



Designing a Learning Sequence

Learning Outcomes

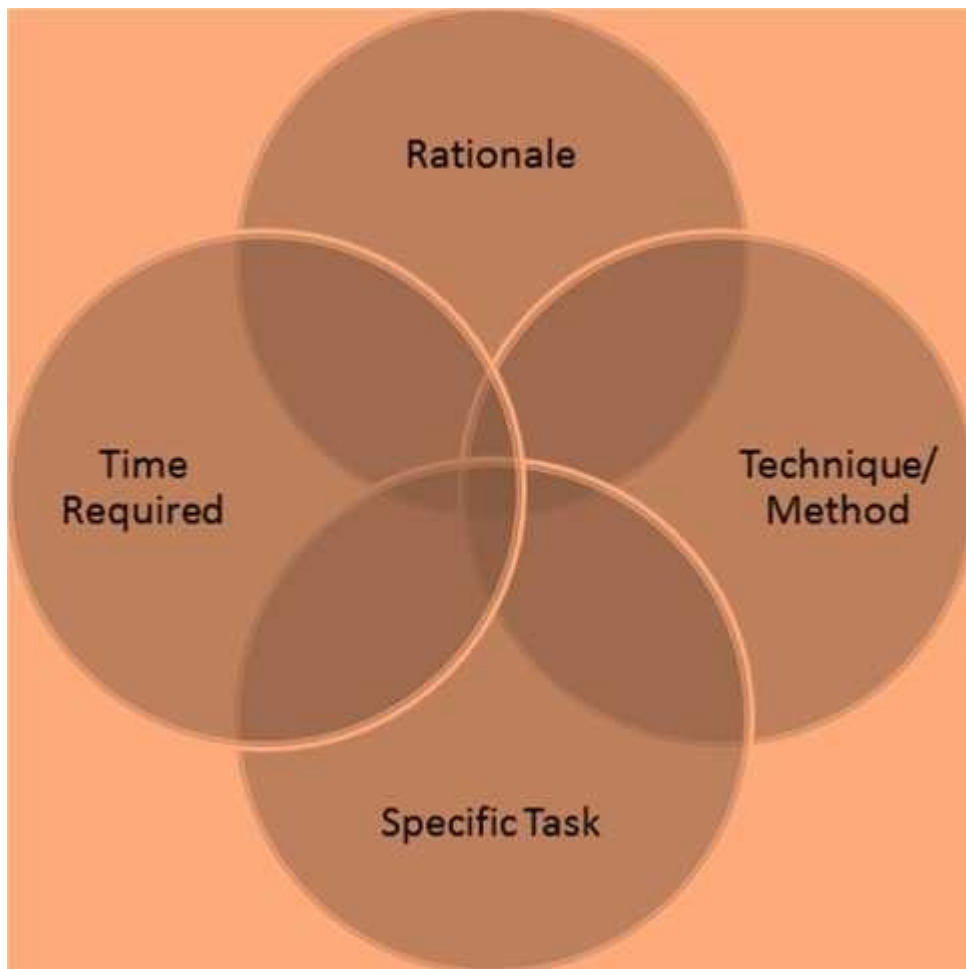
By the end of this unit the learner will be able to:

- ✓ Explore developing a learning sequence.

Designing a Learning Sequence

The Model

Once you have your learning objectives written and you've chosen the most appropriate method to use, it's time to develop a learning sequence. Each learning point should have the following elements.



Sample Sequences

Sequence Ideas

- Responding to customer complaints
- Delegating
- Entering new contacts into a database
- Introducing yourself and others

Sequence One

Test your knowledge

Rationale

Technique/Method

Specific Task

Length of Activity

Sequence Two

Rationale

Technique/Method

Specific Task

Length of Activity

Adding Games

The Value of Games

A game that falls flat can spoil an entire training day, so it is important that the facilitator consider the following tips.

First and foremost, **don't select activities that would annoy you** if you were a participant. Try them out with your family or children first.

As well, make sure that you **adjust the length and type of game** to suit the length of the session. A one-day workshop probably does not benefit from a 45 minute game; a two to five minute icebreaker is probably just fine. However, if your group is taking part in a multi-day workshop and would benefit from getting to know one another really well, then an extensive game of up to an hour is appropriate.

Always **know your audience**. You could develop a short quiz for the participants to complete anonymously before training to assess their comfort level, how well they know other participants, and so on. You could also speak with their managers or former trainers.

