INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS

CASE STUDY

The case study is a detailed account of an event or a series of related events that may be presented to an audience orally, in written form, or film, or in a combination of these forms. The Case Study May Be Used: 1) To present in detail to a group a problem with which the group is concerned. 2) To present and study the solution of a problem similar to one confronting the group. 3) To teach the problem-solving process.

Some Advantages:  

• Gives a detailed accounting of the case under study.
• Helps the learner to see various alternative solutions to the problem.
• Helps people develop analytical and problem-solving skills.

Some Limitations:  

• Some individuals may not see the relevance of the case being studied to their own situation or the group’s problem.
• A considerable amount of time and thought is often required to develop the study.
• Some group members are stimulated to over-participation while others may assume a non-participatory role.

Physical Requirements:  

• Physical requirements vary with the type of presentation. If the case is presented through dramatic acting, a stage area is required. If visual aids are required in a presentation, the room should be suitable for this kind of presentation. If the case study is a written one, a large table and chairs may be all that is necessary.

Procedure:  

• Materials are put into the hands of the participants in advance if the case study is in written form and to be read before the meeting.
• Appropriate techniques to use during the presentation and discussion are selected, and parts rehearsed, if necessary.
• The moderator introduces the topic, explains what the case study is, and the responsibility of each individual, then guides the discussion and other activities.

**Similar Methods and Techniques:**

• Written materials, film, the dramatic skit and speech may be used to present the case to the group. Group discussion is used to carry out the second part of the case study.
CONFERENCE

A conference is a meeting of people in large or small groups. The participants are usually a close-knit group who consult together in a formal fashion on problems to which they give most serious consideration. **The Conference May Be Used:**
1) For a group with a high interest to discuss in depth a rather narrow technical area. 2) To develop plans for promoting some idea.

**Some Advantages:**
- Participants usually have a high interest in the area being discussed.
- Participants usually attend because of their own desires to do so, and are not required to attend or delegated by their local organizations as are participants at institutes and conventions.

**Some Limitations:**
- Evaluation of the results is often difficult.

**Physical Requirements:**
- An auditorium or other meeting facility, with adequate seating so that every member of the audience may see and hear in comfort.
- Eating facilities and housing accommodations.

**Procedure:**
- Arrangements for physical facilities made well in advance of the conference.
- Program participants lined up well in advance of the conference.
- Publicity and promotion to insure attendance.
- Small group meetings or a combination of general sessions and subgroup meetings.
- Evaluation and follow-up as needed.

**Similar Methods and Techniques:**
- Conferences are often structured similar to institutes and conventions, but with a smaller number of participants and with more attention to solving specific problems. The conference may take the form of the clinic which is usually used to diagnose and solve specific problems.
DEMONSTRATION

The demonstration is a presentation that shows how to perform an act or to use a procedure. It is often followed by the learner carrying out the activity, under the guidance of the instructor. It is basically a visual presentation, accompanied by discussion. **The Demonstration May Be Used:**  1) To teach people to carry out a particular task. 2) To show a new technique or procedure. 3) To convince that a new product or procedure has merit.

**Some Advantages:**
- Individuals are more likely to believe what they see than what they hear or read.
- Actual materials or models are used.
- The pace is flexible and the demonstrator can move at the pace desired by the students, and repeat as necessary.

**Some Limitations:**
- Considerable time and expense can be involved in obtaining necessary materials, and heavy objects are difficult to transport.
- If small objects are used, there is a strict limitation on the number of people who can adequately observe the demonstration.
- If a limited number of materials are available, some members of the group may not be occupied while one individual is going through the process of imitating what they have seen demonstrated.

**Physical Requirements:**
- A raised platform or area from which to work with proper lighting that will permit all members of the audience to observe.
- Necessary demonstration materials.

**Procedure:**
- Demonstrator lines up all necessary materials, and selects suitable location.
- Demonstrator presents demonstration. (A commentator may be used to describe the demonstration, or the demonstrator may give the oral portion of the demonstration.)
Members of the audience (all or selected members) imitate what has been shown, with help and/or criticism by instructor and fellow students.

**Similar Methods and Techniques:**

The demonstration described here is technically known as the method demonstration, and is quite different from the result demonstration where a particular practice is observed over a longer period of time. Short demonstrations may be inserted in many types of programs to illustrate or dramatize a particular point.
DISCUSSION GROUP

A group of people meet together to discuss informally and deliberate on a topic of mutual concern. **The Discussion Group May Be Used:** 1) To develop a nucleus of leadership for community service or informal education. 2) To identify, explore, and seek solutions for problems and to develop plans of action. 3) To change attitudes through discussion and the examination of information.

