Building Your Trainer Tool Kit
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Trainer tips and tools to improve any training, including;

- **Logistics**
- **Day of**
- **Audio-visual**
- **Difficult participants**
- **Evaluation**

Facilitator/Trainer notes for leading a session

This document will cover (almost) everything you need to know and do to set up a training. It will include sections on:

Logistical arrangements - including site selection and room set up Handouts
Day of preparation
Audio-visual concerns
Working with difficult participants
Evaluation

Part 1. Training Logistical Arrangements
Logistical concerns include the location and facility for the training event, seating arrangements, equipment needed, materials, food and housing needs of participants and providers, registration procedures, travel and parking concerns, and budget procedures.

Selecting a Training Site
Training that is otherwise well planned can fail completely if the facility is not right. Remember that your participants are **adult** learners, and provide the proper environment for them. If possible, rooms with carpeting and warm walls are more appealing than barren classrooms or agency offices. It is impossible to overemphasize the importance of providing the right learning climate for your training activities. While you don't always have the luxury of budgeting for conference centers and catered meals, every step you do take to provide participants with a comfortable environment makes it easier for you to concentrate on your participants when the training day arrives.

Consider the following questions in determining the location and facility you will use:

✓✓ Where are the participants coming from? Should you find a central location?

✓✓ Does the purpose of the training require a retreat setting?

✓✓ How many participants are you expecting?

✓✓ Do the type of training and the activities planned require a large room, more than one room, flexible space?

✓✓ Will participants need housing or food service during the training?

✓✓ Will any meals be included on the training agenda?

✓✓ Which potential facilities are barrier free and accessible for people who are physically challenged?

✓✓ Is parking available? At what cost? Is public transportation needed or available?

✓✓ What can you afford? Who is paying the costs?

Develop a facilities catalog. As you visit or use different spaces, keep a list of what services, they offer and at what costs. If you are considering a private facility, such as a hotel or conference site, observe the attitude of the staff or other key people you would be working with. Are they cooperative or rigidly unfriendly? How helpful would they be to participants or to you if a problem arose? Ask participants to comment on facilities and location in their evaluations, and record their reactions for future consideration.

Seating Arrangements

The following are examples of seating arrangements and the types of training in which to use them. When audiovisuals will be used, you should be sure all participants will be able to see and hear.

Small group seating arrangements are sketched below. These arrangements are appropriate for both knowledge training and skill training. They provide for close interaction between trainer and participants,

U-Shaped/Horseshoe   Square   Rectangle

(or similar arrangement with round table)
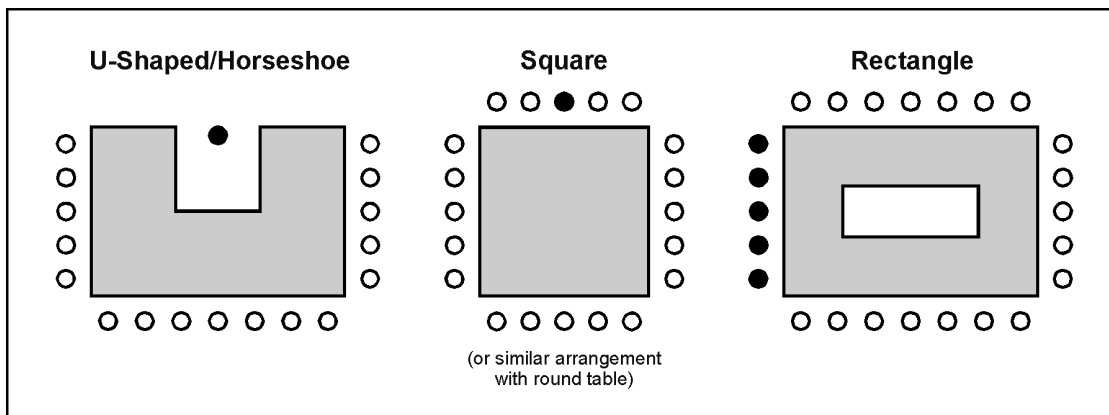
and allow participants to see and hear each other as well.
(●● = trainer/panelists)

Learning takes place most effectively if barriers such as tables are removed. Participants may select chairs randomly placed, and the trainer leads the group to rearrange themselves into a series of different configurations designed to encourage interaction between individuals, small groups, and during debriefing. The leader is part of the group, rather than isolated behind a table or podium, to reduce the image of power and to strengthen group identity.

