their possession.	If the tasks have not been carefully formulated in the first place, the printed briefings may become dated or inappropriate.
Participants can carry the briefings around with them, for example when going to break-out rooms for syndicate work.	Printed words lack the additional benefits regarding tone of voice, body language, emphasis and explanation, which are associated with oral task briefings.
Participants retain the exact task briefings after the workshop, and can re-visit the tasks on their own, or cascade them to other people in their organisations.	If it is decided to alter or fine-tune the tasks orally, participants may revert to the printed briefings, particularly when away from the plenary workshop venue, for example in syndicates.
If there are several different tasks being done in parallel (for example by different syndicate groups), all participants can carry with them all the briefings, and remain aware of where their own work fits in to the bigger picture.	If it is decided to shorten particular tasks, participants may continue to work on the full version according to their printed briefings, and may end up not doing the principal parts of the intended task.

On-screen task briefings, for example overhead transparencies or PowerPoint slides	
Advantages	Disadvantages
All the workshop participants see the task briefing at the same time, and in the order that is revealed by the workshop facilitator.	When participants go to different locations for syndicate work, they may not remember exactly what the briefings were, unless they also have the briefings on paper (or carry copies of the overhead transparencies containing the briefings with them).
It is easier to fine-tune task briefings on overhead transparencies or slides than to change printed briefings.	If the task briefings have been fine-tuned in a plenary session, any pre-prepared copies of the briefings may be out of date, and may be no longer suitable for carrying to breakout rooms for syndicate work.
Participants can question the tasks in plenary before starting work on them, and clarify ambiguities.	
If all participants will be remaining in the plenary location while working on the tasks, the tasks can continue to be displayed (in adjusted forms) while they work.	If the task briefings take more than one overhead or slide, it can be necessary to 'toggle' between separate slides while participants are working on the task.
Verbal briefings	
Tone of voice, body language, emphasis, and repetition can be used to ensure that all participants know exactly what they are intended to do when working on the tasks.	If participants go away into syndicate groups, their memories of the verbal briefing may diverge between groups, and different groups may end up approaching the tasks in different ways.
Participants may be more likely to ask necessary questions in a verbal briefing, rather than assuming that because they have a task in print that they will be able to work out exactly what it means.	Participants may focus on the particular parts of a task which were the subject of plenary discussion, at the expense of other parts which may in fact be more important.

Timing of Workshop Tasks

The following suggestions relating to timing of tasks may help your workshop participants to keep to time when working on tasks, particularly when they may be in separate syndicate groups in different locations while working on the tasks.

- ▶ **Break each task into small, separate stages.** Think in terms of the discrete activities involved in each stage of the task, and make sure that key words and phrases are at the start of the briefing for each task, for example 'share your ideas on...', 'list five reasons why there could be problems with...', 'prioritise the top three problems you have thought of', and so on.
- ▶ **Give deadlines rather than durations.** For example, rather than saying 'spend about 10 minutes on...' say 'complete this stage by 1015' and so on, and make sure that participants have on paper the agreed deadlines for each stage of the overall task.
- ▶ **Don't make deadlines too optimistic.** If participants slip behind an agreed schedule for a task, they may lose heart, and fail to complete important later stages in time for plenary report-back sessions. This is particularly a problem when groups are working in separate rooms, as it is easy for one group to slip behind quite quickly without being noticed.

- ▶ **Go round the groups reminding them (for example) 'three minutes to go, please, before you move on to stage 3 of the briefing'.** This can reinforce the agreed timetable for the overall task, and avoid some groups finishing too much before others.
- ▶ **Consider providing proformas to be completed as the tasks are done.** These can remind participants exactly what they are intended to be producing as evidence of achievement of each stage of the tasks, and can ensure that separate groups continue to work along the same lines when doing tasks in parallel.



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Setting Tasks - A Checklist

The table below is intended to be used as a working checklist for planning workshop tasks, and as an action planning tool for developing tasks on the basis of experience during and after a workshop. A photocopyable version of this checklist can be found at Appendix 2

Facilitator's Checklist questions	Yes	Not yet	n/a	Action planning and reflections
Have workshop tasks been mapped so that they cover all the intended workshop outcomes, as far as is reasonably practicable?				
Is there a suitable variety in workshop tasks, so that participants don't become bored?				
Have suitable workshop tasks been devised as individual participant work?				
Have suitable workshop tasks been devised as work in pairs, trios, or other small group formats?				
Are the task briefings clear, precise and unambiguous? Has the 'what it really means is...' process been applied to clarify and simplify task briefings as far as possible?				
Will there be printed briefing notes to accompany the workshop tasks? Will it be possible for these to be edited and adjusted as the task briefing becomes clarified during plenary discussion?				
Have slides or transparencies been prepared with the main task briefings? Will it be possible for these to be edited and adjusted as necessary?				
Where possible, have tasks been trialled, so that the time needed can be estimated realistically, and the briefings can be further fine-tuned?				

	Yes	Not yet	n/a	Action planning and reflections
Have overall tasks been appropriately broken down into clear separate stages, so that timescales can be allocated realistically?				
Have minimum and maximum timescales been established, both for the overall tasks, and the separate stages for each task?				
Has it been planned so that workshop tasks will take up at least half of the total time of the workshop?				
Have 'spare' short tasks been devised, in case some of the scheduled tasks are completed faster than was expected?				
Have contingency plans been made, so that if a principal task is taking significantly longer than expected, it can be shortened or fine-tuned appropriately?				
Has it been decided how the work done by participants on each task will best be evidenced and shared?				
Where appropriate, have pro-formas been devised to help participants or groups record their work on each task, and to prepare evidence to report back their work in plenary?				
Has it been decided what role the facilitator should take while each task is in progress, for example timekeeping, helping participants keep to the tasks, clarifying briefings, answering questions?				
Where participants will be working in groups, has it been planned how group composition will be altered for successive tasks, or successive stages in an ongoing task?				

	Yes	Not yet	n/a	Action planning and reflections
Where groups will be reporting back their work on tasks, has it been decided how best to brief the groups to report-back – e.g. by a chairperson, or as a group, or using a poster or overhead?				
Have alternative tasks been devised, in case it should turn out that a particular task is inappropriate (for example if most people present have already achieved the related outcome already)?				
Have appropriate resources, for example handout materials, been prepared, for participants or groups to use while working on tasks?				



Unlocking Potential

Coping with the Unexpected

Your reputation as a trainer will depend not only on your professional expertise, but on your ability to be seen to cope with the unexpected, calmly, professionally, with humour and with dignity. The following suggestions are adapted with permission from '2000 Tips for Trainers' (ed. Phil Race, Kogan Page, London), and may help you to attain this image.

- ▶ **Welcome the unexpected!** Life is full of the unexpected. Almost every training workshop will bring with it at least one thing that is entirely unexpected. It is only an enemy if we resist it. Look at it this way: a 'competent' trainer works within what is expected; a 'professional' trainer can work within whatever turns up. Aim to be able to cope with anything. Don't worry that you don't succeed every time – no-one can.
 - ▶ **Harness the unexpected.** Don't hide from it, don't pretend it isn't there. Work out what it really means. Define it. Put it into words which everyone shares the meaning of.
 - ▶ **Turn the unexpected into 'issues' and 'questions'.** Add these to the questions and issues which your training event is based on. Sometimes, the things that arise from unexpected developments are more important than the original issues or questions that your training event was meant to address.
 - ▶ **Seek everyone's views.** When the unexpected turns up, don't feel that you are obliged to have all the answers up
- your sleeve. It can be the ideal opportunity to say 'I don't really know – what do you think?' to your participants. They will respect you all the more for this.
- ▶ **Legitimise the unexpected.** When important matters turn up 'unexpectedly', add these formally to the agenda of your training session. Turn them into additional objectives or intended outcomes.
 - ▶ **Ask for the unexpected.** Keep asking 'what else may we need to be able to deal with?' When the 'unexpected' comes directly from your training event participants, they already have a sense of ownership of it, and are all the more willing to try to work out ways of handling it.
 - ▶ **Be prepared for the unexpected.** As a training event facilitator, be ready for all the things which could happen – overhead projector bulbs blowing, power cuts, a pneumatic drill starting up outside the window, coffee not arriving at all, and so on. Always have something else in mind which can limit the damage of the unexpected.
 - ▶ **Capitalise on the unexpected.** Shamelessly, draw learning points from ways that the unexpected has been successfully handled. Participants will remember the way that you (for example) turned the three fire-alarms (due to a fault in the circuit) in one morning into a learning exercise!

