

Promoting students' engagement in the prevention of bullying in schools Peer Training

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Learning Unit A. First Steps to understand peer training

Sub-Unit A1. What is peer training?

Peer training is the process whereby well-trained and motivated individuals undertake informal or organized educational activities with their peers (those similar to themselves in background or interests) over a period of time, aimed at developing their knowledge, attitudes, beliefs and skills.

Peer-to-peer training is a great way for teachers to learn information in a non-threatening way and this form of training is the ideal way for teachers to learn from one another.

Some of the primary benefits of peer-to-peer training include:

- Team building-through peer-to-peer training all team members are able to come together without the pressures of daily routines.
- Development-one of the best benefits of peer-to-peer training is it allows for both personal and professional development; it improves the expertise of all team members concerned.
- Quick and easy to organize-peer-to-peer training is easy to organize. There is typically no need to request additional funding

Sub-Unit A2. Introductory Theories for Peer Training

When undertaking a peer education programme, the overall goal is to develop a recommended behaviour. The following theories and models of behaviour change are of particular relevance for peer education:

Theory of reasoned action

This theory states that the intention of a person to adopt a recommended behaviour is determined by:

- the person's attitudes towards this behaviour and his or her beliefs about the consequences of the behaviour.
- the person's subjective (a person's personal viewpoint about an issue) and normative (that which is the norm or the standard in their society or group beliefs) based on what others think he or she should do, and whether important individuals approve or disapprove the behaviour.

In the context of peer training is relevant because:

- young people's attitudes are highly influenced by their perception of what their peers do and think;
- young people may be highly motivated by the expectations of respected peer educators.

Social learning/social cognitive theory

This theory is largely based upon the work of psychologist Albert Bandura. He states that people learn:

- indirectly, by observing and modelling on others with whom the person identifies (for example, how young people see their peers behaving);
- through training in skills that lead to confidence in being able to carry out behaviour. This specific condition is called self-efficacy, which includes the ability to overcome any barriers to performing the behaviour.
- In the context of peer training is important because:
- It means that the inclusion of interactive experimental learning activities is extremely important, and peer educators can be important role models.

Diffusion of innovation theory

This theory argues that social influence plays an important role in behaviour change. The role of opinion leaders in a community, acting as agents for behaviour change, is a key element of this theory. Their influence on group norms or customs is predominantly seen as a result of person-to-person exchanges and discussions.

In the context of peer training is important because:

- It means that the selected peer educators should be trustworthy and credible opinion leaders within the target group. The opinion leaders' role as educators is especially important in outreach work, where the target audience is not reached through formally planned activities but through everyday social contacts.

Theory of participatory education

This theory claims that empowerment and a full participation of the people affected by a given problem is a key to behaviour change.

In the context of peer training is important because:

- Many advocates of peer education claim that the (horizontal) process of peers talking among themselves and determining a course of action is a key to the success of a peer education project.

