

# The Methods and Media of Instruction

There are numerous methods and combination of methods and media of instruction. Those described below are some of the major choices. Consult other resources for additional options. In making a selection remember that the ultimate goal is to facilitate the learning by adults who prefer experienced-centered and problem-centered instruction.

In picking methods and media consider the following:

- What are the desired outcomes for instruction?
- What are the constraints on time, money, skills, and agency commitment?
- How much and how often will the training be revised?
- What are the preferences of learners and management?
- What impact does the learning and working environment have on the selections?

Also consider the impact on retention.

Method	Average Retention Rate
Lecture	5%
Reading	10%
Audio-Visual	20%
Demonstration	30%
Discussion Group	50%
Practice by Doing	75%
Immediate Use of Learning	90%

**Lecture** – This is the traditional classroom mode of instruction and usually refers to a formal presentation of information, concepts or principles by an individual. A lecture can be modified to include discussion, demonstration and application. Typically a lecture makes the learning experience passive and much information can be lost during the lecture. The method is inappropriate for psychomotor skill development. A lecture is appropriate for introducing a subject or presenting basic information where the performance objectives are at the lower end of the cognitive or affective learning domains. Keep lectures to a minimum.

**Guided Discussion** – This method is an instructor-controlled, interactive process of meeting performance objectives by sharing information and learner experiences in the classroom. In a guided discussion the instructor asks focused questions and periodically summarizes concepts and principles covered, but

does not try to dominate the discussion. Learners are active participants and are asked to explore a subject by actively offering knowledge, ideas, opinions, and experiences. This method is appropriate in achieving performance objectives that are in the mid to upper range in the affective and cognitive learning domains.

**Case Study** – The case study method uses a detailed written description of a real or imaginary situation that can be analyzed and discussed by the learners. Presenting a case study enables the learners to develop skills by responding to various situations. It stimulates discussion and participation and gives learners an opportunity to apply new knowledge. Case studies are particularly useful in helping learners explore different ways to deal with typical problems in the workplace. This method is appropriate in achieving higher-level performance objectives in the affective and cognitive domains.

**Role-Playing** – In role-playing the learners act out a situation based on real life. Learners role-play the attitudes and behaviors involved in carrying out a task or job responsibility. This method is especially useful when training is focused on how to work with people. Role-playing provides a more valid experience than merely talking about a problem.

**Demonstration** – The demonstration is the basic method for teaching psychomotor skills. The method begins with a practical step-by-step performance by the instructor of a procedure, with a detailed explanation accompanying each step. A demonstration should be accompanied or immediately followed by having learners practice the activity or skill being demonstrated for reinforcement and retention.

Instructional media can play a vital role in enhancing the learning environment. Media can be thought of as any teaching aids or resources that are used as a part of an instructional sequence to demonstrate or clarify course content. The use of media can lengthen the average adult's attention span by strategically refocusing attention. It has been estimated that 75% to 95% of what we learn comes through the sense of sight, 10% to 15% through hearing, 3% to 4% through smell, and 1% to 2% through taste and touch. The combination of audio and visual media is more effective than either medium used alone, with learner retention significantly increased over a longer period of time. The classes of media range from handouts to videos to models to computer software.