- ▶ **Remember that the unexpected is shared.** The unexpected can help bring you closer to your participants. It can help you confirm your role as 'benevolent leader'. It can help them gain respect for your judgement and decisiveness.
- ▶ **Always have 'Plan B'!** When it is quite clear that unexpected factors have made your original plan unworkable, let it show that all the time you had in mind an alternative way that the aims of your training session could be achieved.



Unlocking Potential

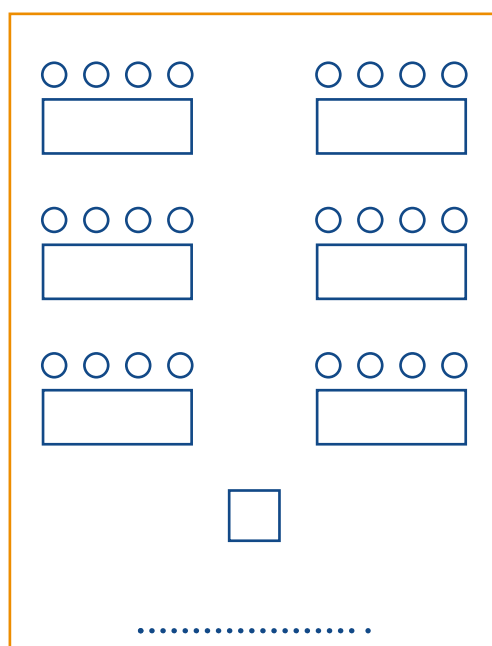
Room Layout – Creating an Active Learning Environment

Spending a little time and thought getting the layout of the room into a 'fit for purpose' format can pay huge dividends at training workshops.

Different Room Layouts

Suppose, for example, a rectangular room is to contain a projection point and screen, and 24 participants, working in fours, seated at tables.

Figure 1 shows how the room may look if the screen is on one of the shorter walls, and the tables are arranged in rows.



The problems with this arrangement include:

- ▶ The screen is likely to be easily visible only to the participants on the front two tables, who themselves could be in the line of sight of people sitting behind them.
- ▶ The participants on the tables at the rear of the room are likely to feel less involved in the workshop than those at the front.
- ▶ Participants can not see each others' faces at all well, in particular those at the front who can't see how others are reacting to the workshop without turning round.

Key

- = Chair
- ▭ = Table
- ▣ = Projection point
- = Screen

Figure 1 An unpromising layout

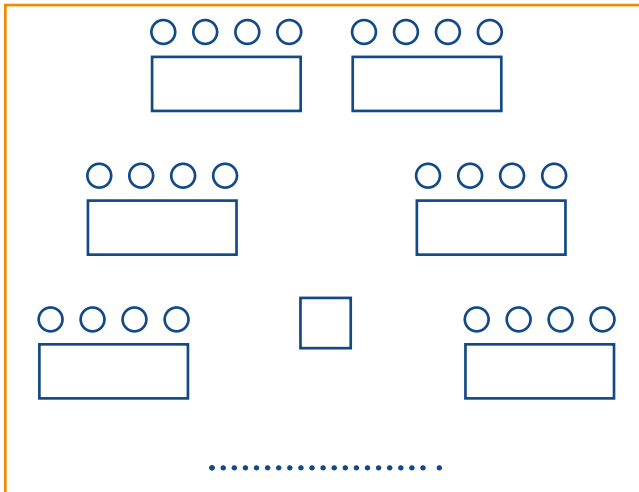


Figure 2 The same room the other way round

Figure 2 shows how the same room could appear simply by altering the position of the screen and projection point.

This is better in that the facilitator is nearer to more of the participants, and lines of visibility are better; with no participants now being a long way from the screen. However, they are all still sitting in rows, and are not able to see participants' faces at other tables well.

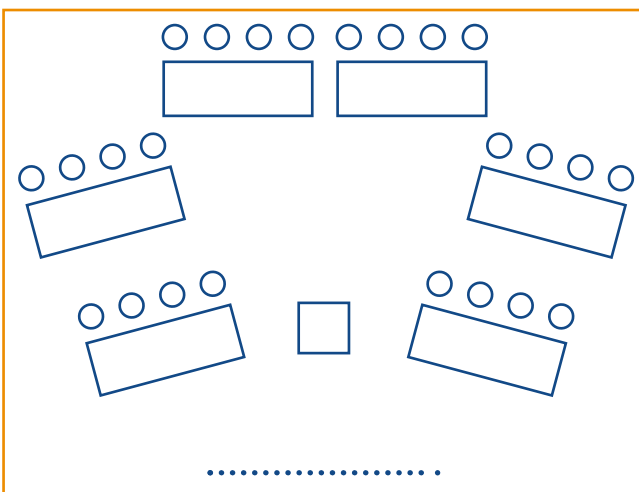


Figure 3 The same room with more opportunity for participation

Figure 3 shows what the room could look like by turning some of the tables round at an angle.

This is better in that participants can see each other considerably better, and the facilitator is less likely to be between most of them and the screen.

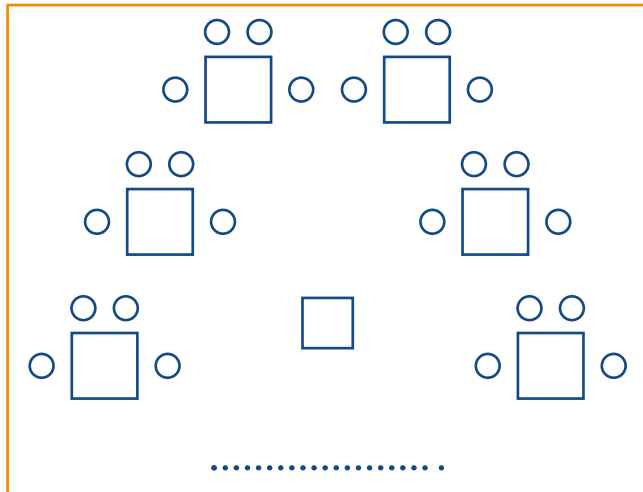


Figure 4 The same room with maximum flexibility

Figure 4 shows an arrangement with square tables rather than rectangular ones.

This is even better, as when working in groups of four, participants are much better able to see each others' faces, and when talking to each other the conversations in one group are less likely to interfere with those of another group. Also the facilitator is much more central, and can interact more easily with any of the groups as necessary.

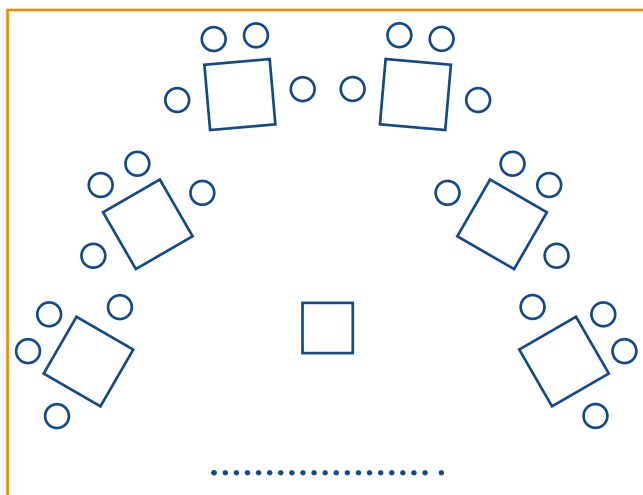


Figure 5 The same room with even less formality

Next, Figure 5 shows the extra degree of informality which can be achieved simply by turning all tables so that none is set 'square' in the room.

More of the participants can see each other in this layout, and the facilitator is better able to interact equally with each of the groups, and plenary discussion is likely to be far more fluent than in some of the layout options shown by the earlier Figures.

