

Mapping out curriculum development

Your guide to developing trainings and courses





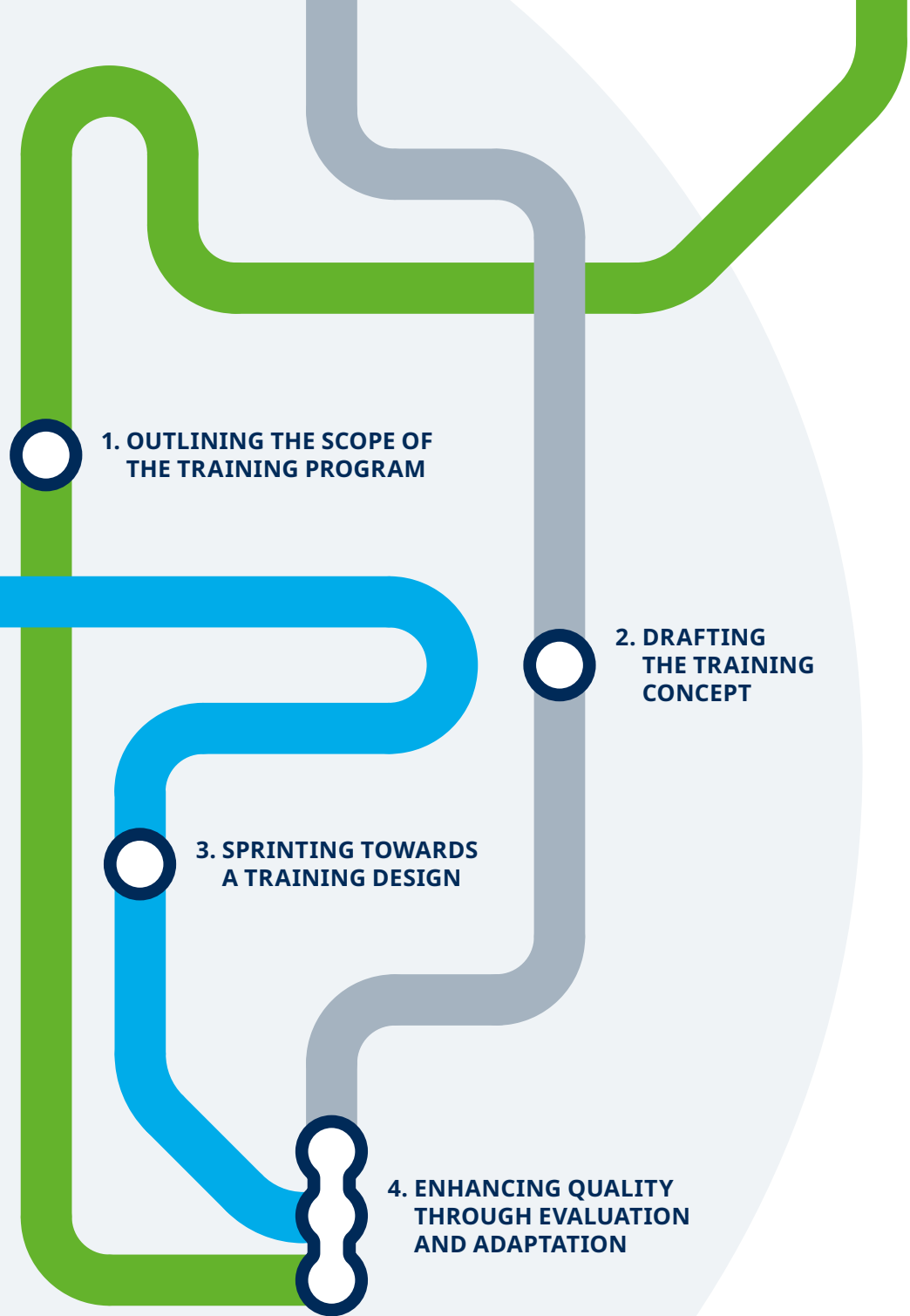
Your step-by-step guide to curriculum development

What is this guide for?

The curriculum is the core of any training program. Developing a curriculum properly guarantees that a program addresses the needs of its target group, while thinking about program structure ensures that proposed training formats fit into their lives.

