

Workshop Description

3/29/07 10:45 am Workshop Block 1

7. Training to empower workers: Doing popular education “on the fly” in health & safety training
(N.E. Consortium – Tom Estabrook & Claudie Grout) Track: Training Approaches for Worker Empowerment

How do trainers engage workers to take action to protect and improve health and safety at work, particularly if the trainers have not already assessed workers’ issues and needs? The objective of this workshop is to introduce and practice “popular education” methods, with the intent of using them in situations where trainers do not previously know the specific needs and experiences of the workers in the training. Popular education is a nontraditional, democratic learning approach that seeks to empower adults by assisting them to reflect critically on their lived experience, identify their motivating issues, identify power dynamics that influence their experience, and forge action steps to address their issues. Participants will do several small-group activities – brainstorming ways to start a training by assessing workers’ needs; analyzing the root causes of trainees’ workplace problems, including workplace power dynamics; and identifying workers’ deepest, most difficult problems – followed by discussion and critique.