

# NIEHS Trainers Exchange

## April 9 - 10/97

**Facilitators:** Marian Flum, Amy Mock, Anita Taylor, and Paula Coleman (not present, but part of the team that designed the session)

These notes are taken from the flip charts recording the discussion during this roundtable session

### **Question 1: Describe your TTT**

- 1 How long?
- 2 How many trainers?
- 3 What were you being trained to do?
- 4 How many instructors and who were they?

#### **Responses**

##### **How long?**

- We had 5 days of TTT spread out over 2 weeks. Trainees could go back to their workplace(s) in between. The advantage of this approach is that trainers got more time to think about issues raised in the TTT and bring back stories/applications from work
- Our TTT was too short. Another participant said their TTT was too long
- Takes longer than a TTT to develop a competent trainer.
- We are always in training
- 2 days TTT to do awareness level training
- 2-3 participants said their TTT programs were 1 week (5 days)

##### **How many trainers?**

- The range of participants was between 14 and 24. We agreed that the optimal number is 15-20 trainers

##### **What were you being trained to do?**

- TTT focused on instructional methods
- We split our TTT about 50-50 between technical issues and teaching methods

##### **Instructors:**

- We use between 2 - 6 experienced worker trainers (peer trainers)

- We used in-house professionals especially for technical training, and training professionals from a nearby university for training techniques
- We use a mixture of peer trainers and professionals

**Question 2: What was the primary focus of your TTT? For example, did it focus on:**

- Technical (health and safety) issues?
- Training techniques?
- Classroom basics? (How to prepare to train, setting up the classroom, etc )

**Responses:**

See answers above (In the interest of time we moved on to the next question without discussing this further )

**Question 3: Hands-on activities**

- 1 How much?
- 2 What kind?

**Responses:**

- Didn't used to have any in our TTT's, but had to incorporate because trainers asked for it.
- We include hands-on activities in our TTT only for courses that have hands-on activities
- Other participants said that from 1.5 to 2.3 of their TTTs were focused on hands-on activities.

**Question 4: Practice Teaching**

- 1 How important is it to do during a TTT?
- 2 How does it help?
- 3 How much?
- 4 Who do you do it for? (Who is the audience?)

**Responses:**

- As much as possible!
- Gives you a chance to be adventurous The more you make of it, the more you learn
- Videotape for later critique
- Essential to really focus on methodology issues
- One workshop participant commented that it was important for trainers to select the topic to present Another said that they select the topics for the trainers.
- We have trainers use new computer programs to develop training aids at our TTT

- For first time trainers we have them first teach about something they know, e.g. basketball. This helps to focus on the methodology issues and ease the discomfort the trainers may feel about health and safety.
- We do a session where we purposely “blow it,” i.e., make a number of teaching mistakes. Then we critique it.
- Make an activity of when to use different training methods.
- Practice teaching in front of other trainers (peers) first.
- Practice before the biggest group you can get. Another participant countered by pointing out that training in smaller groups is less intimidating for the trainer.
- Pair trainers so that they do team teaching.
- Make it optional -- trainer chooses whether to train alone or in a team.

**When training trainers who will be teaching people with limited English skills, trainers must practice:**

- teaching with an interpreter
- using pictorial materials
- speaking slowly
- using demonstrations

**Question 5: Critique/Feedback**

1. What helps the most?
2. Who does it?

**Responses:**

- Sometimes it's hard to get people to say negative things.
- Ask for suggestions for improvement - can help get around problem stated above.
- On-going feedback given by mentor trainees. (Beyond the duration of the TTT.)
- Start with positive things trainers did.
- Emphasize that it should be an honest opinion with suggestions for improvement.
- Feedback given verbally and in writing.
- Ask trainer for self-evaluation first -- makes it less threatening because he/she is usually much harder on him/herself than anyone else is.
- Give trainers specific criteria for evaluating each other's (and their own) performance. This helps to depersonalize the critique.

**Question 6: Life after TTT**

1. Were you ready to teach?
2. What else do you need?
3. Is there a trainer “buddy” or “mentor” program?

We did not have time to discuss this topic, though there was a lot of interest in it. We suggest that one of the sessions at the next Trainers Exchange be devoted to this subject.

**Task:** Design a model TTT program, keeping in mind the parameters discussed in the questions above

**Note:** We were prepared for one of the small groups to focus on designing a TTT focused on teaching to an audience with limited English skills. All the groups decided to focus on designing a more generic train-the-trainer program

## **Responses:**

### **Small Group #1**

- 1 Practice teaching -- helps to develop confidence in one's ability
- 2 Teach module with a mentor (15 - 20 min).
- 3 Role-play methodology
- 4 Refresher skills development
  - site specific
  - new technologies

### **Group #2**

Needed TTT factors

- 1 Set minimum floor (of experience and knowledge) to come into training so range is somewhat similar. Trainers should at least be occupational health and safety veterans
- 2 Recruit motivated persons who want to become trainers.
- 3 Practice teaching is crucial. Trainees should pick topic to get maximum comfort level
- 4 TTT facilitator guide should have structure but also flexibility
- 5 Get trainees to clarify and understand educational goals, training philosophy, and methodology
- 6 Emphasize during TTT that evaluation should focus on outcome assessments so trainees are clear on how they can measure success as trainers
- 7 Build competency that is not overly specialized
- 8 Feedback evaluation should be given during TTT training
- 9 Get trainees to build skills in giving appropriate feedback.

### **Group #3**

- Target audience = first time trainers
- Practice teaching assign topics for trainers to practice and the methods to use
- Teach how to use different training methods
  - demonstrate effective use of a method
  - do a "blow it" session for some methods
- Emphasize careful listening skills and sensitivity to trainees needs
- Feedback
  - Prepare trainers for the evaluation by talking about criteria from the beginning.
  - Provide verbal and written feedback.
  - Provide criteria checklist for evaluating trainers' performance.
- Create atmosphere of a healthy challenge

## Group #4

Critical criteria for success as a trainer

- Ability to clearly present subject matter
- Knowledge and demonstration of diverse teaching techniques.
- Knowledge of subject matter
- Effective solicitation of feedback and interaction among class participants
- Flexibility

- 
- 1) No single model for a train-the-trainer program will work for all trainers. A program must be tailored to the specific needs of those preparing to become trainers.
  - 2) The 1.5 hours set aside for this session were not enough to devote to this topic. At least another 0.5 hours was needed.