**Some Advantages:**
- Group discussion permits full participation.
- It can establish consensus democratically.
- It pools the abilities, knowledge, and experience of all to reach a common goal.

**Some Limitations:**
- Group discussion is time-consuming, particularly if the group includes persons of widely different backgrounds.
- A bossy leader or a few members may dominate the discussion.

**Physical Requirements:**
- The group is usually seated around a large table (or tables arranged in a rectangle). Face-to-face discussion is essential. An informal and relaxed atmosphere will permit free discussion.

**Procedure:**
- Should be governed by the group itself. Generally, the leader will facilitate the discussion.
- A group may meet as long and as often as is necessary and convenient.
- A change of leaders may be made to utilize special individual abilities. For example, different leaders may be used in the deliberative, planning, and action phases of the group’s work.
- The group may appoint a recorder to keep track of its deliberations and to report on its progress from time to time.
Similar Methods and Techniques:

The discussion group is considered as a specific method, but the discussion technique can be used as the primary or as a supplementary technique in almost all methods if size of the group permits. Twenty is considered about the maximum number of participants in a discussion group.
FIELD TRIP

A field trip or tour is a carefully arranged event in which a group visits a place of interest for first-hand observation and study. The trip can range from a short visit to a single location to one lasting several days and covering several states. A Field Trip May Be Used: 1) To provide first-hand study of something that cannot be easily brought to the learning group. 2) To stimulate interest and concern about conditions or problems that need study. 3) To illustrate the results of a course of action in its natural environment. 4) To relate theoretical study to practical problems.

Some Advantages:  
- Seeing something in use is usually more meaningful than hearing or reading about it.
- The practice can be seen in relation to a large picture, or in a larger environment.
- Usually has a high entertainment value for the participants.

Some Limitations:  
- Considerable time is required for advance arrangements.
- There is often uncertainty on the number of participants, making travel arrangements difficult.
- Schedules are hard to maintain.
- There are possibilities of injuries to the participants.

Physical Requirements:  
- A meeting or gathering place before the trip begins.
- Adequate transportation.
- Suitable arrangements for discussions or other program activities at each stop on the trip or tour.

Procedure:  
- Prior to the trip, the coordinator makes arrangements with all persons who will be visited, or will be concerned with the visits; sets up schedule, including a pre-run of the tour if necessary; obtains, or prepares, supplementary materials or learning aids.
- Participants should be told what they will see at each stop, the purpose of each stop, and the amount of time available.
- After each stop, there should be some review of what has been seen and its significance to the purpose of the learning experience.

**Similar Methods and Techniques:**

- The field trip uses a number of techniques, such as formal lecture and informal techniques such as discussion and question periods.
LECTURE OR SPEECH

A lecture is a carefully prepared oral presentation of a subject by a qualified expert. It is usually rather formal. **The Lecture or Speech May Be Used:** 1) To present factual material in a direct or logical manner. 2) To present one point of view on a controversial subject. 3) For accounts of travels or personal experiences. 4) To entertain or inspire an audience. 5) To stimulate thinking and further study on a problem and to open the subject for general discussion.

**Some Advantages:**
- It is suitable for audiences of any size.
- It is easy to organize.
- Some people can learn more easily by listening than by reading.

**Some Limitations:**
- Good speakers informed on subjects of interest to your group may be hard to find. Experts are not always good speakers.
- The role of the audience is passive.
- Its effect on the audience is difficult to gage. Feedback is limited.
- Only one side of a question is presented with little chance for challenge or rebuttal.

**Physical Requirements:**
- Adequate seating so that every member of the audience may see and hear the speaker in comfort.
- A stage or a slightly raised platform and a speaker’s lectern.

**Procedure:**
- The group leader should introduce the speaker to the audience with brief remarks as to position, experience, or special qualification for this particular appearance.
- If visual aids such as films, slides, maps, charts, etc., are to be used, they should be appropriate to the subject, to the audience, and so used as to heighten audience interest, not distract their attention.
• At the conclusion of the prepared lecture, the group leader should thank the speaker, and call for a question period, discussion, or whatever has been planned as follow-up.

