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The NASAGA Organization would like to thank Gail Heidenhain and Randy Hollandsworth for their time and effort in creating this issue of SIMAGES.

Inside this Issue:

Designing Training Materials

Susan Otto

I’ve been asked recently how I go about designing Facilitator Guides and Participant Guides. It seems that colleagues I’ve talked to or read about develop their materials very differently.

I design the Participant Guide in conjunction with the Facilitator Guide. Most of the time is spent on designing the Facilitator Guide material. However, as I come across some detailed information, I immediately place it in the Participant Guide, since it may not need to be in the Facilitator Guide. By doing this, I am capturing the material immediately, saving design time later. The Participant Guide is a guide to be used during the training and as a resource on the job.

The Facilitator Guide contains much more detail than the Participant Guide in other respects since it contains:

- the flow of the content with detailed explanation about how to facilitate the activities, simulations, and games.
- start times, stop times and even breaks.
- as much information as possible to help both trained and non-trained facilitators successfully disseminate the information. In this case, the Facilitator Guide might seem rather constricting and too detailed for the expert facilitator.

I have found that collecting and organizing the content in the Facilitator Guide works best for me... and isn’t that how you should create your material - how it works best for you?

Different instructional designers have different processes for designing. In the July 2000 Thiagi Game Letter, published by Jossey-Bass/Pfeiffer, Lou Russell, an author of The Accelerating Learning Fieldbook: Making the Instructional Process Fast, Flexible, and Fun, recommends "designing your games and simulations before your lecture material, overheads, and student workbooks. Leave aside all non-interactive components of your training package until the very end. If you are lucky, you will run out of time and this will prevent you from creating dull and lifeless materials that encourage passive learning."

Other designers create the Participant Guide prior to the Facilitator Guide. In fact, their Participant Guides look more like PowerPoint presentations rather than reference material to be used during the training and, maybe more importantly, as a resource on the job.

The key is not to lose sight of the "learner" or participant. Constantly consider what the best way is to present the content so that it "sticks". In other words, how can the participants apply the information back on the job immediately and effectively?

After I write the content, I then have the pleasure of looking through my piles of activities, simulations, and games. As you may have found, many activities, simulations, and games can be adapted to fit different applications. Going through the options with an open mind is critical. (Feel free to go to the NASAGA.org website to see article on simulations and games as well as how to adapt them.)

Here are few ideas to consider when creating your training material:

- Do you have interactive activities for the "participative" learners?
- Do you have independent learning for the "reflective" learners?
- Do you think about presenting your content so that the "specific" learners don't become frustrated by information that is not organized?
- Do you allow learning to occur through "big picture" thinking or by giving general instruction for the participants that like to create their own framework or structure to the content?
- Do you tie the learning to the participants' needs? And if you're not clear what they are, give them time to make the application themselves?
- Do you provide auditory, visual, and kinesthetic opportunities throughout the training?

In general, I create Facilitator Guides in a 2-column format. The first column contains the module headings with the recommended time allotted. It also references PowerPoint slides, flip charts, and videos to be used to the left of the second column's detailed description. The second column contains the detailed content of what the facilitator should say and do. I typically note the difference by regular versus italic font, though quotes can also be used. Headers and Footers might contain the course name, module name, page number, company, and date of the last update. The Facilitator Guide also contains an Appendix with such things as: pre and post letters, handouts, PowerPoints, example flip charts, etc.

The Participant Guide format is typically a 1-column format. Consistent headings are used to indicate what material is contained for that page. There is typically no Header. Footers contain the page number, company, and date of the last update. An appendix might contain a glossary of terms, references, blank forms used and discussed in the module, etc.

Designers create their training the way that best meets their needs, while always keeping the learner in mind. Do what works for you. Do what is easiest. Let's face it, in today's corporate environment; we don't have the luxury of time. Let's do what works - fast!

Cool Stuff !!
A Parlor Game on Assumptions

Randy Hollandsworth

Recently, I had the opportunity to work with Dr. William R. Kennan, Communications

Department Chair, Radford University, on a Coaching workshop. He used an old parlor game that really supported the learning on how we make assumptions when communicating. The experience led to a great class discussion on the costs of making assumptions and also how frustrating it can be for managers, direct reports, and anyone involved in the communication loop.

The game is called, "Knives", and requires two common kitchen butter knives. The exercise works best with a group of 10-25 participants. The participants should sit in a circle with the facilitator sitting in the circle beside the participants. The game begins with a statement of the objectives , which are:

- To pass both knives safely to the person to their left (or clockwise)
- To announce to the person, "I present these knives" (crossed/uncrossed).
- To receive these knives by announcing, "I receive these knives" (crossed/uncrossed).
- To determine as a group, the correct process for passing these knives.

[The assumption is automatically made that the terms, crossed or uncrossed, reference the knives themselves or maybe even the hands. However, the correct process references the crossing or uncrossing of the participant's legs or feet while passing or receiving.]

It is best to allow the participants the opportunity to go through a cycle or two with little or no feedback. I provide them feedback like, "the group was 10% correct" or "the group was 90% incorrect."

After the first round, I will visually emphasize crossing my legs prior to passing the knives while handing them the two knives uncrossed. This really gets the participants thinking without my making any statements.

At this point, some participants will get the idea but some will not. An element of frustration will begin to build in the group, which is fertile ground for discussion, but must eventually be debriefed. Once the entire group figures out the secret, either with or without assistance from the facilitator, the debriefing can begin.