Generally speaking, more senior staff will not be willing to look silly or foolish in front of their own subordinates. Junior staff may not be comfortable looking silly in front of their boss. In addition, if participants arrive in business clothes, they may not be comfortable with really active games.

The content of the workshop needs to be a consideration, too. If you are providing introductions and icebreakers for a day consisting of meetings or sessions about layoffs, downsizing, or change, you will need to select your games accordingly.

Learning that deals with "soft skill" subjects such as communication or team building will **benefit from games** more than one that focuses on learning computer software, for example. The software group, however, might really need some kind of energizer as an energy infuser at some point, or even several times, during the day.

People who know each other very well will find some exercises **redundant**. If the group knows each other well, you need to be more selective in the games that you choose. If you are facilitating for people from different organizations, then they will benefit from getting to know each other better.

Types of Games

Choosing the Right Game

Choosing the right activity is really important. Since it can be hard to make dry topics engaging, or you may run into groups who have a lot of tension about “games” at work, you may want to refer to games as activities. Keep in mind that you also have to deliver a meaningful workshop for your clients or boss.

One of the signs of a good trainer is being able to choose and modify a game to fit the situation. A good resource library of games is important so that you don’t find yourself re-using a few games over and over, especially if you are an in-house trainer developing workshops for the same people.

There are lots of excellent books available as well as ideas on the Internet. Check with your local library or bookstore, or do an online search for training games. You can also ask other trainers about games that have worked well for them.

Although “game” is kind of a broad term, below are some loose definitions that might help you select the right activity for the objectives that you have set. Some of these headings overlap, as you will see. The definitions are here to give us a better understanding of the range of activities that we may want to apply when we are injecting from fun into our training.

Game

A game is an exercise that normally has a set of rules and an element of competition. Games also normally include some element of reward or pay off. Although traditional games include competing against some one or another team, they are also many non-competitive games available. Games can include physical challenges, intellectual skills, or chance.

Icebreakers

Icebreakers are normally used as an exercise to introduce group members to one another, infuse some energy into the beginning of a workshop, and/or to lead into the topic material. They are also an effective way to reduce tension between participants or tension about a difficult topic. An icebreaker for a day-long event might be five to ten minutes. For longer training, where it is important that participants really get to know one another, an initial icebreaker might be a half hour to an hour and a half.

Energizer

An energizer is a brief pick-me-up designed to invigorate a group if energy in the room is waning, or to bring them back together following a break. Energizers may be a short version of any game or icebreaker, or a brief set of stretches. They are completed within approximately two to five minutes.

Brain Teasers

Not really a game and not exactly a simulation, brain teasers are puzzles to keep participants busy or to highlight key points. Brain teasers have the flexibility for a creative trainer to create their own rules to fit a particular session. They can include perception exercises, joining the dots, or drawing activities.

Facilitator Responsibilities

Your responsibilities as a facilitator include **keeping your participants engaged**. No matter how brilliant we think we are, people are able to think much more quickly than we can talk, so it can be challenging to keep a group engaged.

Although training is a very serious business, the use of games and related activities all reflect the **principles of adult learning**. As a facilitator, you need to make sure that your participants do not become so engrossed in an activity that they miss the learning objectives. You must also recognize that games, simulations, role plays, and related activities can speed up the learning process and reinforce the course objectives.

It is equally important that you **debrief** the group on every exercise that you conduct. First, you need to ensure that the exercise is linked to the objectives and that participants understand the goal that was set. Second, and perhaps more importantly, you are responsible for keeping your group united. Although you will always establish your training as taking place in a safe environment, some exercises can take a group through self-disclosure or risk taking that may leave them feeling out of sorts or very uncomfortable. Debriefing allows the opportunity for participants to get their feelings out in the open and to question the process or outcomes while the activity is fresh in their mind and they remain within the safety of the training room. Debriefing also allows everyone, including the trainer, to talk about the outcomes of the exercise. Was it what everyone expected? Would it apply in a real situation? How would you have responded if this had happened?

Setting the Climate

Although climate is established to some extent before participants arrive for training, a key factor to capturing their interest is to plan what takes place on arrival.

Test your knowledge

What can you do as the trainer/facilitator to set the stage for an atmosphere conducive to learning?

Atmosphere is not a one-time thing. You want that same climate to continue throughout the training session.

How can you make sure the atmosphere doesn't turn negative mid-way through a training session?