Open Square

Random Seating

(or similar arrangement in a circle)
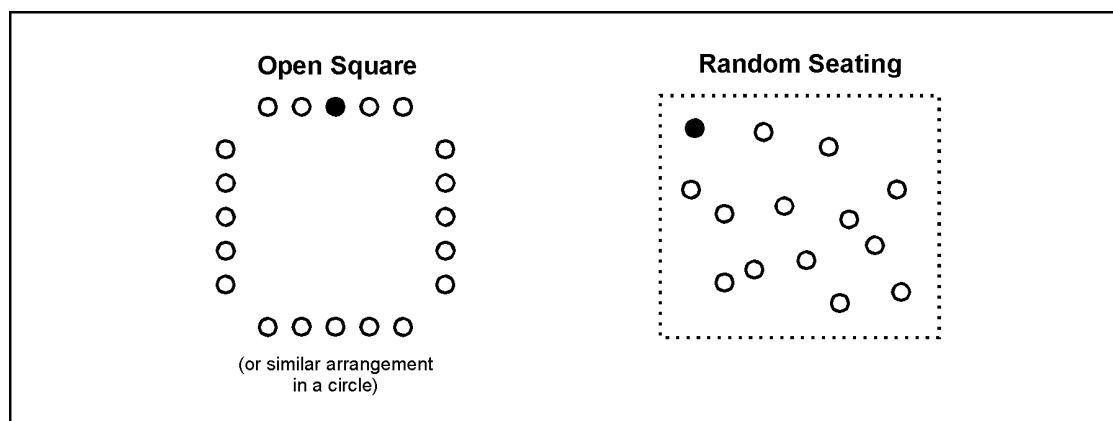
Part 2 Handouts:
Make sure you have all your training handouts ready to go with enough copies made for every participant to have one. I suggest handing 3-4 extra copies of each handout in case participants request and additional handout of if they lose the first one you give them. Handouts may be given up front or as you work through the training. There are benefits to both styles.

Giving all handouts up front:
This allows participants to skim the materials and it can save time when you get to a certain activity. If you choose this method, make sure the handouts are collated in the correct order to correspond with the training agenda. They will also need to be clearly marked so that participants can flip through the handouts quickly and easily when you ask them to find that handout or activity.

Providing handouts throughout the course of the training:
This prevents participants from working ahead in the agenda. They are given what they need when they need it. You will need to have the handouts sorted into piles ready for distribution. These piles, should also be sorted in order of their use during the agenda for ease of access and ability to quickly distribute them to the group. It is suggested that you utilize volunteers from the group to assist with distributing handouts. This will allow you as the facilitator to stay where you can direct the flow of the activity and answer any questions. This also allows for more group participation and engagement.

Part 3: On the Day of Training: Peace or Panic
On the day of training, panic should not be the standard condition. A certain amount of nervousness is a healthy sign that you are "up" for the activity, that you are excited about the day and the experiences you will be sharing with the participants. The way you control the nervousness and use it to your advantage in motivating similar excitement in others begins to set the climate in which learning will occur.

The key factor in control is knowing that you are adequately prepared. You have selected a training site that provides for the physical comfort of adult learners. Your materials are ready and waiting to be unpacked. You have confirmed the arrival of any other presenters or trainers. Participants have received confirmation of their attendance and you expect full attendance. Best of all, you are offering training that specifically responds to the needs of those who will be attending.

You will need to see personally that the room is set up properly in advance of the arrival of the participants. Plan where registration or sign- in will take place, and where refreshments will be served during breaks. What will you do *today* to maintain enthusiasm?

Be the First to Arrive & the Last to Leave…
- Try to come at least 45 minutes early.
- Check the room arrangements and be certain there are enough chairs.
- Set up any equipment and check its operation.
- Set up a sign-in area. Lay out any materials you want participants to pick up when they first arrive.
- Distribute any materials you want at each seat.
- Put materials in the order they will be used.
- Are all the training materials ready to go? Are handouts available, overheads ready, and equipment operating?
- Identify nonsmoking and smoking areas. Locate a coat rack, restrooms, stairs, etc.
- Check on arrangements for breaks and refreshments.