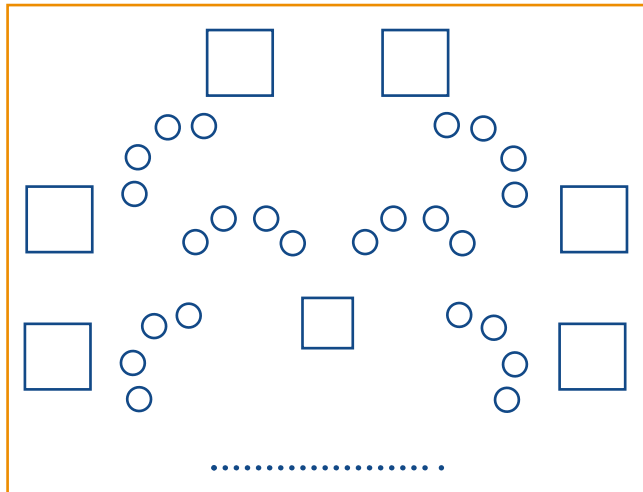


Figure 6 Participants working in plenary

A further possibility is putting the tables around the edges of the room, in such a way so that participants can go to the tables when they need to work together in groups at a table, but talk together in clusters in the plenary sessions. These configurations are shown in Figures 6 and 7.

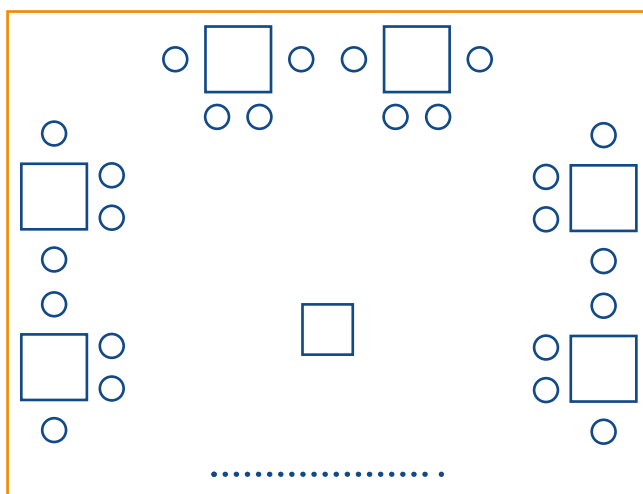


Figure 7 Participants working in groups

Figure 6 shows them in plenary formation, but already clustered in groups of four. It then takes only a short while for them to move their chairs to the respective tables to form working groups round each table as shown in Figure 7.

The discussion above refers to one particular overall group size, 24 participants, but the ideas can easily be extended to other sizes and different numbers of groups. It isn't always possible to have equal numbers of participants in each group, for example if the total number is 13, it is usually necessary to decide on the relative merits of:

- ▶ three groups of three, and one of four
- ▶ two groups of four and one of five

and so on. It is best to avoid having any group simply being a pair; however, as there is much more of a difference between the respective dynamics of a pair and a trio, than between those of a trio and a quartet for example.

Room Layout - A Checklist

The checklist below is intended to help you to make best use of the training rooms and facilities at your disposal. A photocopyable version of this checklist can be found at Appendix 3.

Facilitator's Checklist questions	Yes	Not yet	No	Action planning comments
Is the room somewhere you've worked before, so that you know the strengths and weaknesses of the venue already?				
Will you be able to get access to the room to set up, for at least an hour before the workshop is due to start?				
Is there an overhead projector and screen in the room already (if needed)?				
Is there data projection already installed in the room?				
Is the room equipped with blinds or curtains, so that the lighting can be dimmed sufficiently for data projection if necessary?				
Can the room lighting be dimmed in the vicinity of the projection screen, while still allowing participants to see handouts, other paperwork, and each other clearly?				
If there are external windows in the room, can direct sunlight be prevented from inconveniencing particular participants?				
Is there already a flipchart in the room?				
Have you listed all the equipment you may need to take to the room for your workshop?				
Is the seating in the room moveable?				

	Yes	Not yet	No	Action planning comments
Is the room layout and furniture such that any participant with a physical impairment will be able to be accommodated easily?				
Is the room layout such that any participant who is deaf or hard of hearing, or has a vision impairment, can be accommodated appropriately?				
Will there be sufficient chairs in the room (e.g. a few more than the estimated maximum number of workshop participants)?				
Will participants need to have a table or other writing surface to work on during plenary sessions of the workshop?				
Are the tables moveable?				
Will syndicate groups be able to work in parallel in the main room?				
Will syndicate groups need to spread out into breakout rooms for some workshop tasks?				
Will syndicate groups need to work round a table for their group tasks?				
Has the plenary room arrangement been made so as to maximise participants' eye contact with each other?				
Has the plenary room arrangement been planned so that all participants have a clear uninterrupted view of the screen?				
Will you be able to use the overhead projector or data projector without obstructing some participants' view of the screen?				

	Yes	Not yet	No	Action planning comments
Will you be able to circulate freely to groups of participants working together during the workshop?				
Will it be possible to lock the room during refreshment breaks (if appropriate) so that participants' valuables will be secure?				



Unlocking Potential

Room Layout - Some Tips

Participants can become very bored if they are always sitting in the same chair in the same place and with the same neighbours – even in a training event lasting half a day, let alone a full day workshop. The following suggestions may help you to ensure that your training venue is well chosen, and suitably set out.

- ▶ **Try to choose rooms which lend themselves to variety.** Training rooms where chairs and tables can be moved around easily are best. Tiered lecture theatres and boardrooms with heavy tables are worst!
- ▶ **Don't encourage participants to hide behind tables.** When there is a table between them and you, it is somehow easier for them to sit passively, and lean on the table, and even fall asleep. With nothing to lean on, people are more attentive and involved. Having tables set around the edge of the room can be better.
- ▶ **Be kind to bums!** Use your own experience to decide what sorts of chairs are best. Remember that participants will be sitting down for longer periods than you will. Concentration spans are less to do with brains, and more to do with bums!
- ▶ **Don't have too many spare chairs.** Have only a few spare chairs; stack up any others in a secluded corner – or better still, get them out of the room altogether. Spare chairs often become a no-go zone near the trainer (people instinctively sit at the back of a room if there's a back to sit at). Alternatively, spare chairs get occupied by coats, bags or briefcases.
- ▶ **Avoid straight lines or rows of chairs.** A circle of chairs, or a U-shape, usually works better for an introductory plenary session (with any tables behind the chairs). Try to arrange the chairs so that all participants have an uninterrupted view of you, and of the projector screen and flipchart. Don't be afraid to move chairs!
- ▶ **Consider getting participants to move the furniture themselves.** This is particularly useful when you want to rearrange the layout of the room during a session. It's often far quicker than you doing it yourself (for example in a coffee break), and it's psychologically useful that participants have a sense of ownership of the environment layout when possible.
- ▶ **Help ensure that participants can see each others' faces.** Again, circles and U-shapes work best. When participants can observe each other easily, they get to know each other better and more quickly, and feel more involved in your training event right from the start.
- ▶ **Have no safe hiding place!** Have you noticed that in rectangular table layouts, the most awkward participants always seem to establish themselves in one or other of the back corners? If there aren't any corners to start with, this can't

happen. (However, when you set out your circle or U-shape, make sure that there are no chairs anywhere near any tables that are in the back corners!).

- ▶ **‘Now please find a table!’** When you give participants individual or group tasks to do, invite them to move their chairs to any of the tables round the edge of the room (and not the tables to their chairs). This also helps you to be able to circulate freely, and speak to them in groups or individually as necessary.
- ▶ **Make full use of any other rooms you have available.** Having additional rooms for syndicate work gives participants a change. Make sure that the same syndicate isn't stuck in the same syndicate room for session after session – ring the changes and give everyone some variety. Consider moving the plenary location around too if there is more than one room big enough.



Unlocking Potential

Using Flipcharts

Flipcharts are among the most common of visual media used by trainers. The following suggestions have been adapted from '2000 Tips for Trainers' (ed. Phil Race, Kogan Page, 2001) and may help you make your use of this medium professional and trouble-free.