The goal is to ensure the program **takes into account the fundamental changes media ecologies are going through** and to make your **programs more innovative**. These considerations will ideally flow into the definition of precise learning outcomes and a conscious choice of interactive methods, as well as a training format that is aligned with the needs of the participants. All of this should add up to training which is well designed to build up the competencies of your trainees, who will then push your media ecology forward.*

* Media ecology describes the environment that consists of communication systems within which we live and which shape our culture, including among others legacy media, social media networks and other sources of information and disinformation. This environment inevitably affects our perceptions, feelings, values, and beliefs.



1. OUTLINING THE SCOPE OF THE TRAINING PROGRAM

2. DRAFTING THE TRAINING CONCEPT

3. SPRINTING TOWARDS A TRAINING DESIGN

4. ENHANCING QUALITY THROUGH EVALUATION AND ADAPTATION

The Process

DW Akademie’s “Mapping out curriculum development” guide sets out an agile process that leads you step-by-step through designing an innovative and interactive training program. It can be used to develop trainings for journalists and media managers, as well as to develop media and information literacy training for the general public.

The process consists of four steps:

1. Outlining the scope of the training program

Start by gathering a diverse group of stakeholders to **identify the challenges** their media ecology faces. Using methods of human-centered design*, they map out how a training program can provide answers and what kind of training formats fit for the target group.

2. Drafting the training concept

Then the training provider and their team **take decisions on topics and formats**. They define their target group’s specific training needs using a storyboard approach.

3. Sprinting towards a training design**

In the next step, the team defines **learning outcomes and develops a training structure** with methods, formats, tools and materials. This structure is compiled in training matrices.

4. Enhancing quality through evaluation and adaptation

At the end of the agile curriculum development process, **test your training program**. Make sure to get feedback from your trainees to make it even better for the next iteration.

This process works for short training modules as well as for curricula of bigger programs. Feel free to go through all the steps or choose parts of it, adapting it to your needs and the circumstances you work in.

* Human-centered design is an agile approach that puts your users at the center of the development process, enabling you to create products and services that resonate and are tailored to your audience’s needs.

** In the agile framework, a sprint is a short, intensive work session aimed at making fast progress on a project or product.



1. OUTLINING THE SCOPE OF THE TRAINING PROGRAM

GOAL A
MAPPING OUT THE CHALLENGES

GOAL B
GAINING EMPATHY FOR YOUR TARGET GROUPS

GOAL C
IDENTIFYING TRAINING TOPICS

GOAL D
DEVELOPING OPTIONS FOR TRAINING FORMATS

1. Outlining the scope of the training program

A successful training concept tackles the challenges a media ecology faces. When developing a curriculum for journalistic training, the first question is not what a good journalist needs to know, but **what kind of journalists public-interest media need** in order to fulfill their audience's informational needs. Innovative, needs-based curriculum development starts by looking beyond the target groups of the training itself.

In a one-day Idea Lab*, a diverse group of stakeholders meet and map out the challenges for their media ecology. With the help of human-centered design methods such as challenge walls and empathy maps, they define training topics that both address future needs of the sector and fill gaps in the training landscape. They also discuss how to tailor training formats to your target group.

Goals

- A. Mapping out the challenges
- B. Gaining empathy for your target groups
- C. Identifying training topics
- D. Developing options for training formats

Team

- Training provider and team
- Diverse group of stakeholders (experts, consultants, target group)

Format

Idea Lab

* The Idea Lab is an intensive, interactive and free-thinking environment, where a diverse group of participants from a range of disciplines and backgrounds gets together to immerse themselves in collaborative thinking processes in order to construct innovative approaches.



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DEVELOPING OPTIONS FOR TRAINING FORMATS

TIME	GOAL	METHOD	TO PREPARE
30 min.	Mapping out the challenges	Brainstorming and discussion on challenges	Challenge wall on board or virtually
10 min.	Mapping out the challenges	Voting Vote for the five most urgent issues for your media ecology	Stickers for voting
15 min.	Defining the main challenges	Discussion of results	
60 min.	Gaining empathy for your target groups	Group work Choose a persona, give them name, age and occupation and fill out the fields of the empathy map for them	Templates for empathy maps
30 min.	Identifying training topics	Discussion Take a look at your personae: Which training topics would address their professional “pains and gains”?	Collect ideas on cards
20 min.	Developing options for training formats	Group work Take a look at what your personae do: What training formats would fit into their lives?	Collect ideas on cards

The timings indicated here are meant to give you a general idea, but should be adjusted to your concrete idea lab setting.