It is critical to discuss what happened and how it felt during the exercise. The issues on how it was communicated by the leader is also very important. Another important issue is how quickly we make assumptions. It is very obvious how groups continue forward with actions based on their assumptions. You will find that few participants ask questions about the correct process, they will follow the leader's directions without probing for more information. Bridging these experiences with work life is very easy to do. It is very clear how costly assumptions can be and how quickly groups commit time, resources, and energy to an incorrect process despite negative feedback or lack of understanding.

Game: Knives
Activity Objective: Understanding how we make and act on assumptions when communicating.
Recommended Number of Participants: 10-25
Activity Time: 15-25 minutes
Equipment Needed: Chairs and 2 butter knives
Key Considerations: Safety in passing of knives and ensure participants have opportunity to debrief and relieve some of the frustration from the exercise.

Nine Great Reasons to Collaborate

Kevin Eikenberry

As consultants we need to continually be looking for ways to better serve our clients. One rich source of new ideas is the people in our network - those with whom we might collaborate. Here are nine reasons why collaboration can make us better consultants on our current projects, and more valuable ones in future work.

1. Build your network. Collaborative efforts are one of the best ways to enhance your network. Collaborations start either serendipitously through meeting someone new, or by a conversation with someone already known. If the collaboration is with a new person, you have added to your network. If it is with a known colleague, you have strengthened it. Either way, for all the reasons networking is important, collaborative work on projects makes sense.

2. Get more done. Working together adds a relationship dynamic to a project that doesn't exist if you are working alone. However, most projects, well planned, can be done faster with two people than with one. For this reason, if you will take the time to be clear on outcomes up front, you can use collaborative approaches to get more done.

3. Reduce project time. Along with getting more accomplished, you can finish quicker! Have a tight deadline? Consider a collaborator. Think the planning time will take too long? It might the first time, and might not help you out of your current crunch. But by making collaboration a strategy, and doing it often, this planning time will be reduced over time. Find yourself in tight crunches often? Start finding collaborators!

4. Reinforce accountability. It is harder to let your project slide, or allow timelines to slip when you have told your partner they would have the next draft on Monday.

5. Produce a better result. Two heads are better than one. Collaboration can lead to innovative and fresh solutions to problems. By partnering with some who has different experiences, or a different style, you open yourself to new approaches and ideas to better serve the client. Two heads ARE better than one - and that often translates into better work products.

6. Increase flexibility. In a larger project, having a partner may allow you both more flexibility. If the next task is due next week, and you have some other priorities, having a partner may allow both of you to even out your workload over the course of the project.

7. Increase opportunities for learning. Often when working alone we resort to the tried and true approaches, and never seem to stretch or further build our competencies. Working with someone else provides you many opportunities to learn. What approaches did they suggest? What ideas did they bring to the situation? How do they communicate with clients? These are only a few of the things you can observe and learn from - adding new tools to your own toolkit for future projects.

8. Increase Enjoyment. For most of us, most of the time, working on something with someone else is more fun! If you can gain all of the other benefits (or even only a few of them) from collaboration AND make your work more fun, isn't it something worth trying?

9. Create a Win/Win/Win proposition. All of the benefits you gain, your collaborator gains too. And don't forget your client - they are getting higher quality work done in less time - and seeing you as the person who made that happen.

Hopefully this list of benefits has convinced you of the value of collaboration. Now it is time to get started. Think about people you know who might want to collaborate with you. Write these names down. Think of upcoming projects. Write these projects down. Now it is time to schedule breakfast or lunch with the people on your list and get started.

Kevin Eikenberry (Kevin@discian.com) is president of the Discian Group, a learning consulting company in Indianapolis. He’s always interested in finding new collaborators to help client meet their performance goals through learning. Email him if you want to get started!

Understanding Values Collisions: An Interactive Quickie!

Randy Hollandsworth

A quick and fun exercise that I use for a leadership program , Leader Effectiveness Training, developed by Gordon Training International focuses on managing conflict effectively when dealing with values collisions.

Once the content is provided on how to manage values-based conflicts, I have the entire group stand together in the middle of the classroom. Prior to this event, I place flipchart sheets on the wall on two opposing sides of the classroom. One sheet has in big letters the word "DISAGREE". The other sheet has the word "AGREE". I provide the participants generalized statements on values-related issues and they must move from one side of the room or the other depending on their decision to agree or disagree. They are not allowed to straddle the fence on any issues, I will not provide any additional information. I simply read the short statement and they must decide how they feel about the issue, to agree or disagree.

Some common topics to read would be based on personal relationships, socializing at work, pornography/first amendment issues, work ethics, gender issues, and so on. The critical learning aspect is that the participants practice good listening techniques while engaging with others that agree with them and with those that disagree with them.

I typically cut the discussions shortly after they have begun because the real objective is to allow them to experience the high emotions people feel when reaching into their values systems. The exercise can strongly reinforce how sensitive value-based conflicts can be for managers/leaders to manage. And how good communication skills and conflict management skills become even more necessary.

Randy Hollandsworth is Training and Development Coordinator for Radford University's Business Assistance Center, Radford, Virginia. You can contact him at rhollands@radford.edu.

New Format for Simages

Beginning with the Spring 2001 issue, SIMAGES will be provided in Adobe Acrobat and submitted via email to all members. We understand that some members prefer a hard copy and NASAGA intends to meet those needs as well. Please contact either Gail Heidenhain or Randy Hollandsworth at the above email addresses, if you wish to receive a hard copy version.

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