- ▶ **Set the flipchart up before you start.** Some flipchart stands have a will of their own, and seem to come provided with three legs of unequal length. Don't allow your participants to see you struggle with the thing!
- ▶ **Bring your own pens.** There's nothing more frustrating than a flipchart without proper pens. Overhead projector pens will do in a crisis, but your lettering will look spidery and may be hard to read at the back of the room.
- ▶ **Don't put too much onto a flipchart.** It's best to 'write big' and use broad pens, so that everyone can see all the words without difficulty. Unless your handwriting is unusually good you may find it best to print upper-case letters when writing on flipcharts. But remember that whole sentences or bullet points in upper-case letters tend to generate eye fatigue.
- ▶ **Don't forget your Blu-tack.** You may often want to display several flipcharts at the same time, so make sure you've got that essential means of sticking flipcharts to doors, walls, and even windows. Be careful, however, if walls are wallpapered – with care it's still possible to stick flipcharts to such walls as long as you develop the knack of using Blu-tack sparingly, and gently peel off the chart with the Blu-tack still sticking to the chart rather than to the wallpaper.
- ▶ **Make it easy to tear off successive flipcharts.** With pads of perforated flipchart paper, this is straightforward. However, sometimes you will have to make your own arrangements for removing sheets neatly. Often, it helps to simply unscrew the two knobs which secure the chart to the easel, allowing you to make clean, neat tear-offs at the very top of the pad of charts.
- ▶ **A sharp knife can be useful.** For example, there are small collapsible razor-knives. With these, you can (with practice) score along the top of a chart neatly and tear it off leaving a straight edge at the top. Be careful not to cut more than one sheet at a time though!
- ▶ **Decide when 'live' flipcharting really is a sensible choice.** Don't end up writing long sentences dictated by participants. Flipcharts work best for keywords, for example in brainstorming sessions.
- ▶ **Prepare important flipcharts in advance.** For example, if you're going to use flipcharts to write up tasks for participants to do in your training event, it's useful to be able to turn straight to a ready-made flipchart rather than write it all out with them watching.

- ▶ **Get participants to use flipcharts.**
For example, giving a syndicate a flipchart as a means of reporting-back on the task they are doing can help concentrate their minds on the task in hand, rather than engaging in sophisticated work-avoidance strategies!
- ▶ **Always have some rubber bands.**
Often, you'll want to take away the flipcharts produced at a training event, so you can write up a report on the event, or collate and distribute the products of the event. An armful of loose flipcharts is not an easy package to carry away – but rolled up tightly with a couple of rubber bands, is much more manageable.



Unlocking Potential

Designing a Feedback Questionnaire

Feedback or Evaluation?

People sometimes confuse feedback and evaluation. Many providers of training workshops use 'evaluation questionnaires' at the end of a workshop, but it can be argued that in fact these are feedback questionnaires, and only part of a wider evaluation context. Evaluation, in its true sense (in the context of training workshops) cannot just be achieved through a questionnaire immediately, but needs to be done during the longer timescale of putting into practice what has been gained from a training event. Some argue firmly that "evaluation takes several years", and needs to embrace a variety of elements, such as:

- ▶ how well the learning gained at a training event has been able to be put into practice in day-to-day work contexts;
- ▶ how well a variety of feedback processes filled in the bigger picture of the success of the event, these feedback elements including at least three or four from the following:
 - ▶ structured feedback questionnaire elements
 - ▶ open-ended feedback questions;
 - ▶ face-to-face one-to-one interviews

or discussions about the event, at the end of the event and later;

- ▶ face-to-face group interviews or discussions about the event;
- ▶ testimony from third parties (employers, line managers, and so on) in a position to quantify the added-value arising from the participant's attendance at the workshop;
- ▶ personal reflections of the participant, relating to the event itself, and the implementation of achievement gained from the event.

Participants themselves often comment at the end of a successful workshop that they do not yet know how useful it will turn out to be, as this unsurprisingly depends on the actual relevance to their developing work in a wider context. Indeed, if the workshop is training them for new or developing work responsibilities, they cannot yet assess its impact or relevance.

It is not surprising that feedback questionnaires issued towards the end of a workshop have earned the nickname 'happiness sheets' in many training contexts, as the feedback

participants give relates substantially to how they feel at the end of the event, rather than on how much the event will turn out to have influenced their practice. Admittedly, happiness and value are connected, and participants are more likely to have gained a great deal from a workshop if they feel inspired and enthused at the end of the event.

Collecting and analysing participants' feedback at workshops takes time and energy, not least for the participants themselves who provide the feedback. Therefore, it is important that feedback is not simply planned 'for its own sake' or 'because it is always done in this way'. The checklist which follows should help you to decide why you are seeking and analysing feedback, and this in turn will help you to fine-tune what feedback you seek, and how you seek it from participants.



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Purposeful Feedback Checklist

For each of the following feedback purposes, decide the relative importance in the context of your particular workshop. A photocopyable version of this checklist can be found at Appendix 4.

Feedback purpose	Very important	Quite important	Not really important
To gain participants' feedback on the particular workshop			
To fine-tune further workshops in a series of related workshops			
To find out more about generic workshop skills and processes to use in future workshops			
To determine participants' further training needs			
To satisfy organisational requirements to monitor the quality and relevance of training provision			
To find out more about particular problem areas, so that they can be addressed in future training provision			
To find out more about particular training strengths, so that they can be used to greater effect in future provision			
To find out more about a particular cohort of participants, so that future training for them can be fine-tuned			
To determine the effect of new or exploratory workshop techniques, so that their future usage can be justified or critiqued			
To provide data to be used in the appraisal or monitoring of workshop facilitators			
To form the basis of an evaluation report to be written in due course about the particular workshop or training programme			

	Very important	Quite important	Not really important
To provide evidence for quality assurance requirements of the organisation			



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Some Dangers of Questionnaires

Putting aside for the moment the reservations expressed above about whether questionnaires can be regarded as feedback or evaluation devices, there are some further limitations of questionnaires as a methodology.

- ▶ **Questionnaires can induce ‘surface’ responses.** Because they are normally completed relatively quickly, perhaps as participants are eager to get on their journeys from the event, there can be a tendency to ‘tick the boxes’ lightly rather than in a considered manner.
- ▶ **Questionnaires can be boring to complete.** Where participants want to answer a particular question this isn’t a problem, but where they have no strong feelings, giving their answers to routine questions can become a chore.
- ▶ **Filling in a questionnaire can be a lonely experience!** At highly participative workshops, the only quiet period may be when everyone fills in the ubiquitous questionnaire, and this can cause the whole event to ‘end with a whimper rather than a bang’. It can be worth considering getting small groups of participants to fill in a copy of the questionnaire together, agreeing (or indicating their disagreement appropriately) on their collective responses to the questions, and carrying forward their thinking of what has been achieved by the workshop.
- ▶ **Questionnaires can be hijacked by ‘happiness’ factors.** For example, if a workshop facilitator has inspired and enthused participants, their responses to all the questionnaire elements can be ‘rosy’ and congratulatory. Similarly, if some participants have found parts of the workshop challenging or difficult, they can be ‘blue’ in their responses to questionnaire elements. In short, the extent to which they have grown to like or dislike the facilitator can colour their responses even to quite neutral questions about the venue or the catering.
- ▶ **Quantitative analysis seems all too easy with structured questionnaires.** For example, it is easy to count up the numbers of ticks in ‘excellent’ or ‘unsatisfactory’ boxes, and come to what seems to be a reliable judgement on the success (or otherwise) of a training workshop. However, taking into account the points earlier in this list, we need to ask whether the data is valid enough to make this kind of statistical analysis.

Striking the Balance: Structured and Open-Ended Questionnaire Elements

Having accepted that questionnaires are only one part of the wider evaluation picture, and that in themselves they are essentially feedback instruments (and usually only 'end of event' feedback), it is useful to suggest some guidelines for making the most of such questionnaires. The following checklist questions may help you to put questionnaires to best use in the context of training workshops. A photocopyable version of this checklist can be found at Appendix 5.

Facilitator's Checklist questions	Yes	Not yet	No	Not applicable
Is there a suitable balance between structured questions (e.g. ticking boxes) and open-ended questions (e.g. giving opinions)?				
Is the questionnaire of a suitable length (e.g. no more than two sides of A4)?				
Will the questionnaire take no more than five minutes to fill in on average?				
Are all of the questions useful? In other words, do the questions elicit feedback that is likely to be needed by the facilitator and others involved?				
Do at least some of the questions allow participants to express views and opinions they want to express, and develop these in detail when they choose to do so?				
Will participants' overall response to the questionnaire lend itself to ready analysis, where this is appropriate?				
Has the questionnaire been trialled with representative participants, primed to think of other questions which could be included to give further useful feedback?				
Has the questionnaire already been developed on the basis of using it in practice, and deciding which are the most useful elements?				