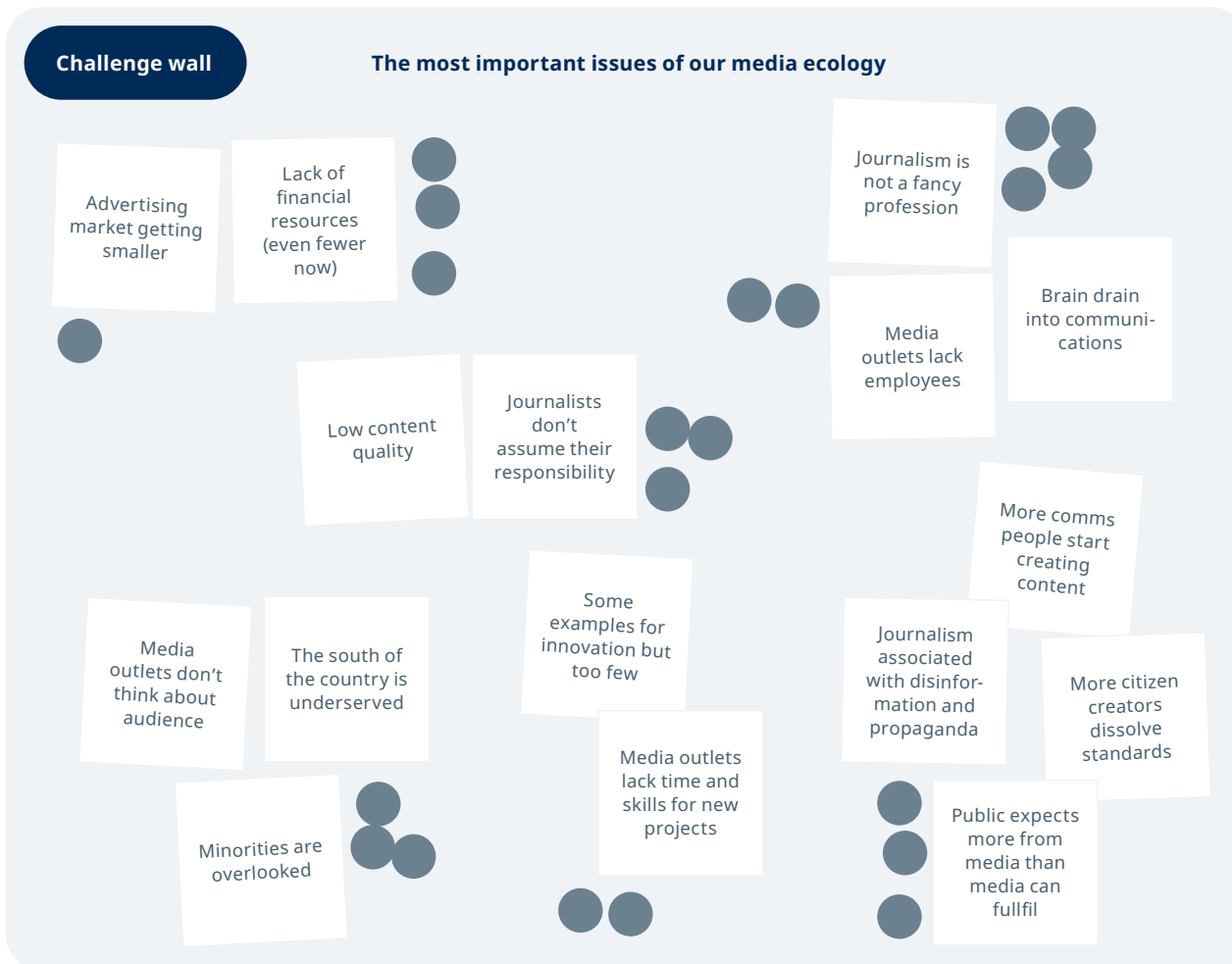
1. OUTLINING THE SCOPE OF THE TRAINING PROGRAM

◀ You are here



MAPPING OUT THE CHALLENGES

Goal A zone



Goal A. Mapping out the challenges

Dive deep into the challenges of your media ecology to find ways to address them through training. Collect the main issues for your country's media ecology. Cluster them on a **challenge wall** and vote for the five most crucial ones. What can your training program's contribution be to tackling them?



