

FIRST GMG/KNOMAD WORKSHOP ON LEARNING

Educating in the 21st Century: Perfecting Learning on Capacity Development Projects

*Hosted by KNOMAD, and IOM & UNITAR as co-facilitators of
GMG's Task Force on Capacity Development*

15 November 2013
IOM Office, New York

Summary

Background

On 15 November 2013 at the IOM Offices in New York, the World Bank, UNITAR and IOM hosted the GMG/KNOMAD Workshop on Learning. The Workshop served as a first opportunity, in a series of workshops funded by KNOMAD, to offer a privileged space for trainers to perfect their approaches to capacity development for government officials in the field and at UN Headquarters through a better understanding of how to educate adult learners in the 21st Century. The focus rested on: forms of knowledge, pedagogical tools, strengthened needs assessments, and technology-enhanced learning.¹²

A second workshop will take place in Geneva in early March 2014. It is open to KNOMAD and GMG constituents, interested government representatives, and pre-selected training experts.

¹ Programme of the Workshop:

http://www.unitar.org/sites/default/files/workshop_on_learning_programme.pdf

² Information Note of the Workshop:

http://www.unitar.org/sites/default/files/workshop_on_learning_information_note.pdf





Main Messages

Three forms of knowledge: When understanding how to design and implement training activities and products it is important to know which type of knowledge is to be imparted. There are 3 forms of knowledge:

- “Knowing that” (facts) – knowing why it is important;
- “Knowing how” (skills) – knowing how to apply a skill; and
- “Knowing from within” (judgment) – knowing how to go on/how to proceed.

Judgment: “Phronesis” refers to judgment or practical wisdom. Judgment is not innate, it is learned. It stems from our habits. The classroom can provide an ideal space – in real time- to reflect on one’s habits, to in fact take a break from one’s habits. Indeed, this third form of knowledge is based on understanding “what would be the right course of action”, or alternatively, on a different way of seeing a problem. Implicit in nature, it generally emerges from challenging existing knowledge and cannot always be transmitted through rationalization.

Link to curriculum design: In curriculum design, it is important to consider the relationship between format and outcome, and to link the form(s) of knowledge to be acquired to the appropriate pedagogies and assessments to be applied. Therefore, one question worth asking from the outset in curriculum design is what outcome(s) are you privileging (e.g. factual recall, implementation, networking)?

There are two forms of curricula: the classical/formal curriculum (what is on paper), and the hidden curriculum (what is known as the tacit curriculum). The tacit curriculum is based on the understanding that some knowledge is implicit and it just has to be voiced (“judgment”). Needs assessments that serve as a beginner tool to have learners reflect (such as the UNITAR’s City Share self-assessment matrix) can work well in such circumstances, also allowing for contextualization of knowledge through comparing and contrasting competencies amongst peers. It also allows for the identification of sub-areas (priorities) prior to the actual training (thereby serving as advocacy).³

³ An example is the City Share method, implemented by UNITAR: <https://www.unitar.org/ldp/what-we-do>





Given the nature of their work, some agencies present emphasized the need to consider the direct applicability of knowledge acquired one that is grounded in actual needs and with immediate applicability in the professional context.

Problem solving: Many, not all, of the training activities undertaken are rooted in what Dewey describes as “*education coming from a problem situation*”⁴. With learners identifying the problem and agreeing on the parameters for the solution, the facilitator(s)’ role is to maintain and support judgment-based knowledge. Networking (through Communities of Practice for example) is often an excellent approach.

“Guide on the side”: There is a tendency to consider the “expert” as a “*sage on the stage*” rather than “*a guide on the side*”, i.e. a coach/mentor who is providing another perspective. S/he should be a facilitator of knowledge exchange amongst learners who shares what s/he “thinks she knows”. S/he should study inter-personal dynamics, and validate learners’ needs. Both the unidirectional lecturing method and a rigid approach by the “expert” can create obstacles to an effective learning experience. One suggestion was to “provincialise knowledge” for example referring to one’s own experience and inquiring on how others see it.

In this context, some agencies spoke of the problem of having many knowledge experts who do not have pedagogical training. This among others suggests the need for internal “train the trainers” focused on effective pedagogy (similar to the intent of this Workshop). The issue of diverse learners (eg. also CSOs) was also raised, as was establishing a rapport with learners in short time-frames.

Technology-enhanced learning: Technology should not be incorporated into learning for its own sake but rather to improve the learning process. What must be considered is how technology can support learning in specific contexts. It is generally understood that solely online instruction (e.g. MOOCs, massively open online courses) is less effective than what is known as “enhanced technology instruction”, in other words, the incorporation of some online elements into a learning curriculum thereby recognizing

⁴ John Dewey, *Experience and Education* (Kappa Delta Pi, 1938).





the value and impact of the face2face experience. There is also a need to engage in “myth busting” given a general resistance to e-learning.

Agencies confirmed that very few technology-enhanced trainings and products exist thus far despite the fact that online learning is no longer “new” but a well-established presence in most sectors. They also discussed the issue of working in Africa where there appears to be a dissonance between access to technology and the use of it.

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E): Qualitative assessments are effective as they often involve story-telling which has a significant impact. However, in most cases, quantitative assessments are also required. This should be considered when developing learning objectives. New software for quantifying outputs was also discussed. Tacit learning may be more difficult to measure than, for instance, factual recall (the first form of knowledge).

Enclosures: Three PPTs presentations (IOM, AU and NYU)

