TRAINING TOOLS:
TECHNIQUES FOR PARTICIPATORY LEARNING

A training workshop is like a laboratory of experiences. We learn through experience. People often think the best way to learn is by listening to the expert. While it's true that individuals with certain expertise or knowledge have much to share, real learning is not just about listening, taking notes, and memorizing information. Real learning happens when we put it into practice.

As we go about the "further invention of nonviolence," training workshops provide opportunities to create new ideas, not just transfer them. We are all students. We are all experts. We are all creators. The goal of the workshop is to provide that space, that catalytic moment, for creative learning to happen.

Elicitive tools are techniques that facilitators can use to draw out the experience of the group. They also provide an opportunity to practice specific skills and allow the learnings to emerge from that practice.

Hassle Line	**Sentence Completion**	**Ambivalence Chart**
Fish Bowl	**Role Play**	**Go-rounds**
Spectrum	**Brainstorming**	**Question/Answer**

Hassle Line

Purpose: Hassle Lines give participants the opportunity to practice brief, one-on-one encounters around a specific task or topic. They can be used to help participants refine "sound bytes" and short, concise messages. Use to prepare for media work, leafleting, dealing with hecklers, engaging police, etc.

Preparation:

- Clear a space in the center of the room big enough so that participants can form two parallel lines facing each other; there should be adequate space for participants to stand side by side comfortably with about three feet between the two lines.
- Develop a scenario for a time-limited, one-on-one encounter (i.e. talking to a media reporter, distributing leaflets to a passerby, negotiating with a police officer, persuading a neighbor to stop kicking the dog, etc.)

Time Required: Allow about 20 minutes for this exercise including time to debrief the experience.

Materials Needed: none

Procedure:

1. **Divide participants into two groups** with the same number of people in each; if there is an odd number of participants in the group, ask one person to help observe the process or enlist an additional person to participate.
2. Have the groups **form two parallel lines** facing each other down the center of the room; each person should pair off with the person standing directly across from them.
3. **Assign roles** to each line of participants; i.e. "Line A, you all are shoppers going about your busy day. You want to get your stuff and go home. Line B, you all are peacemakers handing out leaflets explaining your witness against violent toys. You want to convince this shopper to take and read your leaflet." You may prompt Line A with some ideas if the role is unfamiliar to them.
4. Have participants **take a moment of silence** to center and get into their roles; explain that they will have one minute for this interaction from the time you say "Go" until the time you say "Stop."
5. Say **"Go;"** call **"Stop"** after one minute.
6. **Debrief the experience** by having each side, starting with Line A, talk about the interaction: what worked well, what didn't work well, what was particularly effective or moving, what was unclear or confusing. This is where the real learning can happen.
7. Have the **lines switch roles** and repeat steps 4-6.

Fish Bowl:

Purpose: Fish Bowls utilize a small group to carry out an exercise, model a technique, or focus a discussion while the rest of the participants observe (thus the image of the fish bowl in which the "outside" circle forms the bowl for the "fish" inside to carry out their activity). This tool can be used in a number of ways: 1) deepen discussion around a specific topic (i.e. the role of civil disobedience in nonviolent public witness); 2) simulate or role play certain interactions (i.e. son or daughter talks to parents about their decision to join CPT, engage in civil disobedience, etc.); 3) examine an issue in group process (i.e. leadership skills, decision making processes, conflict resolution issues, etc.); 4) evaluate an activity (i.e. a public witness event) or the group's grasp of certain material (i.e. steps in problem-solving)

Preparation:

- Set up a small number of chairs (typically four or five) in the center of a larger circle; number of chairs will depend on the scenario or discussion topic.
- Decide on the task – discussion topic, role play scenario, group process issue, activity to evaluate, etc.

Time Required: 30-60 minutes – allow at least 30 minutes for this exercise if simulating a specific scenario; if using this tool to focus a discussion, the time allowed will depend on your overall agenda and meeting length.

Materials Needed: minimum 3, maximum 6 chairs to set in center of circle; flip chart and markers helpful (depending on purpose of exercise) but not essential.