1. OUTLINING THE SCOPE OF THE TRAINING PROGRAM

◀ You are here



GAINING EMPATHY FOR YOUR TARGET GROUPS

Goal B zone



Goal B. Gaining empathy for your target groups

Gain empathy for your target groups. Empathy maps grant you insight into their lives—professional and private. Pick concrete personae, give them a name, an age and an occupation. Then describe on the empathy map in as much detail as possible:

- **DO:** What do they do (professionally and in private)?
- **SAY:** What do they talk about?
- **PAINS:** What are their worries? Why are they dissatisfied with the work they do?
- **GAINS:** What are their hopes and aspirations, careerwise and in terms of the journalism they want to do?

You can create empathy maps for different personae that represent your target group. A persona of their editor-in-chief will allow you to cross-check their needs.



1. OUTLINING THE SCOPE OF THE TRAINING PROGRAM

◀ You are here



IDENTIFYING TRAINING TOPICS

Goal C zone

Goal C. Identifying training topics

Take a step back to take a close look at the personae you have created. Which training topics would address the pains and gains they feel? Write the potential topics on sticky notes and add them to the empathy map. How do these topics address the challenges your media ecology faces? Matching the needs of your participants with those of your media ecology makes a training program powerful.

DEVELOPING OPTIONS FOR TRAINING FORMATS

Goal D zone

Goal D. Developing options for training formats

Even the best training program will fail if people do not find the time to attend. Your personae will tell you what works for them. Are they available during the day or in the evenings? Would they prefer to work in a classroom or online? How much time are they willing to dedicate to training? Would they like to choose between different modules or attend one comprehensive course? Group your insights around the empathy map.



2. DRAFTING THE TRAINING CONCEPT

GOAL A
**EXPLORING THE
TRAINEES' FUTURE
WORK ROUTINES**

GOAL B
**BUILDING THE
CURRICULUM**

GOAL C
**PUTTING TOGETHER
A TRAINING
STRUCTURE**

2. Drafting the training concept

Training is never just about developing a certain competency. It is about how your trainees apply this competency in their practical work. A course, i.e. on data journalism, has to go beyond collecting, cleaning and analyzing the data. It has to enable its participants to come up with ideas for data journalism projects, identify sources, choose formats for publication and promote their work after publication.

While the first phase benefits tremendously from your stakeholders' different perspectives, now it is **time for some strategic decisions** best taken within your team. **Select the training topics and formats** of your program. They are the starting point for a two-day workshop, using a story-telling technique to break down complex competencies into separate steps. These are the elements of your curriculum.

Goals

- A. Exploring the trainees' future work routines / media use routines*
- B. Building the curriculum
- C. Putting together a training structure

Team

Core team of training provider: Experts on module topics, trainers, experts on adult learning

Format

Workshop

* When developing training programs for Media and Information Literacy (MIL).



2. DRAFTING THE TRAINING CONCEPT

GOAL A
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TIME	GOAL	METHOD	TO PREPARE
20 min.	Exploring the trainees' future work routines*	Group work Tell the story of 2-3 actual journalist's tasks*. Work in groups	Sticky notes or card on board or virtually
30 min.	Exploring the trainees' future work routines*	Group work Describe the detailed steps behind each journalist's task. Gather questions and actions the journalist asks themselves. Bring them into a logical order with 4-6 steps	Sticky notes or card on board or virtually
30 min.	Building the curriculum	Co-creation** Name the skills which are needed to perform each step	Put sticky notes with skills next to each step
10 min.	Building the curriculum	Discussion Group the skills, prioritize them and write a module headline for each group. Vote on the most important skills	Map with a potential outline for a training program (weeks, days, hours)
30 min.	Putting together a training structure	Co-creation Fill in the module headlines into the potential training structure, adapt the structure	Collect ideas on cards
15 min.	Putting together a training structure	Discussion Discuss if the outline is reasonable. Find obstacles which need to be cleared. Suggest dates and hours for the training	Change the outline and mark questions or obstacles on the board

The timings indicated here are meant to give you a general idea, but should be adjusted to your concrete idea lab setting.