	Yes	Not yet	No	Not applicable
Has it been decided who will collect and collate the findings of the questionnaire, and how these findings will be presented to the facilitator?				
Have the questions been asked as directly as possible? In other words, have all foreseeable ambiguities been ironed out in the wording?				
Will the questionnaire be used in the same form for a series of events, and are there good reasons for doing this?				
Is the questionnaire specific enough to the particular event for which it has been designed?				
Has thought been given to getting pairs or small groups of participants to complete the questionnaire, rather than individuals?				
Is the overall length of the questionnaire proportionate to the duration of the workshop? (For example, one side of A4 for a two-hour event, but no more than two sides of A4 for longer events).				
Will it be relatively straightforward to use the questionnaire to produce a summary report of the overall workshop feedback?				
Is it possible to predict which is likely to be the single most important element of this questionnaire?				
Will it be useful to follow-up this questionnaire by a further one, for example three weeks after the workshop?				

	Yes	Not yet	No	Not applicable
Will it be useful to make further contact with a random sample of the people who filled in the questionnaire (e.g. by telephone or email), asking them particular clarifying questions, to provide better feedback on the workshop?				
Will it be useful for the facilitator to fill in a copy of the questionnaire at the end of the workshop, to indicate what he or she expects as views of the average participant?				



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Some Ideas for Structured Questions

Having already stressed that questionnaires should be short, relevant and direct, it is likely in most circumstances that some structured questions should be included, but no more than a single side of A4 in most contexts.

The following examples may give you ideas of your own to develop for your workshops.

Event organisation

What is your view of the details you were given before the event commenced?

Excellent ☐ Very good ☐ Good ☐ Satisfactory ☐ Poor ☐

Meeting your expectations

How well did the event meet your own expectations?

Fully met ☐ Partially met ☐ Not met ☐



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Specific ratings of elements of the workshop					
Workshop aspects	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Poor	Comments?
Location					
Refreshments					
Clarity of presentations					
Facilitator's knowledge					
Handling of questions					
Amount of discussion					
Amount of participation					
Relevance to your needs					
Value for your time spent					
Quality of handouts					

Achievement of intended outcomes: how well do you feel that the workshop enabled you personally to achieve each of the intended learning outcomes?				
	I feel I've really achieved this now	I feel I've partially achieved this now	I don't feel I've achieved this yet	I had already achieved this before the workshop
(Learning outcome 1)				
(Learning outcome 2)				
(Learning outcome 3)				
(Learning outcome 4)				

Some Ideas for Open-Ended Questions

The following table includes a selection of questions which could be useful for finding out in greater depth how individual participants (or indeed groups of participants) benefited from a workshop.

Stop, start and continue: in the boxes below, please give suggestions to be taken into account when a similar workshop is to be designed.

Stop	Start	Continue

Questions about your experience of the workshop	Your responses
What was the most useful thing you personally gained from this workshop?	
What (if anything) do you consider should have been missed out from this workshop?	
What extra (if anything) do you think should have been added to this workshop?	
To what extent do you feel your time at this workshop has been usefully spent?	
What (if anything) surprised you most about what you learned from this workshop?	

Questions about your experience of the workshop	Your responses
What did you find the most difficult aspect of this workshop?	
What is the most important thing you yourself plan to do directly as a result of this workshop?	
What (if anything) will you personally now try not to do as a result of your experience on this workshop?	
To what extent would you recommend that a colleague should take part in a similar workshop?	



Unlocking Potential

Checklist for Slides and Overheads

The following checklist should help you to ensure that your training resource materials are fit for purpose and professional. A photocopiable version of this checklist can be found at Appendix 6.

Facilitator's checklist statements	Yes, I do this	I will need to consider this, and action planning comments
Font sizes of at least 30 point are used.		
Slides are not over-full – several separate slides are used rather than trying to present too much on any one slide.		
Slide titles are used systematically, so that it is always clear what a particular slide is about, and where it fits into the ongoing theme.		
Sans serif fonts are used (e.g. Arial, Comic Sans MS, MS Sans Serif).		
UPPER CASE TEXT IS AVOIDED IN SIGNIFICANT AMOUNTS (i.e. avoiding the equivalent of 'shouting' in email communication).		
Bold is used for emphasis on slides or overheads, rather than italics or underlined		
Bullet points or numbers are used, rather than continuous prose.		
Overhead transparencies are designed to be moved up the screen so that the part being discussed can always be seen in the top half of the projected image.		

Facilitator's checklist statements	Yes, I do this	I will need to consider this, and action planning comments
PowerPoint slides make use of the upper part of the screen, so that participants at the back of the room do not have difficulty seeing the lowest text or bullet point.		
Dark colours for text (black, dark blue, dark green) on a light background (white, yellow) where the ambient lighting level may be relatively high.		
Light colours for text (white, yellow) are used on a dark background (dark blue, black) where the ambient lighting level may be adjusted to be low.		
Colours and backgrounds which can cause difficulties when viewing from a distance are avoided (e.g. red text on green backgrounds).		
Animation effects are used with restraint (e.g. text flying in from one side or the other for successive bullet points).		
Slide transition effects are used with restraint (e.g. slides dissolving into the next one, checkerboarding, and so on).		
Diagrams, flowcharts and other visuals are big enough and bold enough to be clearly readable from the back of the workshop room.		
Particular care is taken to make labels or captions on diagrams clearly visible, and in font sizes and colours which are large enough to be read easily at the back of the room.		
Paper-based copies of the slides are readily available for participants who need them to take them away.		

Facilitator's checklist statements	Yes, I do this	I will need to consider this, and action planning comments
Large-print paper-based copies of the slides can be made available to participants who have a vision impairment.		
Line spacing is sufficient for text-based slides to be easily read on-screen.		
Additional line spacing is provided between sentences and bullet points.		
Where prose is presented, the left-hand side is justified, with a ragged edge at the right-hand side (i.e. avoiding two-sided justification which can cause irritating differences in the spacing between words on a slide).		



Unlocking Potential

Designing a Training Workshop – An Overall Checklist

The following checklist is intended to be a working tool for planning a workshop, and for revisiting after the event as an aid to learning from experience and fine-tuning planning for future events. A photocopyable version of this checklist can be found at Appendix 7.

The questions are intended to be indicative, and you may well decide to adapt the ideas of this template to make your own working tool for workshop planning.

In each case, tick the 'yes', 'not yet', or 'n/a' (not applicable) columns as you plan the event, then return once more to the checklist after the event using the 'Reflections with hindsight after the event' column to help you to decide how best to put into practice what you have learned from the planning you have done.

	Yes	Not yet	n/a	Reflections with hindsight after the event
Drafting the workshop outline, and publicising the event				
Has a good title been chosen for the event? Will this title be 'lived up to' by the event in practice? Will it seem relevant to participants, and attract the right participants?				
Has the 'Rationale' been drafted well? Does it clarify well what the title actually means in practice, and why the workshop will be important and useful to participants?				

	Yes	Not yet	n/a	Reflections with hindsight after the event
Have intended workshop outcomes been formulated carefully? Are these relevant and achievable? Do these enable intended participants to see exactly what the workshop will be about? Will these ensure that there are no unwelcome surprises or disappointments for participants at the workshop?				
Has an outline programme been worked out? Does this give enough detail of how the workshop will unfold? Is the outline programme still flexible enough to allow the workshop to be fine-tuned at the event itself, to accommodate participants' wishes, expectations and emergent needs?				
Have decisions been made about the optimum number of participants, and the minimum and maximum numbers for the event?				
Choosing the venue, and setting it up				
Is the training room a 'known quantity'?				
Has the room been visited and checked out for size, shape, lighting, equipment, furniture, and so on?				
Is the seating moveable?				
Are the tables easily moveable?				
Have decisions been made about the initial room layout, e.g. for plenary introductions?				
Have decisions been made about the way that small-groups will be accommodated for group work elements of the workshop?				

	Yes	Not yet	n/a	Reflections with hindsight after the event
Will breakout rooms be available nearby for small-group elements of the workshop?				
Will it be necessary to allow time before the workshop to set up the room in exactly the required format?				
Will there be a flipchart in the room?				
Will there be an overhead projector in the room?				
Will data projection facilities be needed in the room?				
Will refreshments be allowed in the room? Or...				
...is there a suitable area for refreshments outside the room, or nearby?				
Paperwork, briefings, handouts, slides and overheads, and so on				
Have joining instructions been prepared, if necessary, to help participants find the venue easily?				
Have handout materials been prepared and copied?				
Will handout materials be sent to participants in advance of the event?				
Will handout materials be issued to participants at the start of the event?				
Will handout materials be issued incrementally at stages during the event?				
Will handout materials be issued to participants at the end of the event?				