Procedure:

1. Clearly **describe the task** of the "fish" and any specific guidance for the observers.
2. Participants volunteer to **sit in the center** of the circle. (If used for a simulation/role play, assign a specific role to each person).
3. Explain that it is **important not to interrupt** once the time has started, even for informational questions. Interruptions will make evaluation more complicated and destroy the sense of "reality" that the task group needs. Laughter and discussion among the observers will also be disruptive to the task group.
4. For Discussions: allow broader participation by explaining that once an individual in the center has shared his/her thoughts, opinions, etc., he/she may **move to the outer circle**; then someone from the outer circle may **move to the empty seat** in the center to add to the conversation.
5. For Simulations: the facilitator may invite someone from the outer circle to **replace one of the actors** in the center to try a different approach; or the exercise may be repeated with a new task group.
6. **Call time** when task has been completed or discussion has wound down and move into debriefing.
7. For Discussions: ask someone from the observer group to **summarize the important points** made in the discussion; you may want to have a volunteer record those summary comments on the flip chart.
8. For Simulations, Evaluations, etc: **ask for observations** first from the outer circle and then from the "fishes" themselves.

Spectrum (or Continuum):

Spectrums can be a fun way to get people up and moving. They are useful to gage the variety of sentiments within a group on a topic. Also a useful evaluation tool. Can be used as an opening exercise leading to a more in-depth group discussion.

Facilitating a Spectrum:

1. **Identify clear statements** for participants to respond to.
2. Ask participants to **stand in the center of the room/space**.
3. Choose one end of the room/space as **"strongly agree"** and the opposite end as **"strongly disagree"**
4. Tell participants you will read a series of statements and they should place themselves anywhere along the spectrum from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." **Explain** that it is ok to move if the comments of others persuade them to shift their position.
5. **Read one statement**.

6. Once everyone has established their position on the spectrum, **solicit comments**, thoughts, etc. from a smattering of people in different places. "Why did you place yourself there?"
7. When a broad range of voices have been heard, **read the next statement** and continue the process.

Sentence Completion:

Sentence Completion elicits people's initial response to focused questions about a given topic. Can be used in a variety of ways – helping people get to know each other, helping people support each other better, surfacing challenges or experiences with a given topic, etc. Best used in pairs or triads.

Facilitating Sentence Completion:

1. **Identify a series of statemets** for participants to complete verbally with their partner(s).
2. **Divide group** into pairs or threes.
3. **Read one statement** and give time for each person in the pair/triad to complete it.
4. Read next statement for each to complete. **Continue** until all statements have been completed.
5. **Harvest responses** – depending on the purpose of the exercise it may be appropriate to gather up some of the small group responses for the whole group.

Sample Sentences (the possibilities are infinite):

- One thing I hope to learn in this workshop is...
- I consider one of my greatest accomplishments to be...
- People often misperceive me as being...
- A particular challenge for me in facilitating meetings is...
- A strength I bring to team life is...

Role Plays:

Role Plays are a dynamic, revealing way to put theoretical concepts into practice. They should form an integral part of a training workshop with plenty of time to analyze and learn from them. The purpose of a Role Play is to simulate as closely as possible a real life situation that participants face. Acting out the role play helps participants connect to possibilities and reflect on responses that can serve them in reality. Role Plays can be based on actual incidents and experiences or they can project a scenario that participants are likely to face.

In setting up a role play:

1. Be clear about the **objectives** of the role play. What are the skills to be practiced and/or the dynamics to be experienced?
2. Think through the **overall scenario** – what information is important for all participants to have in order to understand the dynamics of the situation they will play out?
3. Think through the **roles for each individual** or group – what do they need to know to really get into that role? What do they need to know about the other roles? What information would they NOT know in the situation?
4. Use **props** or large name tags to help identify the different roles (i.e. soldiers, farmers, CPTers, etc.). When dealing with cases of interpersonal conflict, use fictitious names for the roles; have players put on a fictitious name to enter the role play and remove it at the end. Refer to each role by its fictitious name during debriefing so as not to personalize any responses or feedback.
5. Make sure to **debrief** feelings as well as behaviors – "How did you feel when...?" "What affect did 'x' behavior have on you?" "How might you alter your behavior as a result of the role play?"
6. Plan to **role it again** after the initial debriefing, giving participants a chance to try new roles or behaviors, or deepen practice of skills the second time around.
7. **Debrief again!**

Facilitators should encourage participants to:

1. Imagine yourself in the role of the person you are going to represent, with all their emotions, energy,

thoughts, etc.
2. Accept the facts of the case as it's presented, adding information and details when necessary.
3. Act as if you are the person – with that person's hopes, fears, needs, etc. You can change or vary your role during the course of the role play, but only as that person might do.
4. Avoid the tendency to over-act. Don't exaggerate aspects of your role.

