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PEDAGOGICAL GUIDELINES AND TRAINING METHODOLOGY FOR THE WORKSHOPS

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PART I

PREFACE

DIDACTICS IN WORKSHOPS
Didactics in workshops, already detectable in the pedagogy of activism of the American philosopher and psychologist John Dewey, cultivates three principles that are of particular interest:

1. the goals of education should be based on the intrinsic needs of the learner;
2. cooperation contributes effectively to 'liberate and organize' the abilities of the learner and to transform them into skills;
3. the educational value of activities is in the connections and flexibility of courses recognized by the learner as meaningful for himself/herself and that can be spent in reality.

Didactics in workshops promotes motivation and inclusion, provides a particularly useful teaching strategy, encourages the personal autonomy of planning, and creates a learning environment which meets the learners' needs. It enhances the skills of each participant in a co-operative process and provides space for teaching / learning activities aimed at supporting inclusion.

Workshops are based on research and doing, rather than on lectures.

In a workshop we abandon the logic of re-production of knowledge to make room for the re-construction, re-invention of knowledge.
The workshop can be considered a metaphor for how all learning should be done: a space in which to gain experience with the others, where you learn to use the procedures, materials, methods that stimulate the real processes of learning and promote the "construction" of knowledge.
Workshops, in fact, allow us to create learning situations that:
- give priority to the construction of knowledge and not to its reproduction;
- present authentic tasks;
- allow multiple representations of reality;
- encourage reflection and reasoning;
- promote the cooperative construction of knowledge.

PARTICIPATORY TRAINING

Adults are the target group of our project, therefore the activities and the final products are adult-oriented and adult-addressed.

In order to achieve our goals, we have to use learner-centered methods and interdisciplinary approaches.

Participatory training is "participatory" because learning occurs through active involvement of the trainees and it is they who develop the answers. It is "training" because learning opportunities are created by presenting new information together with analytical methodologies for the trainees to discuss and consider in light of their own work experiences. Participatory training is completely different from traditional "teaching".

In the participatory training:
- Trainer's role is to ask questions and to facilitate discussions.
- Both trainers and trainees are knowledgeable and experienced.
- Everyone must reflect on her/his own, then share their ideas, experiences, and expertise.
- Trainees are active and analytical, asking questions and exploring alternatives.
- Trainees develop their own answers. Indeed, there may be many different answers.

Participatory training is, therefore, the opposite of traditional teaching where teachers share their knowledge by lecturing and students are passive, just listening and taking notes.

Many of the principles of participatory training draw on theories of adult learning. Because adults already know a lot, they learn best by building upon their own experiences. They learn more by doing and by listening.

Adult learning theory stresses that adult learners need opportunities to *think*, to *understand,* and to *apply.*

• To learn by thinking, trainees need to have responsibility to work out their own conclusions.

• To learn by understanding, trainees need to relate the learning experience to their own values, beliefs, and previous experiences.

• To learn by applying, trainees need to use and test a new skill and receive feedback on their performance.

Learning is evidenced by change - changes in behaviour, knowledge, understanding, skills, interests, values, awareness, or attitudes. To facilitate these changes in adult learners, experiential activities, during which participants work out their own conclusions, are more effective than lectures. Thus, workshop trainers need to match learning activities with learning outcomes. Good training courses include a broad variety of learning activities, including presentations, games, and role play.

During participatory training, activities are selected specifically to encourage trainees to *engage with* the materials and become active and animated - trainees offer ideas, raise questions, build on one another's statements and challenge one another's opinions. They learn from, and with, other participants and work together on a collective analysis.

The trainers are active; they listen actively and try to create situations which enable learners to work at a mental level. They try to create learning situations, learning itineraries.

The trainers' job is not only to deliver information, explain, or provide answers but, mainly, to

4

structure and facilitate. Trainers initiate discussion and then draw in the trainees. They amplify some trainees' comments and summarize others'; they compare and connect separate remarks and point out opposing views. They draw the threads of discussion together and relate them to the workshop's objectives.

Participatory training is structured around the ability of the trainees to reason, to analyse problems, and to work out their own solutions. It emphasizes the process of inquiry, and therefore participatory training workshops often end with questions as well as conclusions.

PEDAGOGICAL AND MANAGEMENT ISSUE

The key-words should be: **Constructivism; Collaborative Learning; Cooperative Learning; Project Work; Peer Mentoring; Peer Tutoring.**

The PROJECT WORK is a cooperative methodology which expects to use the active involvement of learners according to COOPERATIVE and COLLABORATIVE LEARNING practices (which helps the adults to work in team, where everyone of them has to give his/her own contribution and has a responsibility).

The forms of collaborative learning, sustained by the new technologies, are able to open new doors to knowledge activities by giving value to the various individual contributions.