* Adapt for MIL curricula accordingly: Goal: Explore the trainees media use routine. | Method: Describe 2-3 typical (problematic) situations when your target group comes into contact with social media.

** Co-Creation for MIL: Describe the specific dangers in these situations and deduce the necessary skills to avoid them in the future.



2. DRAFTING THE TRAINING CONCEPT

◀ You are here



EXPLORING THE TRAINEES' FUTURE WORK ROUTINES

Goal A zone

Goal A. Exploring the trainees' future work routines

Tell yourself a story about how your trainees will use their new competencies after your training. Take a concrete situation: how will they start? What happens next? You can analyze concrete training needs for each step from planning a project to publication and promotion on social media. Guiding questions: What tasks will your trainees have to perform and how are their training needs connected to it?

BUILDING THE CURRICULUM

Goal B zone

Goal B. Building the curriculum

Now it is time for decision making. Which training needs do you want to address in the (always too brief) time you have with your trainees? Which training needs go logically together? Select and consolidate the most relevant topics according to the planned scope of your training.

PUTTING TOGETHER A TRAINING STRUCTURE

Goal C zone

Goal C. Putting together a training structure

Now that you know which modules need to be in the training program, you can draft a schedule (weeks, days, hours) and put the respective modules in the timeline. Play around with it. What is the best logical order? How much focus (meaning time) do you want to grant each topic? Where are long practical exercises needed? Do you want your participants to do a final project towards the end?



3. Sprinting towards a training design

Working on a curriculum can become unwieldy rather quickly. It is by default a multi-step process starting from identifying training needs to defining learning outcomes to designing a training experience. These elements all feed into a detailed training matrix. As a last step you can then prepare the materials necessary to carry out the training. This is the part of the process that **determines the overall quality** of your training program. It is the step when your work really intensifies. There are many details to consider and it is easy to lose focus. Therefore, we have set out an agile process that foresees feedback at every step.

In a joint process, the team will go through the different steps of developing a training design starting with drafting learning outcomes. The team will receive feedback at regular meetups after each step, ensuring quality along the way. This agile approach makes sure that the training units build on each other, that content is not repeated, and that no topics are left out.

We recommend conducting the first round of defining learning outcomes based on training needs during the workshop described in the previous chapter to get everyone on board with the methodology.

Goals

- A. Defining learning outcomes
- B. Designing the learning experience
- C. Writing a training matrix
- D. Producing materials

Team

- Training provider/coordinator of training: responsible for organizational questions
- Trainer team: responsible for training content
- Head of training/Leading consultant: responsible for quality

Format

Sprint

3. SPRINTING TOWARDS A TRAINING DESIGN

GOAL A
DEFINING LEARNING OUTCOMES

GOAL B
DESIGNING THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE

GOAL C
WRITING A TRAINING MATRIX

GOAL D
PRODUCING MATERIALS

3. SPRINTING TOWARDS A TRAINING DESIGN

GOAL A
DEFINING LEARNING
OUTCOMES

GOAL B
DESIGNING THE
LEARNING EXPERIENCE

GOAL C
WRITING A
TRAINING MATRIX

GOAL D
PRODUCING
MATERIALS



TIME	GOAL	METHOD	TO PREPARE
Asynchronous or in joint session	Defining learning outcomes	Individual or group work Formulate the learning outcomes for your training program	
60 min.	Feedback session	Joint meeting of the team, discussing written feedback, synchronizing next step	
Asynchronous or in joint session	Designing the learning experience	Individual or group work Plan your training blocks with a special view to creating experiences for your participants	
60 min.	Feedback session	Joint meeting of the team, discussing written feedback, synchronizing next step	
Asynchronous or in joint session	Writing a training matrix	Individual or group work Write your training matrix	
60 min.	Feedback session	Joint meeting of the team, discussing written feedback, synchronizing next step	
Asynchronous or in joint session	Producing materials	Individual or group work Produce handouts, presentations, flipchart design, etc.	
60 min.	Feedback session	Joint meeting of the team, discussing written feedback, synchronizing next step	

Even more than for other parts of the curriculum development process, the timing and number of feedback loops indicated here is simply a suggestion. The main idea of the process is to provide feedback at every step, with the steps building on each other. For example, you cannot design a good training experience without sound learning outcomes. The feedback sessions will also offer a chance to synchronize the team and make sure that everybody is working towards the same goal. Some teams find it more productive to work together in sprint sessions, others will want to work individually and only meet for the feedback sessions.



