## Learning Formats and Techniques

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<tr>
<th>Format</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
<th>Type of learning</th>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
<th>Audience/Group Size</th>
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<tr>
<td>Audience response systems</td>
<td>Two-way communication between presenter(s) and audience occurs. The audience uses an electronic devise to respond to a variety of questions (multiple choice, true or false, etc.).</td>
<td>Type of learning</td>
<td>• attain information, ideas or concepts. • increase awareness of approaches or potential gaps in knowledge or practice</td>
<td>• active participation • immediate feedback • quick tabulation • anonymity • promotes discussion</td>
<td>any (larger sizes may increase passivity)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Case studies</td>
<td>Participants use real-life situations to apply knowledge or find solutions.</td>
<td>Type of learning</td>
<td>• attain or apply information, ideas or concepts to practice</td>
<td>• probing questions • springboard for discussion • in-depth exploration</td>
<td>Case discussion may not be generalizable to other situations • easy to digress</td>
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<tr>
<td>Demonstration</td>
<td>A method or technique is presented with a description of each step or element.</td>
<td>Type of learning</td>
<td>• learn through demonstration and observation</td>
<td>• active participation possible • promotes discussion</td>
<td>time required for questions and answers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discussion group/ peer exchange/ user groups</td>
<td>People discuss mutually relevant topics based on experience or background.</td>
<td>Type of learning</td>
<td>• attain or apply information, ideas or concepts to practice</td>
<td>• useful for electronic learning forms, e.g., chat rooms, bulletin boards and e-mail</td>
<td>often requires a moderator or facilitator • easy to digress</td>
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<tr>
<td>Forum/panels</td>
<td>Two or more people (subject experts or experienced practitioners) conduct a discussion before an audience.</td>
<td>Type of learning</td>
<td>• attain or apply information, ideas or concepts to practice</td>
<td>• opportunities to voice and hear opinions • open dialogue/debate • raise controversies</td>
<td>disengagement if topic unappealing</td>
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| **Lecture/plenary method** | Directed information presented by a speaker to an audience for purposes of instruction. | • provide information, ideas or concepts | • reaches a large audience  
• large amount of information delivered in a short time | • highly passive  
• participants unable to direct topic  
• potential relevance | any |
| **Question and answer sessions** | Participants are able to pose questions to speaker(s). | • discuss information, ideas or concepts | • springboard for in depth discussion  
• interactive learning for larger audience | • limited opportunity to engage in dialogue  
• often short | any |
| **Role playing** | Participants take part in a simulated situation involving realistic problems and incidents. | • practice skills, techniques and thinking processes | • adaptable formats (scripts, improvisational, etc.)  
• broad content areas | • some participants may refrain from taking part  
• labour intensive | small |
| **Seminar** | A subject expert meets for discussion on a particular topic. Learners often prepare papers for discussion. | • potential to meet individual learning objectives | • exploration of issues  
• in-depth guidance and expertise  
• in-depth discussion | • can be lengthy | small to medium |
| **Simulation** | Participants take part in a mock situation using a model duplicating real life situations. | • practice skills, techniques, and thinking processes | • first-hand experience  
• learning in action  
• focus on multiple competencies | • lengthy  
• debriefing session required  
• costly | small to medium |
| **Small group discussion** | A chosen topic is discussed. Structured questions are often used to lead participants in discussion. | • apply information, ideas or concepts to practice | • dialogue (open)  
• opportunities to raise questions and resolves gaps in understanding | • used too often with lectures and presentations  
• often requires facilitation | small |
| **Workshop / hands-on demonstration** | A group with a similar background or interest share knowledge and concerns about a topic. | • potential to meet individual learning objectives | • responsibility for learning rests with the participants  
• short and intensive | • may lack depth | any |

http://www.arrowhead.lib.mn.us/renewal/formats.htm