At the End of the Day
Whether you have held a two-hour session, a full day, or more than one day, you want to send participants off with the same enthusiasm and excitement with which they began. When closing activities have been completed and participant evaluations have been returned, be a gracious host:
- Thank the group for attending.
- Congratulate them on a productive session.
- Confirm any follow-up activities.

- Thank other trainers or presenters for contributing.
- Announce the schedule for any upcoming sessions.
- Wish everyone success, a safe trip home, an enjoyable evening.

Frequently, participants want to linger and talk with you about their specific needs. This is an opportune time to get reactions to the session that may be most valuable in assessing its effectiveness. Be willing to listen.

Review the sessions with all trainers and review the written evaluations. Determine whether changes are needed, and come to agreement on what will be done.

Survey the room. Is all equipment properly cared for? Have trainees left any personal possessions behind that you should return to them? Are extra materials put away or packed for return to the office?

Summary: Murphy's Law

Murphy's Law—whatever can go wrong will, at the most inopportune time—may be a factor in the life of every trainer, but it does not have to be insurmountable if you:

✓✓ **Prepare for problems you can predict.**

✓✓ **Keep your sense of humor!**

Part 3. Audiovisual Aids

Audiovisual aids—flipcharts, PowerPoints, video presentations—bring your training message home in a direct, easily understandable form. They serve several important purposes:

1. They emphasize and clarify key learning points.
2. They represent complex concepts and tasks in easily understandable graphic form.
3. They increase trainees' interest and attention and help them remember what they have learned.
4. And—particularly in the case of video presentations—they appeal to the imagination and the senses and spark creative thinking.

Consider the following questions when trying to decide on the appropriateness of a particular visual aid:

✓✓ **Is it simple?**
✓✓ **Is it accurate?**
✓✓ **Is it visually clear?**
✓✓ **Is it readable?**
✓✓ **Is it relevant?**
✓✓ **Is it interesting?**
✓✓ **Does it communicate a single idea?**

Placing a Projector Screen

Although a white wall or even a sheet will do, a quality, well-placed screen will make images more visible and therefore more effective. To determine the correct screen size, follow the "two-and-six" rule:

✓✓ One-half the screen width should equal the distance of the closest person.
✓✓ Six times the screen width should equal the distance of the farthest person.

For best viewing, the screen should be placed in a corner and angled toward the center of the room.

Flipcharts

Flipcharts are inexpensive, flexible, and versatile teaching aids. You can prepare them ahead of time or use them to record the workshop proceedings as events unfold.

Prepare flipcharts ahead of time to:

- Outline key points in your subject-matter presentation.
- List examples of these key points.
- List questions related to the presentation.
- Exhibit a diagram, bar graph, pie chart, flow chart, or table.

When you use flipcharts to record the ongoing workshop proceedings:

- Write down trainees' contributions to the workshop activities (questions, answers, solutions to problems, examples).
- Record key points that evolve from group discussion.
- Record the problems identified and the conclusions reached during group discussions.

Here are some hints for using flipcharts:

✓✓ Pencil basic points on the paper before the presentation, then write over the pencil with a marker during the presentation—this works as notes or as an outline.

✓✓ Be sure the materials are in proper sequence.

✓✓ Flip to each sheet only when it is needed during the presentation, not before.

✓✓ Use a separate sheet for summary points rather than flipping back through the pages when summarizing.

✓✓ Use a variety of marker colors—stay away from light colors—but use not more than three colors on one page. Make sure they do not bleed through to the next sheet.

✓✓ Leave the bottom third of the pages empty. This makes it easier for people in back to see and leaves room for adding things later.

✓✓ Brighten the charts visually by boxing or underlining words and using shapes or designs or colorful post-it notes.

✓✓ Talk to the audience, not the flipchart, and have someone else do the writing during brainstorming sessions when possible.

✓✓ Keep the lettering and graphics simple and large enough for everyone to see, and use print rather than cursive lettering.

✓✓ Make sure the flipchart is put together securely and will not fall apart during the presentation.

✓✓ Leave a blank sheet of paper between visuals in a flipchart to cover the next visual until it is needed.

✓✓ Rehearse with the visual before the presentation. Be sure you have enough blank sheets of paper and fresh markers for the session.

Part 4: Options for Dealing with Disruptive Trainees

Difficult Participants What to Do?