3. SPRINTING TOWARDS A TRAINING DESIGN

◀ You are here



DEFINING LEARNING OUTCOMES

Goal A zone

Learning outcomes

Example:
For an interview training module, one learning outcome could be the following:

- WHAT:** Trainees will be able to conduct a quality interview
- HOW:** by formulating an interview goal
 - by using different techniques to open up even difficult interviewees
 - by choosing an appropriate format for the interview
 - by finding an appropriate interviewee for the topic
- WHY:** in order to contribute to public dialogue and fulfil the informational needs of their audience

Each HOW can be broken down further, depending on how much you want to go into detail in your training. For example, the learning outcomes for one training session (one of the HOWs from the learning outcome above) could read:

- WHAT:** Trainees will be able to deal with difficult interviewees
- HOW:** by using technique A to open up an interviewee
 - by using technique B to open up an interviewee
 - by confronting their interviewee with detailed factual research
- WHY:** in order to conduct a quality interview

Goal A. Defining learning outcomes

Sound learning outcomes are the basis of effective training. They describe the expected competency a trainee has acquired upon the completion of the training. They give a clear idea of what and how much to convey in a training program, and how to plan accordingly. Formulating learning outcomes from training needs means deciding which of the needs you want to address in your limited amount of time and how intensely you want to address them.

Learning outcomes are formulated in three steps:

1. **WHAT** trainees will be able to do (skills)
2. **HOW** will they do it (using which knowledge, concepts/theories/tools/instruments/workflows)
3. **WHY** does it make sense to use these skills (intrinsic motivation/attitudes/values/bigger picture)



3. SPRINTING TOWARDS A TRAINING DESIGN

◀ You are here



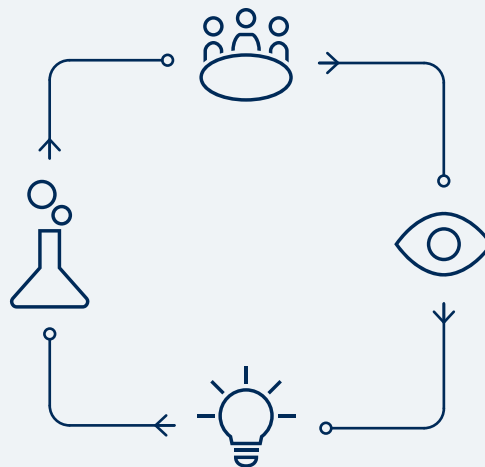
DESIGNING THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE

Goal B zone

Designing the learning experience

For an interview training, a learning experience could look like the following

1. Experience:
Have participants listen to best-practice interviews



4. Application and experimentation:
Practice interviewing skills in a role play

2. Reflection:
What were strong and weak points of the interview? Did the interviewer reach their goal? How?

3. Concept:
How to plan and conduct an interview

Goal B. Designing the learning experience

Training does not necessarily mean passing knowledge on to trainees. Training at its best creates a space in which new experiences stimulate independent learning and the development of new competencies. Dedicate some time to find the right experience to kick off the learning process. This can be listening to a sound collage in a podcast training session or—in a media and information literacy training session—looking at a stranger’s social media profile before letting your trainees reflect on how much they want to share online.

Here is the structure experiential learning should take to be effective:

1. Kick off with an activity which exposes your trainees to a first-hand **experience**.
2. Then let the trainees **reflect** on this experience.
3. Now introduce the **general concept or tool** you want your trainees to learn.
4. In a final stage, you design methods enabling your trainees to **apply and experiment** with what they learned.



3. SPRINTING TOWARDS A TRAINING DESIGN

◀ You are here



WRITING A TRAINING MATRIX

Goal C zone

Time	Learning outcome	Content	Method	Media and Materials
20 min.	Trainees will be able to deal with difficult interviewees	Listen to interviews	Video/audio presentation	Prepare audio and/or video examples, make sure there are speakers in the workshop room
20 min.		Reflect strong and weak points	Discussion	
10 min.		Four hacks for opening up an interviewee	Mini-lecture	
20 min.		Practice: Conduct an interview with a partner	Role play	Trainees use their mobile phones for recording
10 min.		Trainees give each other feedback on recordings	Reflection	

Always start with learning outcomes and then pick the methods that best help you reach them. This might not always be the most fun one.