	Yes	Not yet	n/a	Reflections with hindsight after the event
Will copies of slides or overheads be made available to participants at the event?				
Will task briefings be issued separately to participants when each task is started?				
Has a feedback questionnaire been designed relevant to the particular event?				
Does the feedback questionnaire include questions which probe into how well participants feel they have achieved the intended learning outcomes?				
Getting the workshop off to a good start				
Will participants be welcomed, signed-in, and given coffee or tea as they arrive?				
Is there a 'getting to know each other' introductory exercise at the beginning of the workshop?				
Will the intended workshop outcomes be explained clearly near the beginning of the workshop?				
Will it be possible to fine-tune the intended workshop outcomes in the light of participants' expectations at the start of the workshop?				
Have plans been made about how best to accommodate anyone who arrives late and misses the opening stages of the workshop?				
Making it an active learning experience				
Is there an emphasis on participants doing things rather than simply listening to people talking at them?				

	Yes	Not yet	n/a	Reflections with hindsight after the event
Is there a suitable variety of tasks, including individual work, small-group work, reporting-back in plenary, question-and-answer sessions, and so on?				
Have task briefings been thought through carefully so that participants will stay on task?				
Are the tasks demonstrably linked to the intended workshop outcomes?				
Have plans been made to allow participants to work in different groupings over the course of the workshop, so that they get to know each other better?				
Have plans been made to debrief each workshop task, and allow participants to share the results of their work?				
Bringing the workshop to a good conclusion				
Have plans been made so that the programme can be adjusted if necessary so that the event will end on time?				
Has it been decided what the most appropriate 'ending' activity will be for the workshop?				
Has time been left for participants to complete a short feedback questionnaire before they leave?				
After the workshop				
Has participants' feedback been collected and analysed?				

	Yes	Not yet	n/a	Reflections with hindsight after the event
Have decisions been made about adjustments to make to future workshops in the light of participants' feedback?				
Will participants receive details of any particular issues raised (e.g. flipchart notes, questions, recommendations) they made at the workshop?				
Has the facilitator reflected on the successes and trials of the workshop, and made notes to capture these reflections?				



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Reflecting on your Workshop

It is very valuable to reflect on each workshop you lead, and to learn from things which went well, and of course to think about what could have gone better. The main problem with reflecting is that unless some record of reflection is made at the time, your best ideas can just evaporate away again.

The following table can be a starting point for reflecting after running a training workshop, and for capturing your reflections so that you can put them to good use when planning and running future workshops. The questions below are just indicative ones; you may wish to use these as a starting point towards developing your own personal reflections checklist to use after each workshop. A photocopyable version of this checklist can be found at Appendix 8.

Facilitator's reflection checklist questions	Your responses and action-planning ideas
What particular aspect of this workshop was the thing that worked best of all? Why did this element work really well? How can I make sure that I capitalise on this in my future training workshops?	
What else worked really well at this workshop? How best can I build in similar features into my future workshops?	
What worked least well at this particular workshop? Why was this? What can I do in future workshops to minimise the chance that similar things will happen again?	
What surprised me most at this particular workshop? Why was this unexpected? What would I now do, with hindsight, to address this, if it were to happen again at a future workshop?	

Facilitator's reflection checklist questions	Your responses and action-planning ideas
How well do I now think that I started this particular workshop? What have I learned about how best to start this particular kind of workshop? How will I now fine-tune the beginning of a future similar workshop?	
How well did I explain the intended learning outcomes to participants? Which of these outcomes seemed to be most important to them? How best can I, with hindsight, adjust the intended learning outcomes to be more relevant to future participants at similar events?	
Was the number of participants too many, too few, or just right for the particular workshop? What can I do to make it more likely that I have an optimum number of participants for this kind of workshop in future?	
How much did the participants turn out to know already, on average? Was this more than I expected or less than I expected? How would I adjust the content of a future workshop to fine-tune it better to what the participants are likely to know already? How best can I find out more from them about what they already know at the start of a similar workshop in future?	
What was the best thing about the training room at this particular workshop? Why did this really help the event? What can I do to try to ensure that this kind of venue feature will be put to good use in future events?	
What was the worst thing about the training room at this particular workshop? What can I do in future to minimise the risk of similar things spoiling a workshop?	

Facilitator's reflection checklist questions	Your responses and action-planning ideas
What was the best thing about the actual participants at this particular workshop? How best can I try to make use of similar strengths among future participants?	
What was the best thing about the actual participants at this particular workshop? How best can I try to make use of similar strengths among future participants?	
What behaviours did the most difficult participant show at this particular workshop? What can I do to address such behaviours at future events, if they occur again?	
What was my own best moment at this particular workshop? Why do I feel good about this particular aspect? What can I do to lead to more such moments at future workshops?	
What is the single most important thing I wish I hadn't done at this workshop? Why do I feel badly about this? How best can I avoid doing this in future workshops?	
What was the most important thing I learned about the topic of my workshop on this occasion? How best can I make use of what I learned on future occasions?	
What, with hindsight, would I now miss out of the workshop? Why would I now choose to miss this out of similar workshops in the future?	
What else, with hindsight, do I wish I had been able to include in this particular workshop? How best can I make time to include something along these lines into future similar workshops?	

Facilitator's reflection checklist questions	Your responses and action-planning ideas
What was the most unexpected event at this workshop? How well do I now think that I handled this? How would I handle the same sort of thing differently at a future workshop?	
How well do I think I closed the workshop? Did I end it with a whimper or a bang?! Was I rushed towards the end of the workshop, trying to get through everything on the agenda? What would I do next time round, with hindsight, to make sure that a future similar workshop ended really positively?	
What do I feel about the feedback I have received from participants at this workshop? What will be the most important thing that I will do differently next time as a result of this feedback? What will be the most important thing I will do in exactly the same way because of this feedback?	
What was the most hurtful comment or grading in participants' feedback? Why do I find this hurtful? Was it justified? Is it really important considering the feedback as a whole? Would it be useful for me to do something different next time round to address this particular aspect of critical feedback?	
What was the most pleasing comment or grading I received in participants' feedback? Why does this please me so much? Will it be possible for me to aim to get further similar feedback in future, and how will I adjust a future workshop to do so?	
What turned out to be the most revealing question on the feedback questionnaire? Why was this? How could I develop the questionnaire to get better feedback next time round?	

Facilitator's reflection checklist questions	Your responses and action-planning ideas
How well did participants feel that they had achieved the intended learning outcomes at the end of the workshop? Which outcomes had they achieved best? Were any of the intended outcomes less important than others? How would it be useful, with hindsight, to adjust the intended learning outcomes for a similar workshop next time round?	
What is the most important thing I have learned about facilitating workshops from this event? How will I put this learning to good use at future workshops?	



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Appendix I - One-Page Workshop Outline

Workshop Title:

Facilitator:

Date and Time:

Venue:

Rationale**Intended workshop outcomes**

After participating in this workshop, you should be better able to:

▶

▶

▶

Workshop outline programme

Time	Workshop element
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About the facilitator:

Appendix 2 - Setting Tasks Checklist

Facilitator's Checklist questions	Yes	Not yet	n/a	Action planning and reflections
Have workshop tasks been mapped so that they cover all the intended workshop outcomes, as far as is reasonably practicable?				
Is there a suitable variety in workshop tasks, so that participants don't become bored?				
Have suitable workshop tasks been devised as individual participant work?				
Have suitable workshop tasks been devised as work in pairs, trios, or other small group formats?				
Are the task briefings clear, precise and unambiguous? Has the 'what it really means is...' process been applied to clarify and simplify task briefings as far as possible?				
Will there be printed briefing notes to accompany the workshop tasks? Will it be possible for these to be edited and adjusted as the task briefing becomes clarified during plenary discussion?				
Have slides or transparencies been prepared with the main task briefings? Will it be possible for these to be edited and adjusted as necessary?				
Where possible, have tasks been trialled, so that the time needed can be estimated realistically, and the briefings can be further fine-tuned?				
Have overall tasks been appropriately broken down into clear separate stages, so that timescales can be allocated realistically?				

