

Lesson Plan 7: Active Learning



1 hr 20 min total

Lesson Description



In this lesson, participants are introduced to the concept of active learning. Using active learning strategies is important for creating an inclusive, participatory training environment.

Learning Outcomes



At the end of this session participants will be able to:

1. Describe active learning.
2. Contrast active learning against other instructional methods.
3. Explain the importance of active learning in effective training.
4. Create solutions for barriers to using active learning in training.

Materials



- Flip chart paper
- Tape
- Markers
- Paper
- Pens/pencils
- Active learning jigsaw puzzle (See end of lesson plan)

Preparation



- Read and prepare the lesson plan
- Print active learning jigsaw puzzle and cut out pieces (2 copies)
- Write learning outcomes or lesson description on the flip chart

Introduction

15 minutes



1. Explain to the participants that you will be dividing them into 2 groups. Each group will be given a puzzle to complete together.
2. Tell participants that as they put their puzzles together, they should try to think of the significance of the words on each piece: What do they have in common? *To make the activity more exciting, the two groups can compete in a race.*
3. Break the participants into 2 groups and give 1 puzzle to each group. Give the groups 5-10 minutes to complete their puzzle.
4. Present the learning outcomes or lesson description.

Investigating Active Learning**10 minutes**

1. In their small groups, ask the participants to discuss what the larger puzzle represents. *Learning tools and/or activities to facilitate active learning.*
2. Share answers in the large group.
3. Explain that each of the activities in the puzzle can be used in various ways to promote an active, participatory learning environment. The activities by themselves are not necessarily participatory, how we choose to use them will make them participatory.
4. Ask participants:

- “How would you define ‘active learning’?”

Active learning is a learner-focused approach where opportunities are provided for participants to meaningfully talk and engage in individual and group activities around a topic. Knowledge is co-created by bringing together the experiences of different participants. Active Learning uses participatory techniques and is based on the idea that to learn people must do more than just listen.

- “How is this different from passive or more direct types of learning?”

Passive or direct instruction is an expert-centered delivery model that often relies on lecture and learners sitting while listening to a presentation or speech.

5. Ask the participants: “Why is the introductory activity in this lesson considered active learning?” *Because people shared their ideas and experience and worked together to solve something collectively.*
6. Ask the participants: “What picture does the puzzle create? Why did we choose this image to represent Active Learning?” *The leaves of the tree represent the creation of collective knowledge and each participant’s input into the group.*

Active Learning and WASH**15 minutes**

1. Refer to the posted flip chart with the four things learners need (safe learning environment, motivation, connection to past experience, meaningful practice).
2. Ask participants: “How does active learning relate to what participants need?”
 - *Safe environment: promotes sharing between participants.*
 - *Motivation: participants are expected to be engaged and are accountable to the group they are working with.*
 - *Connection to existing knowledge: participants share their experiences with each other.*
 - *Practice: participants do a variety of activities to help them learn.*
3. Ask participants: What is the goal of education in water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)? *For participants to adapt healthier behaviours.*
4. Ask participants: “Why then should we use active learning and not just direct instruction to teach others about WASH?” *Active learning makes the WASH*

concepts being taught relevant to learners' lives. As learners are taught new concepts, they connect them to existing knowledge and practice with the information, which helps them to retain the information. When people have the opportunity to practice, they feel more confident. All of these things make it more likely that the participant will be successful in applying what they have learned.

Addressing Barriers to Active Learning

30 minutes

1. Explain to participants that while active learning can promote longer-lasting and practical learning among our participants, sometimes people hesitate to use participatory activities.
2. Ask the participants: "What are some possible arguments that people may have against using active learning techniques?" Create a list on the flip chart paper. Possible challenges might include:
 - Too time consuming
 - Loss of control by instructor
 - Learners are not used to the instructional style
3. Ask the participants to select which identified challenges they believe are most difficult for them to address as trainers. Participants can vote on 3-4 challenges by raising their hands, placing a mark or sticker beside their choice, etc.
4. Divide participants into 3-4 groups and assign each group one of the challenges they identified as being difficult to address.
5. Tell participants to imagine they are going into a new community where participants are unaccustomed to active learning and skeptical about participatory activities. In their small groups they must develop strategies to:
 - Resolve the challenge they have been assigned.
 - Explain the importance of active learning and participatory activities to the skeptical group of participants.
6. After 10 minutes, ask each group to present their strategies to the full group. Discuss and add any additional strategies which are missing.

Review

10 minutes



1. Tell the participants they are going to return to their 2 groups from the introductory activity.
2. Explain that each group will look at the different examples of learning techniques from the puzzle and discuss the following:
 - Which techniques they already use and are comfortable with
 - Which activities they would like to incorporate into their next workshop
 - How they will incorporate the new activities into their next workshop

Reflections on Lesson