Common pitfalls in setting up role plays:
1. Not allowing enough time to adequately debrief;
2. Throwing out a very broad scenario without providing enough information on the context, scenario, or characters for people to get into their roles;
3. Not establishing clear, specific objectives for the role play.

Brainstorming:

In brainstorming, the ideas of the whole group are solicited in a free-flowing way. This technique can be used to get the ball rolling in planning an action, solving a problem, envisioning new work, etc. The normal rule of waiting to speak until the facilitator recognizes you is suspended and everyone is encouraged to call out ideas to be written by the scribe for all to see. In brainstorming, all ideas are welcomed, no matter how unusual or incomplete. Avoid evaluating each other's ideas during brainstorming. This process can generate very creative possibilities.

Facilitating Brainstorming:
1. It can be helpful to **select one or two scribes** to write the ideas on flip charts so the facilitator can focus attention on making sure everyone gets a chance to share their idea.
2. **Every idea is written** on the flip chart; be as true as possible to the speaker's wording
3. **Set a time limit** for the brainstorming and stick to it.
4. **Develop a plan** for how to use the ideas generated – i.e. person or task group synthesize ideas; small groups develop proposals based on ideas, etc.

Ambivalence Chart:

Use an Ambivalence Chart to surface the "shadow side" of a situation. This tool can help individuals or a group look at any resistance they may be experiencing to moving forward or deepen analysis of a problem.

Facilitating an Ambivalence Chart:
1. **Identify the issue or question** before the group. (i.e. whether to engage in civil disobedience; Palestinians and Israelis working together; increasing the number of delegations to a project site, etc.)
2. **Create two columns** on a flip chart/newsprint; depending on the issue or question, give each column a heading, i.e. "Pros" & "Cons;" "Things that compel me" & "Things that make me hesitate;" "Positives" & "Negatives," etc.
3. **Begin with the "shadow side,"** inviting participants to name those things that hinder or give pause; record each thought on the chart.
4. **Move to the positive side**, inviting participants to name those things that compel or motivate; record each thought on the chart.
5. **Decide how to use the information** that this exercise surfaces, especially the shadow side – further discussion; deeper exploration; ritual or prayer, etc.
6. If the group is large, you may want to have small groups talk through the question first so that everyone can express their thoughts more easily, then harvest the small group responses for the whole group's reflection.

Go-rounds:

Go-rounds invite each person in the group to share in order around the circle. Anyone may pass when it is their turn. A useful tool for equalizing participation in a discussion or at times when everyone's voice is needed (during group check-ins, sharing experiences, etc.)

Facilitating a Go-round:

1. The Facilitator either **initiates** the go-round, selects someone else to begin, or asks for a volunteer to start.
2. **Suggest a time limit** for each person's sharing in the go-round.
3. Explain that it is **ok to pass**; after the go-round is complete, come back to anyone in the circle who passed.
4. **Take note of any issues or concerns** that might need further group attention.

Question/Answer:

Tried and true method when lots of ideas or information ha been presented by a speaker or resource person.

Facilitating Question/Answer Periods:

1. Be clear whether it is a question/answer period or a discussion time; if it is only for questions, urge participants to frame their comments in the form of a question; be prepared to interrupt and call for the question if a person slips into monologue mode.
2. Watch for balance (gender, age, ethnicity, etc) in recognizing questioners.
3. If time is limited, you might ask people ahead of time to write down their questions; then you can collect and randomly select questions for the presenter.
4. Inform participants at the beginning how much time will be allowed for questions and remind them periodically how much time remains.
5. Let people know the end is coming by saying "We'll take two more questions after this one."