✓✓ Remain non-defensive. Don't get pulled in to the negativism. You are responsible for teaching and doing the best job you can. You are not responsible for making everyone happy, nor are you responsible for making everyone accept or use the information presented. And, in the long run, it probably won't matter whether everyone "liked" you or

your presentation.

✓✓ Keep distance and perspective. Remember that you are usually not the cause of people's anger, hostility, or disappointment. You are merely an available target.

✓✓ Treat all learners with respect. Be tactful and respectful of individual differences. Try to listen with an open mind. Acknowledge views, perspectives, and opinions that might be different than your own or those of the majority. Try not to cut people off.

✓✓ Try to acknowledge diversity, alternative viewpoints, and the fact that some may be unwilling participants. Invite learners to share experience and try to get something out of the day that will make their participation worthwhile.

Recommended Actions
Those who doubt your credibility:

- Establish credibility—work experience, personal experience, firsthand knowledge.
- Acknowledge participants' knowledge and expertise—have audience share, use, and build on their expertise. Validate importance of what they already know.
- Don't play expert—establish role as facilitator, instructor, coach.
- Actively listen—let people have their say. Try not to cut them off. Treat all participants alike.

Those who are verbally aggressive or hostile:

Individuals who are forced to attend educational sessions, those who feel that the subject matter is not relevant, those who really believe they "know it all," can exhibit hostile or aggressive behavior.

- Acknowledge feelings. Ask for cooperation to make the day as valuable as possible for all participants.
- Remind them that no one can "make" them do anything. Only they can decide if there is anything to be gained from the day. Encourage them to find something of value.

Those who have an agenda other than the planned one:
Some individuals try to take control of the class to achieve their objectives.
They frequently will ask "off-the-wall" questions or answer questions with
"Yes, but…" and go off on a tangent.
- Clearly state what you will and won't be doing during the training.
  Preview agenda and objectives.
- Listen briefly, acknowledge importance or validity of perspective, but
  state that the topic is beyond the scope of today's session.
- Be available during breaks and after class to discuss "alternative"
  agendas.
- Suggest alternative forums or resources that might be of interest to
  individuals.

**Those who carry on side conversations or otherwise try to divert
attention from the speaker:**
Whisper conversations, passing of notes, other distraction behaviors can
be an attempt to get attention.
- Call on them by name and invite them to share their perspective.
- If there are several such distractions happening, ask for attention of all
  participants and ask that such conversations be stopped because they
  distract and interfere with learning.

Those who are silent or don't participate in discussion or activities:
- Make individual contact during break; be friendly and open.
- Ask open-ended questions.
- Give plenty of response time; use silence.
- Invite people to write responses before sharing orally.
- Give them a role or responsibility. Involve them directly.

Those who are defensive or feel that they are being attacked:
- Consistently validate all perspectives and experiences. Reinforce
  need for diversity that is inclusive, not exclusive.
- Remind audience that examples are generalizations. Not all individuals
  within groups are the same; tremendous variability exists.

Part 5: Evaluation

Evaluate early and often. Regardless of the platform used to deliver the training (classroom, CBT, Intranet, distance learning, self-paced, etc.), provide an evaluation form early so that participants know what they are being asked for feedback on. Find a variety of ways to solicit feedback early in the delivery process so that if the intervention (in this case   probably training of some type) is missing the mark, it can be adjusted to meet the needs without wasting too much time.

Here Are Some Quick Tips…

1. In multiple-day classes, do a start/stop/continue 3x5 card. Ask participants to write down something they'd like to start that would help their learning, something they'd like stopped and something they'd like continued. Collecting and reviewing these cards can tip you off to some adjustments that will really help.

2. Provide participants with the evaluation form early. In a two-day class, I distribute it the morning of the first day. This makes them aware of what they're being asked for feedback on and allows them to complete it when they choose. For example, by noon the first day, they've probably made up their minds about the facility being used.

3. Give people a chance to evaluate everything that impacts the training. We use four items at least: the instructor, the content, the environment, and the participants. Each of these four can have a big impact on if learning takes place. The instructor's attitude, availability, and knowledge are important, but so is the temperature of the meeting room, equipment that works, adequate breaks, etc. Content delivered at the right level is important, but so are its practical uses on the job. Participation and cooperation in the learning process by each individual and their co-participants can also play a major part in the effectiveness of the training delivered.

