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The recent growth of interest in mid-career training reflects professionals' need to keep abreast with developments in their own fields and to broaden their awareness of their own and others' roles in the construction and development processes. Increasing complexity of society and public disenchantment with "planned" development make it ever more necessary for the professional to understand the perspectives of fellow practitioners and other interest groups. Case study training methods can play a valuable part in providing this enhanced awareness and lead to improved professional performance.

There are two main approaches to the design of continuing professional development training. In the process or problem-solving approach, selected problems or sequences of the development process are examined from different disciplinary and professional standpoints. In the gaming simulation approach, real world construction and development processes are simulated in games involving the active participation of all concerned; the integrating element is the personal inquiry of each participant, reinforced with follow-up discussion and debriefing.

The material necessary for the design of such training methods can be developed through case study research. Training sessions then have the added interest of being grounded in reality, which may be reinforced through slide and video presentations, and possibly site visits and interviews with key personnel. The potential of training sessions can be illustrated by examples from the research and training project funded by the RICS and ISVA, and being undertaken at North East London Polytechnic. This centres on the compilation of case study databases and their exploitation to suit particular

training requirements.

One case study in this series concerns the Cofferidge Close redevelopment in Stony Stratford, undertaken by Milton Keynes Development Corporation (MKDC) in the 1970s. The case has been thoroughly researched, and an extensive database prepared. If one is using the process or problem-solving training approach, the case material provides many options. The trainer has at his disposal a linked sequence of stages in the decision-making and development processes, each with supportive documentary and visual materials, including plans, slides and committee reports.

Problem solving

Taking the initial planning and design process as an example, participants are given a plan showing property ownership in 1970 and a summary of MKDC objectives for developing the site. In an initial brainstorming session lasting 15 or 20 minutes, participants are asked to identify issues relevant to the site's development, and to specify factual data which they feel is necessary before proposals for planning and development can be formulated. The group response, which is likely to reflect multi-disciplinary perspectives (encompassing planning, architecture, law, economics, politics, community relations, building technology, etc), is noted on a display board.

In a second stage lasting 20 minutes the trainer attempts to involve participants in examining the inter-relationships and inter-dependencies that exist between various issues raised by the group, to foster inter-disciplinary awareness and heighten appreciation of others' perspectives. Similarly the information gaps are examined in parallel, with the trainer providing answers wherever possible by reference to the

case study database.

In a third stage, lasting up to an hour, participants are divided into multi-disciplinary teams and asked to prepare a general policy and planning statement for the development of the site, incorporating whatever data they deem appropriate. Team reports can then be presented, with each team acting as a "panel" to justify its recommendations in the face of comment from the rest of the group.

This type of "brainstorm and team task" exercise is but one of several options that can be devised to fit different training requirements, drawing on a variety of problems from different case studies. Sometimes, indeed, case material may be taken from the files of the trainees' firm or institution, thus adding further interest and immediacy to the training session. This has happened, for example, in a training package currently being run with St Quentin's, in which the range of issues relating to the possible redevelopment or refurbishment of one of their clients' properties forms the focus of the session, with colour-coded information sheets being provided at intervals to answer points arising and stimulate new thinking.

Simulations

The value of gaming simulations has sometimes been doubted on the grounds of irrelevance to needs and poor definition of reality. On the other hand the more complex games tend to be difficult to run, with the danger of confusing rather than enlightening participants. One way of ensuring both realism and manageability is to build games around tightly defined case studies.

In these games, which run for two to five hours, well defined role briefs and imposition of real life constraints and objectives (social, financial, technological,

etc) guide the game along a decision-making and developmental course not far from the real life case. In the Cofferidge Close game, played on a simplified board, the final design approved generally includes a far higher proportion of offices than originally intended, at the expense of a hall, library and disabled people's dwellings. This indeed was what happened in real life, following the slump in the property market in 1974 and the imposition by the DOE of firm financial parameters.

In the debriefing session, the course of the real case study is revealed by the game manager, using slides and video, and comparisons and contrasts are made between the game and reality to promote examination of options and the viewpoints of other interest groups. Participants become aware – to a degree not easily achieved through other training methods – of the constraints, dilemmas and opportunities that confront the key personnel who influence environmental decision-making.

Recent attention given to continuing professional development presents trainers with the challenge of providing appropriate learning packages. The great advantage of case study training is that it is anchored to real life material and has an immediacy which is readily appreciated. Roles and perspectives of those with different professional backgrounds and functions can be dynamically exposed.

The case study provides a framework for inter-disciplinary involvement, which can promote a variety of levels of learning at the same time. Case study training can play a valuable part in enhancing the general awareness and performance of the professional practitioner. ●
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GAMES PEOPLE PLAY

A crucial role of mid-career training is to foster an awareness of the aims and dilemmas other disciplines face in development policy and planning. *Dr Martin Wynn* describes the use of case studies for training and simulation games to do just that.



BUILDING

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