	Yes	Not yet	n/a	Action planning and reflections
Have minimum and maximum timescales been established, both for the overall tasks, and the separate stages for each task?				
Has it been planned so that workshop tasks will take up at least half of the total time of the workshop?				
Have 'spare' short tasks been devised, in case some of the scheduled tasks are completed faster than was expected?				
Have contingency plans been made, so that if a principal task is taking significantly longer than expected, it can be shortened or fine-tuned appropriately?				
Has it been decided how the work done by participants on each task will best be evidenced and shared?				
Where appropriate, have pro-formas been devised to help participants or groups record their work on each task, and to prepare evidence to report back their work in plenary?				
Has it been decided what role the facilitator should take while each task is in progress, for example timekeeping, helping participants keep to the tasks, clarifying briefings, answering questions?				
Where participants will be working in groups, has it been planned how group composition will be altered for successive tasks, or successive stages in an ongoing task?				
Where groups will be reporting back their work on tasks, has it been decided how best to brief the groups to report-back – e.g. by a chairperson, or as a group, or using a poster or overhead?				

	Yes	Not yet	n/a	Action planning and reflections
Have alternative tasks been devised, in case it should turn out that a particular task is inappropriate (for example if most people present have already achieved the related outcome already)?				
Have appropriate resources, for example handout materials, been prepared, for participants or groups to use while working on tasks?				

Appendix 3 - Room Layout - A Checklist

Facilitator's Checklist questions	Yes	Not yet	No	Action planning comments
Is the room somewhere you've worked before, so that you know the strengths and weaknesses of the venue already?				
Will you be able to get access to the room to set up, for at least an hour before the workshop is due to start?				
Is there an overhead projector and screen in the room already (if needed)?				
Is there data projection already installed in the room?				
Is the room equipped with blinds or curtains, so that the lighting can be dimmed sufficiently for data projection if necessary?				
Can the room lighting be dimmed in the vicinity of the projection screen, while still allowing participants to see handouts, other paperwork, and each other clearly?				
If there are external windows in the room, can direct sunlight be prevented from inconveniencing particular participants?				
Is there already a flipchart in the room?				
Have you listed all the equipment you may need to take to the room for your workshop?				
Is the seating in the room moveable?				
Is the room layout and furniture such that any participant with a physical impairment will be able to be accommodated easily?				

	Yes	Not yet	No	Action planning comments
Is the room layout such that any participant who is deaf or hard of hearing, or has a vision impairment, can be accommodated appropriately?				
Will there be sufficient chairs in the room (e.g. a few more than the estimated maximum number of workshop participants)?				
Will participants need to have a table or other writing surface to work on during plenary sessions of the workshop?				
Are the tables moveable?				
Will syndicate groups be able to work in parallel in the main room?				
Will syndicate groups need to spread out into breakout rooms for some workshop tasks?				
Will syndicate groups need to work round a table for their group tasks?				
Has the plenary room arrangement been made so as to maximise participants' eye contact with each other?				
Has the plenary room arrangement been planned so that all participants have a clear uninterrupted view of the screen?				
Will you be able to use the overhead projector or data projector without obstructing some participants' view of the screen?				
Will you be able to circulate freely to groups of participants working together during the workshop?				
Will it be possible to lock the room during refreshment breaks (if appropriate) so that participants' valuables will be secure?				

Appendix 4 - Purposeful Feedback Checklist

Feedback purpose	Very important	Quite important	Not really important
To gain participants' feedback on the particular workshop			
To fine-tune further workshops in a series of related workshops			
To find out more about generic workshop skills and processes to use in future workshops			
To determine participants' further training needs			
To satisfy organisational requirements to monitor the quality and relevance of training provision			
To find out more about particular problem areas, so that they can be addressed in future training provision			
To find out more about particular training strengths, so that they can be used to greater effect in future provision			
To find out more about a particular cohort of participants, so that future training for them can be fine-tuned			
To determine the effect of new or exploratory workshop techniques, so that their future usage can be justified or critiqued			
To provide data to be used in the appraisal or monitoring of workshop facilitators			
To form the basis of an evaluation report to be written in due course about the particular workshop or training programme			
To provide evidence for quality assurance requirements of the organisation			

Appendix 5 - Striking the Balance: Structured and Open-Ended Questionnaire Elements

Facilitator's Checklist questions	Yes	Not yet	No	Not applicable
Is there a suitable balance between structured questions (e.g. ticking boxes) and open-ended questions (e.g. giving opinions)?				
Is the questionnaire of a suitable length (e.g. no more than two sides of A4)?				
Will the questionnaire take no more than five minutes to fill in on average?				
Are all of the questions useful? In other words, do the questions elicit feedback that is likely to be needed by the facilitator and others involved?				
Do at least some of the questions allow participants to express views and opinions they want to express, and develop these in detail when they choose to do so?				
Will participants' overall response to the questionnaire lend itself to ready analysis, where this is appropriate?				
Has the questionnaire been trialled with representative participants, primed to think of other questions which could be included to give further useful feedback?				
Has the questionnaire already been developed on the basis of using it in practice, and deciding which are the most useful elements?				
Has it been decided who will collect and collate the findings of the questionnaire, and how these findings will be presented to the facilitator?				
Have the questions been asked as directly as possible? In other words, have all foreseeable ambiguities been ironed out in the wording?				

	Yes	Not yet	No	Not applicable
Will the questionnaire be used in the same form for a series of events, and are there good reasons for doing this?				
Is the questionnaire specific enough to the particular event for which it has been designed?				
Has thought been given to getting pairs or small groups of participants to complete the questionnaire, rather than individuals?				
Is the overall length of the questionnaire proportionate to the duration of the workshop? (For example, one side of A4 for a two-hour event, but no more than two sides of A4 for longer events).				
Will it be relatively straightforward to use the questionnaire to produce a summary report of the overall workshop feedback?				
Is it possible to predict which is likely to be the single most important element of this questionnaire?				
Will it be useful to follow-up this questionnaire by a further one, for example three weeks after the workshop?				
Will it be useful to make further contact with a random sample of the people who filled in the questionnaire (e.g. by telephone or email), asking them particular clarifying questions, to provide better feedback on the workshop?				
Will it be useful for the facilitator to fill in a copy of the questionnaire at the end of the workshop, to indicate what he or she expects as views of the average participant?				

Appendix 6 - Checklist for Slides and Overheads

Facilitator's checklist statements	Yes, I do this	I will need to consider this, and action planning comments
Font sizes of at least 30 point are used.		
Slides are not over-full – several separate slides are used rather than trying to present too much on any one slide.		
Slide titles are used systematically, so that it is always clear what a particular slide is about, and where it fits into the ongoing theme.		
Sans serif fonts are used (e.g. Arial, Comic Sans MS, MS Sans Serif).		
UPPER CASE TEXT IS AVOIDED IN SIGNIFICANT AMOUNTS (i.e. avoiding the equivalent of 'shouting' in email communication).		
Bold is used for emphasis on slides or overheads, rather than italics or underlined		
Bullet points or numbers are used, rather than continuous prose.		
Overhead transparencies are designed to be moved up the screen so that the part being discussed can always be seen in the top half of the projected image.		
PowerPoint slides make use of the upper part of the screen, so that participants at the back of the room do not have difficulty seeing the lowest text or bullet point.		
Dark colours for text (black, dark blue, dark green) on a light background (white, yellow) where the ambient lighting level may be relatively high.		

	Yes, I do this	I will need to consider this, and action planning comments
Light colours for text (white, yellow) are used on a dark background (dark blue, black) where the ambient lighting level may be adjusted to be low.		
Colours and backgrounds which can cause difficulties when viewing from a distance are avoided (e.g. red text on green backgrounds).		
Animation effects are used with restraint (e.g. text flying in from one side or the other for successive bullet points).		
Slide transition effects are used with restraint (e.g. slides dissolving into the next one, checkerboarding, and so on).		
Diagrams, flowcharts and other visuals are big enough and bold enough to be clearly readable from the back of the workshop room.		
Particular care is taken to make labels or captions on diagrams clearly visible, and in font sizes and colours which are large enough to be read easily at the back of the room.		
Paper-based copies of the slides are readily available for participants who need them to take them away.		
Large-print paper-based copies of the slides can be made available to participants who have a vision impairment.		
Line spacing is sufficient for text-based slides to be easily read on-screen.		
Additional line spacing is provided between sentences and bullet points.		
Where prose is presented, the left-hand side is justified, with a ragged edge at the right-hand side (i.e. avoiding two-sided justification which can cause irritating differences in the spacing between words on a slide).		