At the moment, collaborative learning is linked to CONSTRUCTIVISM.

The "social construction of knowledge" is the main subject of constructivism which is mainly characterised by:

- emphasizing the active construction of our knowledge and not its reproduction;
- presenting authentic tasks;
- sustaining thoughtful practices;
- contributing to the cooperative construction of knowledge through social negotiation.

METHODS AND APPROACHES

Developing cooperative learning as a method helps trainees actively take part in the project while providing them with a wide range of creative activities, tasks and workshops. When trainees work toward a common goal, cooperative learning approach seems to be effective in increasing motivation for working together and learning from each other.

Trainees are engaged in life-related learning and they learn how to solve problems, acquire reasoning skills and they can also develop and improve their interpersonal skills . Such skills which include decision making, conflict management, leadership, clear communication and positive interaction, are useful for them in their everyday lives as well.

The tasks are structured so that trainees need each other to accomplish their common tasks and they also feel some kind of responsibility and positive independence.

Our main approach is to create a natural, interactive, non-formal teaching context in which trainees have genuine reasons for working with each other, clarifying issues, discussing problems, explaining, encouraging and supporting each other to fostering their ability to think creatively.

PART II

DESIGNING A TRAINING WORKSHOP

MAIN STEPS
We can fix nine interrelated steps in designing a workshop:
1. Identify participants/trainees
2. Assess participants'/trainees' needs
3. Negotiation and contract
4. Set training objectives
5. Detailed planning
6. Select materials and trainers
7. Design trainers' and trainees' agendas
8. Implementation of the project
9. Develop evaluation strategy

STEP 1
IDENTIFY PARTICIPANTS
The purpose of Step 1 is to find out about the trainees - *the nature and level of their responsibilities, what their priorities are*, and so forth. This information is essential to design a workshop that is *relevant* and also to determine whether or not potential trainees have enough in common to create one group. If they do not, it may be more appropriate to create several groups with shared characteristics.
Another purpose of Step 1 is to examine the trainees' *motivation* for attending the workshop. This will affect choices the trainer will have to make in subsequent steps.

STEP 2
ASSESS PARTICIPANTS'/ TRAINEES' NEEDS
The purpose of Step 2 is to find out what the trainees *want and need* from the training. This information is essential to design a workshop that is *useful* to the participants.

A needs assessment guides the formulation of training objectives by identifying the gap between "what is" and "what should be". It can be carried out by meeting with trainees, administering questionnaires to trainees, and reviewing key materials,
A needs assessment helps avoid common mistakes in training design, such as:
- wasting time by focusing on a topic the trainees are already familiar with;
- wasting time by focusing on a topic that has little relevance for the trainees; and
- missing an opportunity by omitting a topic that is useful for the trainees.

STEP 3
NEGOTIATION AND CONTRACT
Negotiation is an important step.
Trainers and trainees negotiate about:
- Topics
- How to work
- Criteria for forming groups
- Division of tasks and time management work
- Roles and responsibilities

A contract provides for trainers and trainees agree on mutual commitments about:
- Conscious assumption of duties and responsibilities:
- Share needs and goals
- Be aware of which areas of knowledge learners will learn
- What everyone will learn how to make
- Determining the characteristics of the product that will be realized
- etc.

STEP 4
SET TRAINING OBJECTIVES
The purpose of Step 4 is to ensure that both the trainers and the trainees *understand and agree on the intended outcomes* of the workshop. The training objectives are important guideposts for everyone to keep the discussions focused and on-track, and they are the basis for Step 9, evaluation.
Other specific training objectives will arise from discussion with the participants about their needs.
These will vary from group to group and may be added as necessary.
Setting training objectives provides a sound basis for:
- organizing both trainers and trainees' efforts and activities for accomplishing workshop outcomes;
- selecting training materials and methods;
- evaluating the success of the workshop.

STEP 5
DETAILED PLANNING
Trainers and trainees decide and agree about:
- Objectives
- Time, stages, means
- Methods
- Resourses
- Final products

The trainees are divided into groups because the methodology for working groups as 'learning communities' has many advantages:
- each participant introduces situations and events that affect relationships,
- it causes responses that involve each trainee and that generate changes;

- everyone offers his/her availability, commitment and collaboration being aware that together the group can achieve better goals and results.

STEP 6
SELECT MATERIALS AND TRAINERS

The purpose of Step 6 is to *match training resources* to the needs of trainees and the training objectives. Therefore it is fundamental to select the right training materials and the right trainers.

It is advisable that every workshop be carried out by a team of trainers with complementary styles, skills and knowledge. More than one trainer also makes the workshop more interesting for the trainees.

The trainers should be confident and skilled at using various training tools.