**Similar Methods and Techniques:**

• Other techniques that are mainly formal stage presentations are panel, forum, and interview. These are all often followed by question or discussion periods.
ROLE PLAYING

In role playing some members act out a real-life situation in front of the group. The group then discusses the implications of the performance to the situation or problem under consideration. **Role Playing May Be Used:** 1) To examine a delicate problem in human relations. 2) To explore possible solutions to an emotion-laden problem. 3) To provide insight into attitudes differing sharply from those of the participants.

**Some Advantages:**

- A dramatic way of presenting a problem and stimulating discussion.
- It can provide clues to possible solutions and explore them without the dangers inherent in real-life trial and error approach.
- It gives the players a chance to assume the personality of another human being — think and act like them.

**Some Limitations:**

- Some people may be too self-conscious or too self-centered to act successfully in role playing. Others may be shy and fear being made to feel ridiculous before the group.
- Role playing before large audiences is less effective because of the psychological effect of the large group upon the players.

**Physical Requirements:**

- A room large enough to provide seating so that all members of the group may see the action. No stage or platform is necessary with groups of 30 or less. Costumes or elaborate props are not necessary.

** Procedures:**

- The problem or situation is clearly defined by the group before role playing begins, and the scene is set by the group leader with the assistance of the group.
• Players should be selected just before role playing begins and not warned in advance, although a brief warm-up period may be necessary to throw off self-consciousness and get in the spirit.

• The leader should allow the action to proceed only so long as it is contributing to understanding (usually five to ten minutes).

• After discussion a second set of actors may be chosen and the scene replayed.

**Similar Methods and Techniques:**

• Role playing is staged in about the same manner as the dramatic skit. The primary difference is that the skit parts are assigned in advance and it is rehearsed before presentation before the group. In role playing there is no advance preparation and all is spontaneous.
SEMINARY

The seminar is a group of persons engaged in specialized study led by a recognized authority in the subject being studied. It may be a single session or a series of sessions. **The Seminar May Be Used:** To study a subject in depth under the guidance of an authority.

**Some Advantages:**
- A recognized authority is available to guide discussion and to assist the learners.
- Detailed and systematic discussion and inquiry can take place.
- All members of the group have the opportunity to participate, over time, in the discussion and in formal presentations.

**Some Limitations:**
- It may be difficult to find the right person to direct the seminar.
- Members may not want to spend all the time required for preparation of reports.
- The presence of an expert may inhibit participation of some members.
- It may be difficult to find all the source materials desired.

**Physical Requirements:**
- If the group is not too large, it is best to have the participants arranged around a conference table. If the group is too large or if such arrangements are not possible, the chairs should be arranged in a semicircle to facilitate group discussion.

**Procedure:**
- Responsibilities for the giving of reports are assigned, and these are prepared in advance of the seminar.
- Reports are made, including the use of visuals and written handouts, if needed.
- All participants discuss the report, and question the reporter.
- Evaluation and follow-up as needed.
Similar Methods and Techniques:

With the exception of the formal reporting, group discussion is the technique most often employed in a seminar. In some respects the seminar is similar to the institute or workshop. A usually distinguishable feature is that all seminar participants may be assigned formal participation roles.
WORKSHOP

The workshop is a group (10 to 25 persons) sharing a common interest or problem meeting together to improve their individual proficiency, to solve a problem, or to extend their knowledge of a subject through intensive study, research, and discussion. **The Workshop May Be Used:** 1) To identify, explore, and seek solution of a problem. 2) To permit extensive study of a situation including its background and social or philosophical implications.

Some Advantages:  
- Provides the opportunity for preparation for specific vocational, professional, or community service functions.
- Permits a high degree of individual participation.
- Provides for group determination of goals and methods.

Some Limitations:  
- Requires a lot of time from participants and staff.
- Requires a high proportion of staff for participants.
- May require special facilities or materials.
- Participants must be willing to work both independently and cooperatively.

Physical Requirements:  
- A room large enough to provide comfortable seating for all around a large table (or tables arranged in a rectangle) with extra space for use of resource materials.
- Library or other resource materials for research.
- Chalkboard or other device for recording ideas and notes.

Procedure:  
- Arrangements for physical facilities made well in advance of the workshop.
- Resource persons and resource materials lined up well in advance.
- Workshop is conducted.
- Evaluation and follow-up as needed.
Similar Methods and Techniques:

The workshop is structured similar to clinics and institutes. A series of short workshops on related problems may be incorporated into the program of a convention, institute, short course, or conference.