Goal C. Writing a training matrix

A training matrix is the trainer’s script for running sessions. Interactive training never goes according to plan if you take your participants’ needs seriously. Still, writing a detailed matrix helps you think through the links between learning outcomes and methods, as well as the exact task that will make your methods effective. The smaller the steps, the more a matrix will help you think your training through. What task helps your participants reach learning outcomes best? What are the criteria you want to provide feedback on after group work? How do you plan to form the groups? We suggest the following structure:



3. SPRINTING TOWARDS A TRAINING DESIGN

◀ You are here



PRODUCING MATERIALS

Goal D zone

Goal D. Producing materials

Prepare the materials needed for your workshop such as handouts, audiovisual material, flipcharts, cards, presentations. Upload them, if available, to a digital learning platform where the trainees have access to the material.

4. ENHANCING QUALITY THROUGH EVALUATION AND ADAPTATION



4. Enhancing quality through evaluation and adaptation

At the end of the agile curriculum development process, you should have a finished, interactive, participant-centered training program with a corresponding number of thematic modules. **Test it.** Make sure to **get feedback from your trainees.** And make it even better for the next iteration of your training cycle.

Here is a trainee-centered approach to evaluate a training program through dialogue:

Teaching-Analysis-Poll (TAP) is a comprehensive method of feedback specific to training. Through TAPs, trainees provide open feedback about their learning experience and suggestions for improving the training. The process is facilitated by two uninvolved staff members in the absence of the trainers.

First the staff members introduce the method (5 minutes).

Then the trainees work in small groups and take notes to address the following questions (15 minutes):

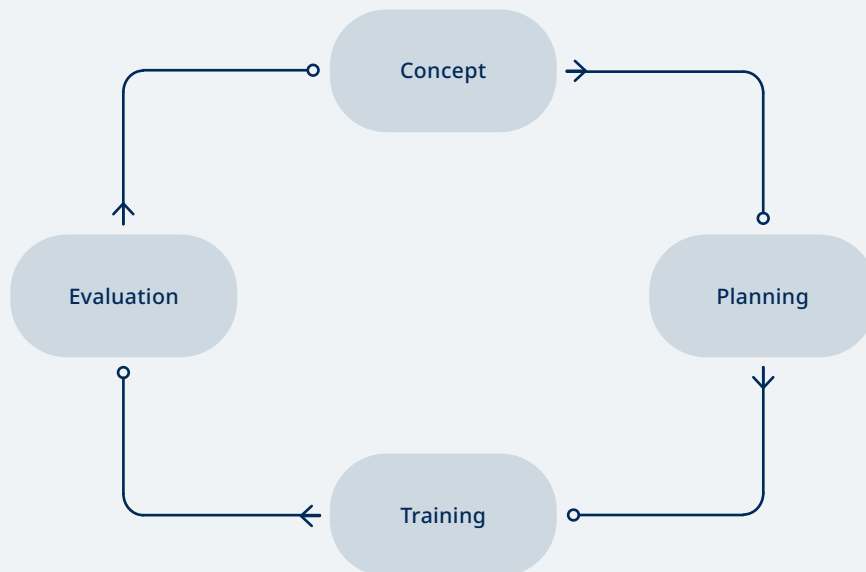
- What enhanced your learning during this program?
- What hindered your learning?
- What concrete suggestions do you have for improvement?

As the next step, the results are clustered in a group discussion. This takes about 20 minutes.

The feedback is later evaluated by the uninvolved staff members and subsequently discussed with the trainers who, together with the training provider, develop suggestions for improvement.

The TAP thus facilitates discourse about the training; the trainees give more active feedback than would be the case with a written questionnaire. The method is particularly suitable for obtaining detailed, concrete feedback to further develop a training program.

Training cycle





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DW Akademie is a strategic partner of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development. We also receive funding from the Federal Foreign Office and the European Union and are active in approximately 70 developing countries and emerging economies.

Imprint

PUBLISHER
Deutsche Welle
53110 Bonn
Germany

PUBLISHED
June 2023


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