Appendix 7 - Designing a Training Workshop - An Overall Checklist

	Yes	Not yet	n/a	Reflections with hindsight after the event
Drafting the workshop outline, and publicising the event				
Has a good title been chosen for the event? Will this title be 'lived up to' by the event in practice? Will it seem relevant to participants, and attract the right participants?				
Has the 'Rationale' been drafted well? Does it clarify well what the title actually means in practice, and why the workshop will be important and useful to participants?				
Have intended workshop outcomes been formulated carefully? Are these relevant and achievable? Do these enable intended participants to see exactly what the workshop will be about? Will these ensure that there are no unwelcome surprises or disappointments for participants at the workshop?				
Has an outline programme been worked out? Does this give enough detail of how the workshop will unfold? Is the outline programme still flexible enough to allow the workshop to be fine-tuned at the event itself, to accommodate participants' wishes, expectations and emergent needs?				
Have decisions been made about the optimum number of participants, and the minimum and maximum numbers for the event?				

	Yes	Not yet	n/a	Reflections with hindsight after the event
Choosing the venue, and setting it up				
Is the training room a 'known quantity'?				
Has the room been visited and checked out for size, shape, lighting, equipment, furniture, and so on?				
Is the seating moveable?				
Are the tables easily moveable?				
Have decisions been made about the initial room layout, e.g. for plenary introductions?				
Have decisions been made about the way that small-groups will be accommodated for group work elements of the workshop?				
Will breakout rooms be available nearby for small-group elements of the workshop?				
Will it be necessary to allow time before the workshop to set up the room in exactly the required format?				
Will there be a flipchart in the room?				
Will there be an overhead projector in the room?				
Will data projection facilities be needed in the room?				
Will refreshments be allowed in the room? Or...				
...is there a suitable area for refreshments outside the room, or nearby?				
Paperwork, briefings, handouts, slides and overheads, and so on				
Have joining instructions been prepared, if necessary, to help participants find the venue easily?				

	Yes	Not yet	n/a	Reflections with hindsight after the event
Have handout materials been prepared and copied?				
Will handout materials be sent to participants in advance of the event?				
Will handout materials be issued to participants at the start of the event?				
Will handout materials be issued incrementally at stages during the event?				
Will handout materials be issued to participants at the end of the event?				
Will copies of slides or overheads be made available to participants at the event?				
Will task briefings be issued separately to participants when each task is started?				
Has a feedback questionnaire been designed relevant to the particular event?				
Does the feedback questionnaire include questions which probe into how well participants feel they have achieved the intended learning outcomes?				
Getting the workshop off to a good start				
Will participants be welcomed, signed-in, and given coffee or tea as they arrive?				
Is there a 'getting to know each other' introductory exercise at the beginning of the workshop?				
Will the intended workshop outcomes be explained clearly near the beginning of the workshop?				
Will it be possible to fine-tune the intended workshop outcomes in the light of participants' expectations at the start of the workshop?				

	Yes	Not yet	n/a	Reflections with hindsight after the event
Have plans been made about how best to accommodate anyone who arrives late and misses the opening stages of the workshop?				
Making it an active learning experience				
Is there an emphasis on participants doing things rather than simply listening to people talking at them?				
Is there a suitable variety of tasks, including individual work, small-group work, reporting-back in plenary, question-and-answer sessions, and so on?				
Have task briefings been thought through carefully so that participants will stay on task?				
Are the tasks demonstrably linked to the intended workshop outcomes?				
Have plans been made to allow participants to work in different groupings over the course of the workshop, so that they get to know each other better?				
Have plans been made to debrief each workshop task, and allow participants to share the results of their work?				
Bringing the workshop to a good conclusion				
Have plans been made so that the programme can be adjusted if necessary so that the event will end on time?				
Has it been decided what the most appropriate 'ending' activity will be for the workshop?				
Has time been left for participants to complete a short feedback questionnaire before they leave?				

	Yes	Not yet	n/a	Reflections with hindsight after the event
After the workshop				
Has participants' feedback been collected and analysed?				
Have decisions been made about adjustments to make to future workshops in the light of participants' feedback?				
Will participants receive details of any particular issues raised (e.g. flipchart notes, questions, recommendations) they made at the workshop?				
Has the facilitator reflected on the successes and trials of the workshop, and made notes to capture these reflections?				

Appendix 8 - Reflecting on your Workshop

Facilitator's reflection checklist questions	Your responses and action-planning ideas
What particular aspect of this workshop was the thing that worked best of all? Why did this element work really well? How can I make sure that I capitalise on this in my future training workshops?	
What else worked really well at this workshop? How best can I build in similar features into my future workshops?	
What worked least well at this particular workshop? Why was this? What can I do in future workshops to minimise the chance that similar things will happen again?	
What surprised me most at this particular workshop? Why was this unexpected? What would I now do, with hindsight, to address this, if it were to happen again at a future workshop?	
How well do I now think that I started this particular workshop? What have I learned about how best to start this particular kind of workshop? How will I now fine-tune the beginning of a future similar workshop?	
How well did I explain the intended learning outcomes to participants? Which of these outcomes seemed to be most important to them? How best can I, with hindsight, adjust the intended learning outcomes to be more relevant to future participants at similar events?	
Was the number of participants too many, too few, or just right for the particular workshop? What can I do to make it more likely that I have an optimum number of participants for this kind of workshop in future?	

Facilitator's reflection checklist questions	Your responses and action-planning ideas
How much did the participants turn out to know already, on average? Was this more than I expected or less than I expected? How would I adjust the content of a future workshop to fine-tune it better to what the participants are likely to know already? How best can I find out more from them about what they already know at the start of a similar workshop in future?	
What was the best thing about the training room at this particular workshop? Why did this really help the event? What can I do to try to ensure that this kind of venue feature will be put to good use in future events?	
What was the worst thing about the training room at this particular workshop? What can I do in future to minimise the risk of similar things spoiling a workshop?	
What was the best thing about the actual participants at this particular workshop? How best can I try to make use of similar strengths among future participants?	
What was the best thing about the actual participants at this particular workshop? How best can I try to make use of similar strengths among future participants?	
What behaviours did the most difficult participant show at this particular workshop? What can I do to address such behaviours at future events, if they occur again?	
What was my own best moment at this particular workshop? Why do I feel good about this particular aspect? What can I do to lead to more such moments at future workshops?	
What is the single most important thing I wish I hadn't done at this workshop? Why do I feel badly about this? How best can I avoid doing this in future workshops?	

Facilitator's reflection checklist questions	Your responses and action-planning ideas
What was the most important thing I learned about the topic of my workshop on this occasion? How best can I make use of what I learned on future occasions?	
What, with hindsight, would I now miss out of the workshop? Why would I now choose to miss this out of similar workshops in the future?	
What else, with hindsight, do I wish I had been able to include in this particular workshop? How best can I make time to include something along these lines into future similar workshops?	
What was the most unexpected event at this workshop? How well do I now think that I handled this? How would I handle the same sort of thing differently at a future workshop?	
How well do I think I closed the workshop? Did I end it with a whimper or a bang?! Was I rushed towards the end of the workshop, trying to get through everything on the agenda? What would I do next time round, with hindsight, to make sure that a future similar workshop ended really positively?	
What do I feel about the feedback I have received from participants at this workshop? What will be the most important thing that I will do differently next time as a result of this feedback? What will be the most important thing I will do in exactly the same way because of this feedback?	
What was the most hurtful comment or grading in participants' feedback? Why do I find this hurtful? Was it justified? Is it really important considering the feedback as a whole? Would it be useful for me to do something different next time round to address this particular aspect of critical feedback?	

Facilitator's reflection checklist questions	Your responses and action-planning ideas
What was the most pleasing comment or grading I received in participants' feedback? Why does this please me so much? Will it be possible for me to aim to get further similar feedback in future, and how will I adjust a future workshop to do so?	
What turned out to be the most revealing question on the feedback questionnaire? Why was this? How could I develop the questionnaire to get better feedback next time round?	
How well did participants feel that they had achieved the intended learning outcomes at the end of the workshop? Which outcomes had they achieved best? Were any of the intended outcomes less important than others? How would it be useful, with hindsight, to adjust the intended learning outcomes for a similar workshop next time round?	
What is the most important thing I have learned about facilitating workshops from this event? How will I put this learning to good use at future workshops?	



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