

Tool 12-3. Instructional Methods—When to Use

| Method | Purpose | When to Use |
|-------------------------------------|---|--|
| Role Plays | Help participants practice skills used in interactions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To practice newly acquired skill To experience what a particular situation feels like To provide feedback to participants about their behavior |
| Games | Provide nonthreatening way to present or review course material | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To help grasp total program content To present dry material in an interesting way To add a competitive element to the session |
| Simulations | Recreate a process, event, or set of circumstances, usually complex, so that participants can experience and manipulate the situation without risk and then analyze what happened | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To integrate and apply a complex set of skills To elicit participants' natural tendencies and provide feedback on those tendencies To provide a realistic, job-related experience |
| Observations | Certain participants act out or demonstrate behaviors, tasks, or situations while others observe and give feedback | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To show the group how to perform a procedure or apply a skill or behavior To increase participants' observation, critiquing, and feedback skills To demonstrate behavior modeling |
| Instruments | Provide feedback; self-assessment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To identify areas for improvement To establish a baseline for future growth |
| Mental Imagery Exercises | Help participants increase understanding, gain insight | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To address affective learning To stimulate thinking, imagination To replace role playing |
| Writing Tasks | Help participants reflect on their understanding of concepts, information, ideas | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide for individual input |
| Lecturettes | Convey information when interaction or discussion is not desired or is not possible | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To convey information quickly within a short time To communicate the same information to large numbers of people To provide basic information to a group that is not knowledgeable |
| Small Group Discussions | Offer opportunities for participants to express opinions, share ideas, solve problems, interact with others | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To generate ideas To find out what participants think about a particular subject To increase level of participation To encourage group interaction and build group cohesiveness |
| Case Studies | Allow participants to discover certain learning points themselves | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To apply new knowledge to a specific situation To practice problem-solving skills |
| Task Exercises or Activities | Allow participants to work with the content in small groups | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To test participants' understanding of a concept or process To promote group collaboration To increase participants' confidence in their ability to apply learning on the job |

Source: Karen Lawson (Pfeiffer, 2006). *The Trainer's Handbook*. 2nd ed. Used with permission.