STEP 7
DESIGN TRAINERS' AND TRAINEES' AGENDAS

The purpose of Step 7 is to create a workshop "master plan", including two agendas, and training activities, which will meet the training objectives in the allotted time. To achieve this, *all of the information from the previous steps must be taken into consideration* – who the trainees are plus training needs, objectives, and training resources. It is advisable to draw up two different agendas.

The first agenda is the "trainer's agenda". It is minutely detailed, includes the objectives for every session, and is for the trainers' use only. An example of a "trainer's agenda" is shown on page 9.

The second agenda is the "trainee's agenda". It is distributed to the workshop participants at the start of the workshop. It parallels the trainer's agenda, but is limited to general topics and approximate time allocations to allow for flexibility. (An example of a trainee's agenda is shown on page 9).

A well designed agenda should:
- aim to achieve the workshop objectives;
- incorporate the methodology;
- follow a logical learning cycle, both in the overall agenda and in every session.

Selecting training activities

Activities for the agenda should be selected to meet the training needs of the participants.
Be sure the agenda provides time for closure in every session of every day.

Closure is essential to:
- summarize the key findings of the training session;
- link the findings of each session to the training objectives;
- link the findings of each session to those of other sessions.

During closure allocate time for the trainees to reflect on what they have learned. This is essential to reinforce their learning experience. For example, ask the trainees to complete the following sentence at the end of each day, *"The most important thing I learned today is…".*

Other open-ended questions can also be used so the participants can express what they liked or disliked during the day.

At the end of the last session, before the evaluation, the trainees need to relate the insights, skills, and conclusions gained from the workshop as a whole to their own everyday work and responsibilities. Ask them to complete a statement such as, *"I can apply what I have learned to my own work by…"*

EXAMPLE OF A TRAINER'S AGENDA

TOPIC	TIME	MATERIAL	OBJECTIVES
Opening and introduction	8.00 – 8.45	Trainer's notes for opening	"Climate setting" 1. create warm friendly atmosphere 2. stimulate interest and curiosity 3. enable trainees to begin thinking about the subject of the course 4. encourage the trainees to get to know each other
Objectives and methods	8.45 – 9.00	slides	Objectives: ………..
…………. etc…….			
Coffee break	10.15 – 10.30		
Introduction to case study	10.30 – 11.00	Provide information	
Introduction to small group work			
Small group analysis of case study			
…etc…			
Closure			Reflecting on what they have learned

EXAMPLE OF A TRAINEE'S AGENDA
DAY 1

TIME	
8.00 – 8.45	Opening and introduction
8.45 – 9.00	Objectives and methods
Etc.	

STEP 8
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT
In the implementation stage the learners will:
- do different project-related tasks and activities by working in groups and cooperating actively with each other
- cooperate in creating the final products
- cooperate with the project staff and other people involved in project tasks
- participate in evaluation processes
- give interviews for local TV channels, write newspaper articles for local magazines and papers about the project.

STEP 9
DEVELOP EVALUATION STRATEGY
The purpose of Step 9 is to develop methods for *determining the degree to which the training is successful*—that is, whether it accomplishes the objectives set out in Step 4. A well designed evaluation strategy provides trainees with an opportunity to express whether or not their needs have been met. It also provides the trainers with valuable feedback on the choices they made in the previous steps for workshop design.

The type of evaluation that best meets the needs of such a complex process is formative assessment. In effect it allows a balance between the observation results and the formative dimension, which are complementary.
The assessment goes beyond the traditional tests that evaluate the final results and assumes both the process and the end result as objects to be taken into account.

A good evaluation strategy measures:
- reactions to the training;
- changes in understanding and attitudes;
- changes in skills and knowledge;
- changes in how the trainees carry out their work.

Development of metacognition
It is important to push the learner to reflect on himself/herself, to describe the progress made.
It must be shown that certain techniques that are used are actually relevant, that he/she has the ability to capitalize a set of strategies and that they may be used in different contexts.

What is evaluated

Communicability:	Communication:	within the group
		among the groups
		between the groups and the tutorial team

Originality:	of the activities,
	of the products,
	of the methodology,
	etc.

Complexity:	fast learning
	autonomy reached
	ability to use in other areas

Organization:	taking tasks
	use of resources
	meeting deadlines

Quality:	documentation
	products
	sharing
	significant effects
	spin-off
	etc.

Project evaluation

Learners are asked the following questions:

- How did you proceed?
- What results have you achieved?
- What has been found useful in your strategy?
- What made you waste time or brought you down a false trail?
- What has worked well and how can you reuse it in different contexts?
- etc.

Final evaluation

• Verification of the results, of the organization
• Coherence between what was planned and what was achieved
• Development of metacognition

The End