

the 'time on task' which many teachers think is the final one. It isn't, of course: if the task is not a very learning-rich one, then time on task could result in very little learning. And then you get into discussing what 'learning time' really is.

TW: Thanks, Penny. I am really going to think about this!

References

Ryle, G *The Concept of Mind* (1949)
London: Hutchinson

Author

Penny Ur was educated at the universities of Oxford (MA), Cambridge (PGCE) and Reading (MATEFL). She emigrated to Israel in 1967, where she still lives today. She is married with four children and five grandchildren.



Penny Ur has thirty years' experience as an English teacher in primary and secondary schools in Israel. She has recently retired from the headship of the M.Ed program in foreign-language teaching at Oranim Academic College of Education, but

continues to teach M.A. courses at Oranim and Haifa University.

She is interested in all aspects of language-teaching methodology, but in particular issues of fluency and accuracy in language teaching, language-learning activity design and the implications for teachers of the development of English as a lingua franca.

She has published a number of articles, and was for ten years the editor of the *Cambridge Handbooks for Language Teachers* series. Her books include *Discussions that Work* (1981), *Five Minute Activities* (co-authored with Andrew Wright) (1992), *A Course in Language Teaching* (1996), and *Grammar Practice Activities* (2nd Edition) (2009), all published by Cambridge University Press.

A checklist for organising and running a workshop for teachers

By the 'January Trainers'!

INTRODUCTION

Trainers will sometimes be asked by their institution to organise and run a workshop for in-house, in-service teachers. At other times you might feel the need yourself to offer a workshop to pre-service trainees on an exam course. We are also sometimes invited abroad to give workshops to people we have never met before. This kind of training is sometimes called Fly In Fly Out (FIFO).

A workshop could be anything from a 45-minute session for colleagues in a lunch break to a four-day event for people we have never met, held in a residential centre. The participants might be a group of colleagues who know each other well or a mix of teachers who come from different backgrounds, have different levels of experience and who have never met before. The topic might be set by the institution, a syllabus or requested by the participants (Ps) themselves.

Whatever the reason, topic or setting of the workshop, we need to plan carefully and keep lots of things in mind.

Below, we try to provide a checklist that could help you before, during and after the workshop.

Before the workshop

- You might prepare a questionnaire or letter for the participants and circulate it to find out what their needs and expectations are. This might really help your preparation

- If you don't have enough information on the topic of the workshop, do some research by asking colleagues, finding articles, books or searching for information on the internet.
- Find out what you can about the venue e.g. how much space you will have and how many break out spaces for group work
- Plan in participation by means of a variety of interactive activities that will spark conversation and insights (role-plays, discussions, debates, case studies) and through a variety of patterns of interaction (group work, pair work, individually); These will ensure the workshop is practical and will involve the participants more deeply in what is going on.
- Prepare the materials, e.g. handouts, multimedia presentations etc.
- Think about the feedback you will get from the participants during and after the workshop. Prepare the aspects you would like to be evaluated beforehand so that you can distribute any forms in the workshop.
- If you need other people to do certain things along with you, decide on who they should be, what their role is going to be and what they should do (e.g. technical support, help with registration)
- Plan the time
- Introduce guests or other lecturers that have been invited to help you and make sure participants can get to know at least a little about each other in an interesting way;
- Remember to establish a friendly, non-threatening atmosphere so that attendees will feel comfortable to ask and answer questions and discuss issues;
- Remind attendees to fill in the feedback form and hand it in before they leave;
- Go through the workshop agenda with Ps to briefly preview what will be covered and to clarify any queries;
- Find out as much as possible about the Ps' needs and expectations so that you can make alterations in the agenda or adjust your plans if necessary as it is often the case that participants come who are not expected or that needs have changes since you were last in touch with participants ;
- Negotiate with Ps the ground rules; that is, whether questions can be raised at any time or at specifically assigned times, for example;
- Because you have planned lots of interaction, also be prepared to deal with unexpected issues that might crop up (See the Fridge System on page 6);
- Refer back to the agenda at different moments of the workshop to recap topics/ issues already covered;
- Keep track of your timing to avoid delays (and using up Ps' coffee breaks!) and to ensure all points will be dealt with;
- Change pace according to your Ps' reactions;

During the workshop

- Introduce yourself to the participants (Ps) with information about your workplace, your background, expertise in the target subject, etc;

- Have a number of tasks up your sleeve to give to people who either finish activities first or are latecomers;
- Summarize / recap the content covered at the end of the session and invite attendees to make final comments;
- Suggest / collect ideas for the next workshop;
- Provide everyone with a list of all Ps' e-mails so that they can contact one another and remember to keep a copy for yourself
- Collect the feedback forms or have a place for them to be put in as people leave;
- Thank Ps and guests lecturers at the end of the workshop;
- Remind Ps to get their certificates before they leave.

After the workshop

- Keep a journal or diary after each workshop so that you will be able to record your feelings/perceptions, thoughts on your plans, alterations made either by yourself or at attendees' request;
- Analyse your own data after a while aiming at self-development;
- Think about how to organise the data gathered from the attendees' feedback;
- Analyse the data qualitatively (for instance: you can have an overall impression which will lead you to take further action) and/or quantitatively (for example: you analyse the frequency of their answers and find important patterns that may occur) according to your needs;
- Compare the results from both analyses and draw conclusions in order to improve future sessions;
- Remember to promote contact among the participants via discussion forums, blogs, e-mails, and so on.
- It might be a good idea to write an article about your workshop sessions taking into account the wide range of groups you have dealt with, their behaviour, needs, feedback and reactions. Subsequently, compare and contrast all these data with your self-feedback.

When running workshops for your own trainees or for in-service teachers at your own institution bear in mind that:

- All the steps above also apply to this situation;

The data collected can help you:

1. understand your trainees better and cater for their needs;
2. analyse the usefulness of the session and plan follow ups;

Whenever you observe teachers after the sessions, the whole process of observation (pre-lesson discussion, lesson planning implementation, post-lesson discussion) will also help you as feedback for your future

sessions, and also gives you an idea of whether the teachers are putting the workshop ideas into practice or not; Try to find out why they are putting some ideas into practice or not.

The special case of the FIFO trainer

- Try to find out as much as possible about the history ,geography, climate, clothing, language, politics and social context of the place you will be travelling to.
- Liaise with host. Double check all travel, visa, accommodation, insurance, currency, expenses, float, meeting and contact arrangements.
- Arrange your fees and the time and manner of payment.
- Receive, if possible, some background information about the participants, e.g. their CV's or a paragraph about their most recent training experience.
- Check with local helpers and make sure they see to everything you need for the workshop (e.g. Handouts photocopied? Technical support?).
- When travelling take all your workshop notes, one presentable blouse/shirt and your target address in your hand luggage in case your bag goes astray and you have to do the workshop without its contents!
- After the workshop give the participants your email address and encourage them to get in touch with you should they have any queries related to the topic.
- Remember to collect feedback sheets before you leave. Take copies if necessary.
- Having kept all receipts, claim your expenses, fees, etc.
- Send a thank-you letter or e-mail to the host and school personnel who helped you.
- Write any reports required.
- Summarise the content of the workshop in a Power Point presentation file and send it to the participants and the host?

Conclusion

The checklist we have provided here is a practical overview of how to organize workshops from both the content and logistics points of view. A very well organized workshop is an effective tool for improving personal and professional qualities of all those involved in it. Before reading this article you might have thought that being a teacher trainer and conducting a workshop would differ completely from being a teacher and delivering lessons. However, as you can see, the essence of trying to get a message across, no matter if in a language classroom nearby or in a teacher-training room, maybe even abroad, is the same. We are talking about the necessary interaction among minds,

knowledge, environment and souls which will allow some learning to happen. For this interaction to take place, careful preparation, execution and reflection to decide on further action are demanded. To make your life simpler we have prepared this checklist so that you can photocopy and use it next time you are preparing for a workshop.

Reading leads

www.glsenco.org/Educators/designing.htm (case sensitive)

www.educationsense.org/events/camp/

www.ifuw.org/ifuw2007/workshops/guidelines.pdf (international federation of university women)

www.icab.be/downloads/WB_SampleChapter10.pdf

excerpt from *The Workshop Book: From Individual Creativity to Group Action*.

For more information or to order please visit www.icacan.ca.

All sites accessed in January, 2008



Authors

Ana Beatriz Rocha dos Santos (Brazil)
 Ana Paula Tavares de Moraes Silva Cypriano (Brazil)
 Anette Heidler (Germany)
 Celia Elisa de Magalhaes (Brazil)
 Cynthia Pamela Cohen (Argentina)
 George de Azevedo Madeiro (Brazil)
 Maria Karaivanova (Bulgaria)
 Vera Lucia Pasa Puerari (Brazil)

Eight of us teacher trainers got together for discussions on a course in January 2008 in Broadstairs, Kent, UK with Tessa Woodward.