4. Use numbers, letters, and open-ended sentences. We use a Likert scale (for example 1 to 5, low to high) to get feedback on the usefulness of the content, availability of the instructor, etc. Letters help us to get feedback on things like pacing: (circle one) TF (too fast), TS (too slow), JAR (just about right); timing: TL (too long), TS (too short), JAR (just about right); and level: TB (too basic), TA (too advanced), JAR (just about right).

Open-ended sentences allow participants to tell you why they provided the numerical and letter rating they did so that you're not making assumptions. For example: "The reason I rated the instructor's availability the way I did was
_____."

Evaluate more than the instructor and the content. These are key, of course, but so are the way individuals participate in the training and the environment in which the training is delivered.

Four Things to Evaluate at the End of Training…
1. The instructor, which could include things like openness to questions, availability, knowledge of the subject, interest in participants, etc.
2. The content, which could include things like relevance, the level at which it is delivered, applicability to the job, opportunity for skill practice, the amount of time spent on each content piece, the pace at which each content piece was covered, etc.

3. The environment, including things like the amount of space in the meeting room, seating arrangement, temperature control, sleeping rooms, food, breaks, etc.
4. The participants, including things like the evaluator's participation, other participants' participation, self and others' commitment to developing and implementing an action plan, etc.

All of these things will give you a much clearer picture of the effectiveness of the delivery phase of your program. Below are some sample evaluation forms you can use during or after the training.

Sample Training Evaluation Forms
SAMPLE 1: Quick Feedback Sheet

Quick Feedback Sheet…	**One thing I learned in this activity is…**
	What I liked most about the activity was…
	What I liked least about the activity was…
	One word to describe my experience on this activity is…

SAMPLE 2: End of Course Reactionnaire

<table>
<tr>
<td rowspan="5">End of Course Reactionnaire…</td>
<td>What I learned most in the course is…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What I still need to learn more of is…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What I will have difficulty in applying is…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My overall feelings about the course are…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If a close friend asked me how I saw this course, I would say…</td>
</tr>
</table>

SAMPLE 3: Training for Trainers Day One Feedback

Training for Trainers Day One Feedback…	**While There's Still Time to Implement Changes in the Training**
	What worked well for me today was…
	What I wish you/we would do more of tomorrow is…
	What I wish you/we would do less of tomorrow is…
	One or more questions I'd like answered tomorrow are…
	I'm still (fill in all that apply): " **confused a b o u t …** " **stuck on…** " **resistant to…** " **unsure a b o u t …**
	The "big picture" point I've mastered already is…
	My favorite part of the training today was…because…

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SAMPLE 4: Reaction Evaluation *(Post-Meeting Reaction)*

<table>
<tr><td rowspan="5">*Reaction Evaluation (Post-Meeting Reaction) …*</td><td>1. **The program was…**
    POOR   SATISFACTORY GOOD EXCELLENT</td></tr>
<tr><td>2. **What was the most helpful aspect of the program?**
    a) In terms of course content…

    b) In terms of course method…</td></tr>
<tr><td>3. **What was the least helpful aspect of the program?**
    a) In terms of course content…

    b) In terms of course method…</td></tr>
<tr><td>4. **Give three ways that you plan to use the knowledge and/or skills gained from this program in your work:**
    a)

    b)

    c)</td></tr>
<tr><td>5. **Other comments:** *(use other side of this paper if needed)*</td></tr>
</table>

SAMPLE 5: Reaction Rating

Reaction Rating…

Directions: Listed below are pairs of adjectives placed at opposite ends of a continuum. Place an **X** on each line, at the point in the continuum that best reflects your evaluation of this activity.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Disliked										Liked
Uninvolved										Involved
Unclear										Clear
Uninteresting										Interesting
Useless										Useful
Poorly Timed										Well Timed

SAMPLE 6: Reaction Evaluation

Reaction Evaluation...	Name:		Date of Training:
	☺☺	**This is what I DID that I felt GOOD about…**	
	☺☺	**This is WHY I felt GOOD…**	
	☹☹	**This is what I DID that I felt BAD about…**	
	☹☹	**This is WHY I felt BAD…**	

SAMPLE 7: "Here's My Reaction to the Workshop"

As a Result of This Workshop…	**I have learned…**
	I hope that…
	I feel…
	I wish…
	I want to tell _____ that…
	I urge…
	I plan to…
	Other reactions: