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Human settlement management training: an approach to course design

Martin G. Wynn and Pier Giovanni d'Ayala

Dr Wynn is research fellow in the Department of General Surveying and Construction, North East London Polytechnic, Great Britain, and a UNESCO consultant in training and research.

Dr d' Ayala is responsible for Training, Research and Information programs in the Division of Human Settlements and Socio-Cultural Environments, UNESCO (Paris).

Over the past decade, different United Nations authorities, above all, UNESCO, have expended considerable effort on the organization of training programs for human settlement managers, ie “Those actors, mainly drawn from the public sector, who are professionally engaged in the formulation, organisation and implementation of decisions affecting human settlements.”¹

The main thrust of training seminars and courses has been towards providing participants with a broader awareness of the transectoral nature of the development and urban management processes, thereby enhancing their capacity to formulate and carry out appropriate responses to problem situations. More recently, however, UNESCO has moved into the field of “training trainers,” with a view to setting up related courses to complement their existing “training managers ” program. In November 1980, a group of experts met at Chantilly in France to review past training experiences and make recommendations for future actions. This article reports on one of the major themes discussed at the seminar - how best to approach the design and structure of subsequent training courses. At the same time, however, the article also makes recommendations concerning course monitoring and feedback, which, it is hoped, will enable future course structures to be viewed within a common analytical framework, and which might form the basis for the design and packaging of training formats and materials.

Goals and objectives

The approach to course design and structuring described below is based on the assumption that there is no universally applicable ideal course structure. Rather it is suggested that the overall objective of course planning should be to find the optimum blend; mix and variety of learning experiences to best match the requirements of a particular program. Nevertheless, there would seem to be certain training goals and learning objectives which are generally relevant to training in the human settlement management field, even if their exact weighting will differ from program to program. Similarly the use of certain training methods and techniques will be more appropriate, than others in the realization of specific goals and objectives. It is thus possible to conceptualize the initial stages of course planning as a process of selection and elimination, in which factors particular to any one course - the “problem set” (participants' background, time and financial resources etc) - suggest the appropriate balance of goals and objectives, and recommend which particular combinations of training methods and techniques might be best used on any one course (fig. 1).

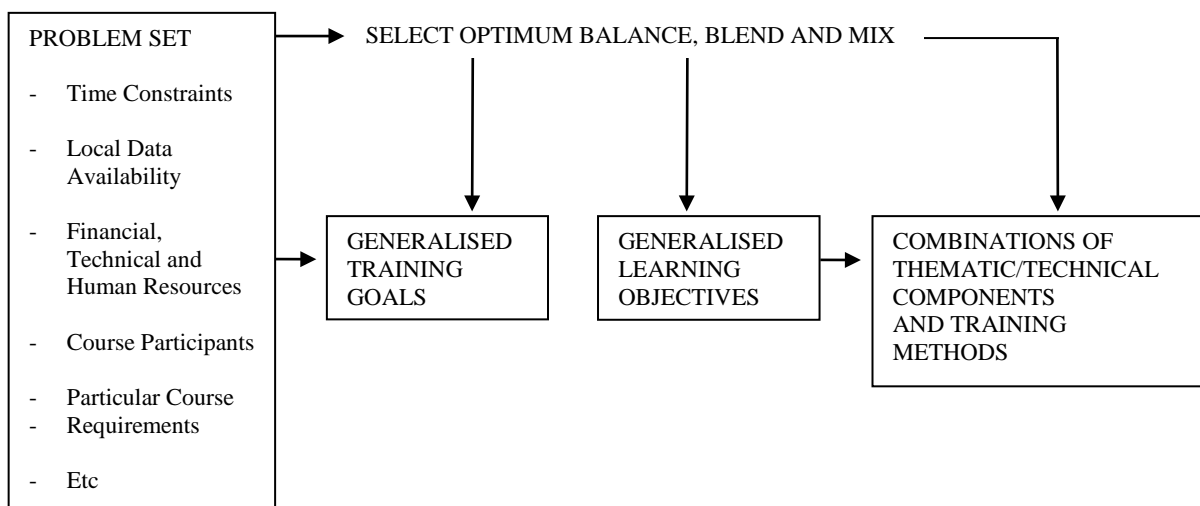


Fig. 1: Selecting the optimum balance, blend and mix from the “problem set.”

In the field of human settlement management training, it is suggested that training courses - for trainers and/ or managers - will aim to help course members “learn” in three main interrelated areas, which may be termed “generalized training goals.” These three goals are:

- A. Learning to understand and manage the development process,
- B. Learning to understand yourself and others,

C. Learning how to train.

Clearly, in a strictly “training trainers” context, Goal C is likely to be of greater importance than in a “training managers” course (fig. 2). But, as one of the underlying aims of UNESCO training programs is to diffuse improved performance capacity as widely as possible throughout those management systems that attempt to direct the course of change in human settlements, the “learning to train” goal is likely to be of relevance to all courses that form part of this wider program. Similarly, Goal B (Learning to understand oneself

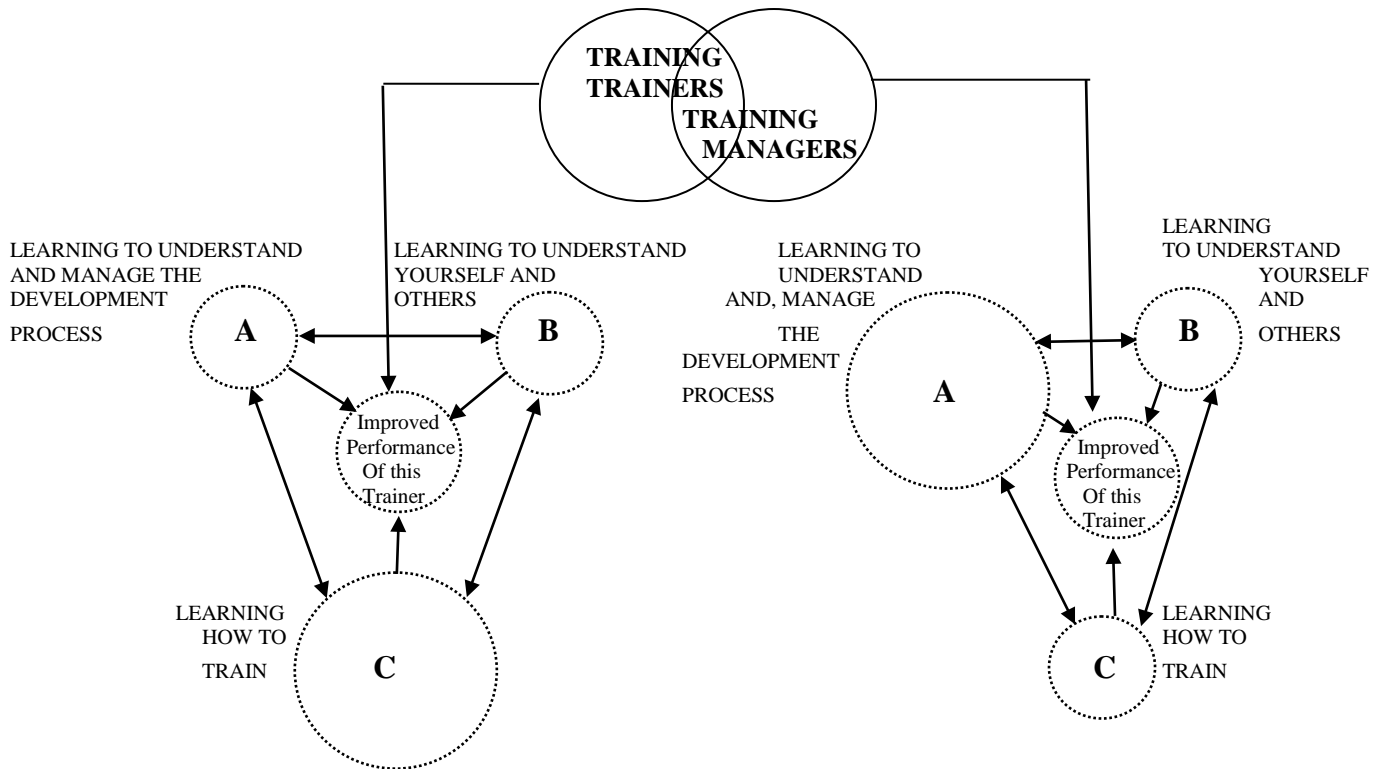


Fig.2: Generalized training goals in human settlement management courses

and others) is likely to be of significance in enabling participants to develop their self-awareness and broaden their perceptions of others' roles and activities. Indeed, “learning to learn” is a major theoretical underpinning to this triad of training goals, and Goal B will be of significance in any course which attempts to foster interdisciplinary and transectoral perspectives. Goal A, however, will most likely feature more prominently in “training managers” rather than “training trainers” courses, the assumption being that potential trainers will already be suitably well informed on the functioning of the urban management and development processes.

Following group and plenary sessions at the 1980 seminar, a set of learning objectives for each training goal was agreed upon. These objectives, listed in table 1, are largely self-explanatory, but certain points are perhaps worth noting here. The set of objectives relating to Goal A is based on what is often termed a “decision centered” or “systems view” of planning, as conceptualized by Chadwick² and Mcloughlin^{3,4}, in the late sixties and early seventies, which has had a major impact on the organization of planning and management systems in Europe in the seventies. It should be stressed, however, that this framework is intended to be used as much to facilitate a “bottom-up” understanding of reality, as to generate “top-down” action programs for change; and that an appreciation of transectoral inter-relationships (A2), and broad based implementation and monitoring methods (A5, A6) are seen as particularly important.

The second set of objectives, concerning Goal B, relate to what is often termed “social skills training.” This has been defined by Fraser and Phillips⁵ as “any form of training which is designed to help people understand themselves, learn about how others see them, and make choices about their behaviour” This form of training can encompass a range of techniques (eg Rackham's Behavioural Analysis, the Johari Window Team Effectiveness Survey), many of which can be used in group training situations which may also meet other learning objectives.⁶ In this way, then, the richness of the learning experience for course participants can be enhanced without undue extra requirements on time and space. We shall return to this theme later.

The last set of objectives concerns the need to familiarize participants with the factors involved in the planning and design of courses (C1) and to provide them with a knowledge, and, as far as is possible, first hand experience of the range of training methods most appropriate to their needs (C2, C3). At the same time, it was considered important that the need for sensitivity, flexibility and innovation in the use of training methods (C4, C5) should also be highlighted;

Table 1

Testing Goals	LEARNING OBJECTIVES
G O A L A	To Develop a Capacity to: A1 Identify critical issues and problems A2 Identify inter-relationships between problems A3 Generate alternative courses of action A4 Evaluate and appraise potential impacts of different courses of action A5 Implement preferred courses of action A6 Monitor and respond to change in the decision environment
G O A L B	B1 Heighten awareness of one's own strengths and weaknesses B2 Heighten awareness of others' perceptions of your role B3 Broaden your understanding of others' strengths and weaknesses B4 Improve ability to effect appropriate inter-personal interaction B5 Make fuller use of your won potential B6 Improve communication skills
G O A L C	C1 To give participants an awareness of the factors involved in the planning and designing of courses C2 Provide an outline of the range of available instructional methods C3 Give participants first hand experience of using selected training tools and mechanisms C4 To attempt to give participants the awareness and sensitivity to know how and when to use different tools C5 To encourage flexibility and in the use of techniques: and an ability to adapt and try new innovatory methods as necessary C6 To provide participants with knowledge and experience of a range of on-going feedback systems (a) Primary – day to day (b) Secondary – end of course (c) Tertiary – post-course evaluation (d) Quaternary – inter-course linkages

and participants should be made aware of the desirability of, and scope for, setting up feedback mechanisms within various temporal and organizational contexts relating to training (C6). While “day-to-day” (primary) and “end of course” (secondary) feedback is likely to be of importance in contributing to the smooth running of individual courses, it was felt that attention should also be given to providing post-course (tertiary) evaluation and feedback, and continuity and linkage between courses (quaternary). To get over these concepts to participants, then, was all seen to fit within the general framework of the “learning to train” objectives.

Training methods

It was thus assumed that training goals and learning objectives can be identified in the planning of any one program. The task then facing the trainer, given these objectives and the variety of constraints relating to the “problem set,” is how to optimize the learning experience of participants attending the course. In confronting this problem certain

general principles were agreed upon, which collectively suggested directions for future research activity in this area:

- General support was given to Lewin's assertion ⁷ that training is more effective if people learn at three levels: through thinking (cognitive/ conceptual), through doing (psychomotor) and through feeling (affective domain).
- Animated case studies (based on data drawn from the locale of the course), simulation gaming and systems modelling were seen as tried and tested approaches that, when used correctly, can involve participants in these three types of learning. At the same time, it was agreed that these three major training approaches should be used in conjunction with whatever other methods might most effectively help to stimulate innovative thinking and, at the same time, provide changes of pace, rhythm and orientation in the training course (fig. 3).
- General support was given to the idea of attempting to introduce an element of social skills training (generally related to Goals and Objectives B) in all training courses. It was stressed that relevant training exercises could be undertaken in parallel with other sessions that may centrally address other learning objectives. A Team Effectiveness Survey, for example, based on the Johari Window Concept, could be used as a follow-up to any

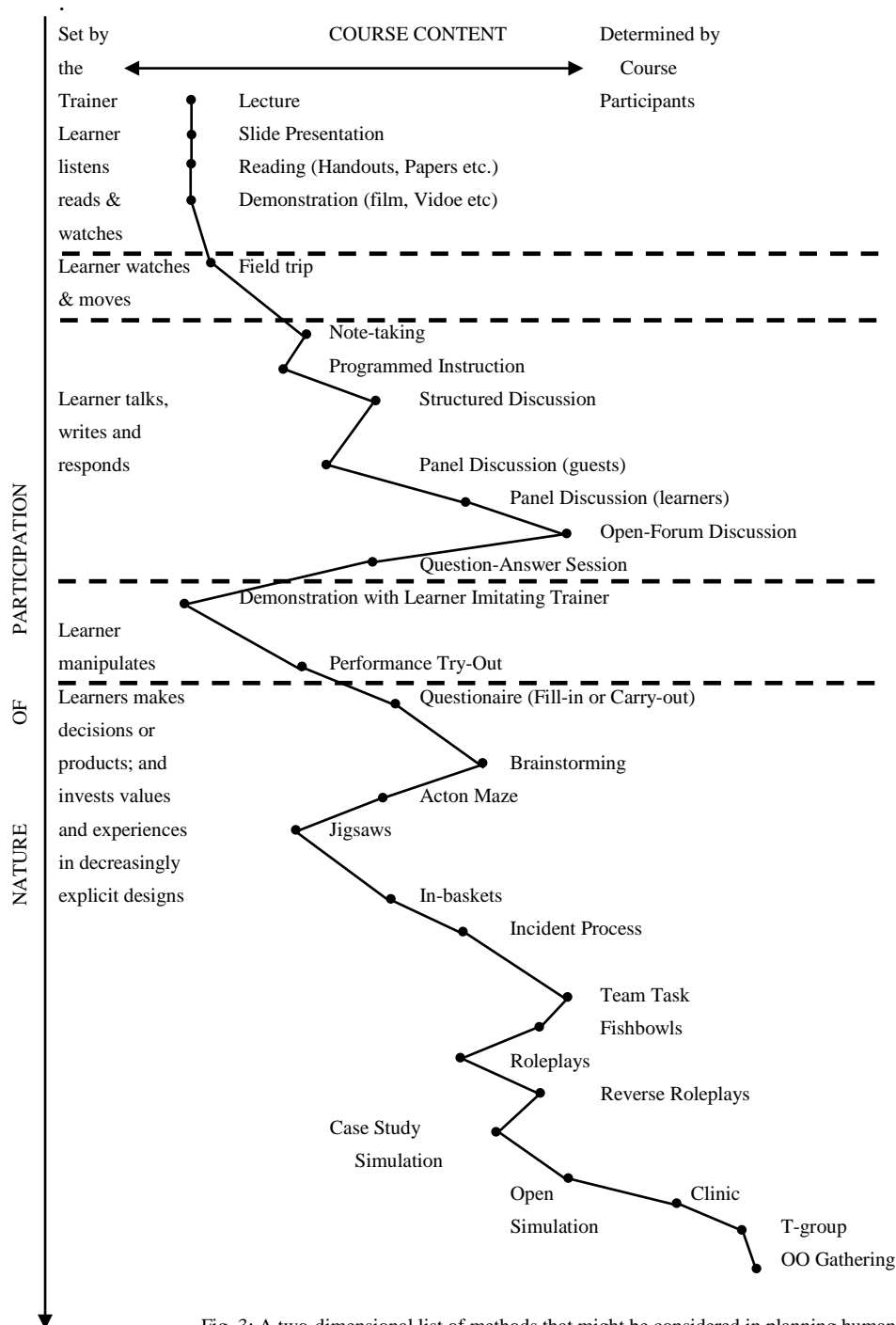


Fig. 3: A two-dimensional list of methods that might be considered in planning human settlement management training courses. (Based on D. Laird, "Approaches to Training and Development," Addison-Wesley, 1975)

Team Task session, in which team performance. could be examined from the point of view of interpersonal communication and sharing of knowledge. Similarly, Rackham and Morgan's Behavioural Analysis might be used to analyze interpersonal exchanges in small group work centering on other topics which might involve, for example, team tasks or fishbowl methods. ⁸

- It was agreed that different target groups in the developing world should be identified, and that a variety of learning packages should be put together which might act as a basis for designing training courses with particular goals, objectives and constraints. These packages would provide the trainer with certain combinations of training sessions, which would produce a mix of learning experiences most appropriate to specified. goals and objectives for specific target groups.
- As a guide for the putting together of such “software” packages, subsequent courses would be monitored to examine and test the effectiveness of different combinations of methods and techniques.

	TRAINING METHODS		
	THEMATIC & TECHNICAL COMPONENTS		
	1. General, Introduction & Welcome		1. Short Talk 2. Structured Discussion 3. Team Task 4. Role Reversal 5. Handouts & group feedback 6. Panel 7. Showcards 8. Question & Answer 9. Case Study Simulation 10. Slide Presentation 11. Brainstorm Exercise 12. Graphic Systems Representation of Reality 13. Johari Window 14. Written Report
	2. Course planning		*
C1, B1	3. Training Goals & Objectives		*
C1, B1, B4	4. Training Goals & Objectives: solving problem situation		*
C1	5. Training Goals: Some ideas		*
C1	6. Explaining a Training Course		*
C1, B1-4	7. Evaluating Performance		*
C6a, B1-3	8. Matrix of Methods vs. Themes		*
C1, C1	9. The Potential of Case Study Simulations		*
C2, B1-4, A1-4, A6	10. Participant Reaction to Case Study Game Method		*
C2, C6a	11. Case Study: Other training methods		*
C2	12. The Potential Of Brainstorming & Graphic Systems Modelling		*
C2	13. Course Goals & Objectives (Reconsideration)		*
C1, B1	14. Team & Individual Effectiveness Surveys		*
B1-4	15. Designing a Course Structure		*
C1, B4	16. General Feedback on 3-day course		*
		DAY ONE	
		DAY TWO	
		DAY THREE	

Fig. 4: Learning objectives, thematic components and training methods in the Szczecin (Poland) course

Implementing the proposals: The Szczecin (Poland) course

The three day “training trainers” course held at the University of Szczecin, Poland, illustrates how this approach to planning and design is being pursued in UNESCO-run courses. This short course was one component in a six month diploma course in town and regional planning for practicing planners and administrators from developing countries. There were 17 participants, and the purpose of the course was to improve their capacity to act as trainers, for most will be entrusted with mounting short courses for planners and associated professionals from time to time, when they return to their home countries.

Given the shortness and general orientation of the course, Goal C - Learning how to train - and its associated Learning Objectives (see table 1) was given major priority, with Goal B (and its Objectives) being given secondary importance. Goal A, which was essentially the concern of the rest of the six month course, was paid no direct attention, although certain related topics were inevitably touched upon. This goal prioritization is reflected in the learning objectives which were considered to be of major importance (fig. 4).

Having identified this set of Learning Objectives, a list of related thematic and technical components was identified (fig. 4 - side access). These should not necessarily be seen as being fully comprehensive in totally fulfilling the special Learning Objectives; rather they were collectively considered as satisfactorily addressing these Objectives, given the time limitations and the background of course participants. Certainly, other themes could have been included, and others omitted. Similarly the training methods employed (fig. 4 - top axis) in conjunction with these themes may be seen as only one option, which might be repeated or modified in subsequent courses of a similar nature.

This flexibility notwithstanding, this matrix format may act as both a framework for monitoring UNESCO training courses and as a basis for the packaging of training materials. A handbook has already been compiled which provides guidance on how these methods were used and combined in the Szczecin course. With the benefit of subsequent experience, whereby other formats can be tried and tested, it is hoped to put together more sophisticated packages (which might include, for example, the case study game kits, brainstorm and team task kits, all with the necessary charts, handouts and overheads etc), and to compile a comprehensive manual on how combinations of training methods and thematic components can best be used to fulfil specific Learning Objectives and Training Goals.

Concluding remarks

In conclusion, it needs to be said that this approach to course design and monitoring is still in its infant stages, and that the potential advantages and attributes have yet to be fully realized. Nevertheless, it is expected that the general framework presented in this paper will provide a degree of continuity and consistency between courses, whereby present and future training performances can be consolidated and enhanced. A more tangible product will be the software training packages that are being designed to fit the particular training requirements of public and private sector agencies, working, above all, in the developing world. The design of such training courses - for both “managers” and “trainers” themselves - still poses considerable problems; it is hoped that this initiative will contribute to their solution.

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6. N. Rackham and T. Morgan, *Behavioural Analysis in Training* (McGraw Hill, 1977).
7. See K. Benne, “The process of re-education: an assessment of Kurt Lewin's views,” *Group and Organisational Studies*, vol.1, no.1 (1976).
8. Fishbowl is a special kind of discussion group particularly suited to practicing and evaluating interpersonal and “social” skills, as well as developing argument on a particular theme. The name comes from the structuring of the group, for at certain times discussants sit in the center of the wider group. Other members observe this “fishbowl” and will eventually take place in it themselves,
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