Sub-Unit A3. Turning theory into practice

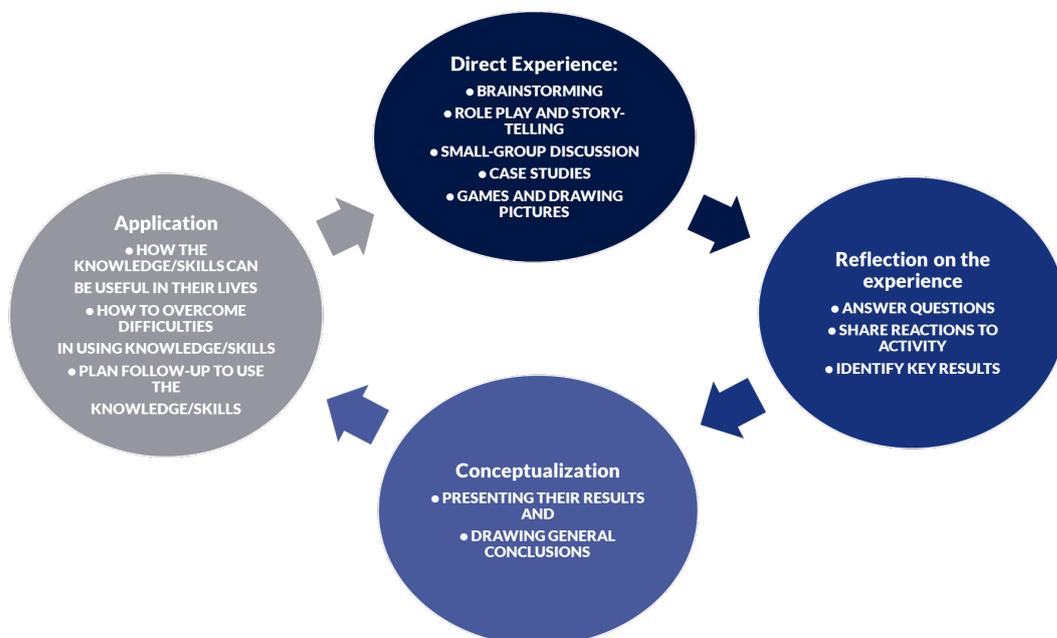
Experiential learning

“I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand.” Confucius

‘Involving’ the participants in a training workshop in an active way that incorporates their own experience is essential. Such experiential learning gives the trainees an opportunity to begin developing their skills with immediate feedback. It also gives them the opportunity to participate in many of the training exercises and techniques first-hand, before they engage other peer educator trainees in such exercises.

The training of trainers proposed in this manual is based upon an experiential learning model, using highly interactive techniques. The model includes four elements:

- direct experience (an activity in which learners create an experience),
- reflection on the experience
- conceptualization (lessons learned)
- applying lessons learned.



Lesson A4. The role of a peer trainer

The main role of the peer educator is to help the group members define their concerns and seek solutions through the mutual sharing of information and experiences. S/he is the best person to disseminate new information and knowledge to the group members and can become a role model to others by “practicing what s/he preaches”. Since s/he is from the same group, s/he can empathize and understand the emotions, thoughts, feelings, language of the participants, and, therefore, relate better.

The basic requisite for becoming a peer educator is to be a peer, if you are a peer, you speak the same language and are familiar with the cultural norms and values of the group/community.

It is important for them to have had some training in group facilitation or peer education. In order to answer questions clearly and correctly, the peer educator also needs to have an overall knowledge of the subject. It is not necessary to be an expert.

It is generally better to refer people to organizations or leaflets where more information can be found. A peer educator should be aware of where more information and support can be accessed. As a person grows into the role of a peer educator, one should increase one’s knowledge of the subject and include related subjects,

A peer educator should be sensitive, open minded, a good listener and a good communicator. S/he should be acceptable to the community and be trust worthy. In brief, s/he should possess good interpersonal skills. A peer educator should also develop leadership and motivation skills. People often tend to judge others. Peer educators need to be non-judgmental and open minded. Being non-judgmental means not making judgement statements out loud or in one’s mind. Skills such as:

Tips for a peer educator

Peer educators need the skills to bring out the views and concerns of the participants. It is important to realize that the peer educator’s role is to give information, and let people make their own decisions based on facts. A peer educator should always avoid being directive and authoritarian. S/he is a peer and not a parent. Make sure participants know that there will be no report of the session made. Ask them to try not to discuss the opinions of particular individuals outside of the group, but warn them that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. The discussion should be conducted in a manner that is not personalized and specific. If possible, give out information about where individuals, who want to discuss a personal situation, can get

Active Listening

Communication skills

Trustworthiness

Leadership

Motivation

Non judgemental

Open-mindedness

confidential advice. At the end of the training, do not forget to ask them to fill out the evaluation forms you have prepared. It makes the work much easier the next time around.

Learning Unit B. Development of Peer Training

Sub-Unit B1. Advantages and Importance of Peer Training

Peer tutoring activities — whether occasional or frequent — can deliver research-backed benefits to both the peers.

Here are five benefits that exemplify the importance of peer training:

Increased Literacy Scores — Peers who read and discuss story passages with their peers recall more content and score higher on assessments, according to an [Ohio University pilot study](#). The researcher divided four average-reading 6th grade students into pairs. The first pair participated in peer reading activities twice a week, whereas students in the second pair read the same passages individually at the same frequency. The first pair scored higher on each reading assessment.

Developed Reasoning and Critical Thinking Skills — Students who work in pairs and groups typically perform better on tests that involve reasoning and critical thinking, according an [oft-cited study about science education](#). This is largely because students must become active learners, discussing and rationalizing lesson concepts in their own words.

Improved Confidence and Interpersonal Skills — Many studies about peer teaching point to students building confidence and communication abilities. [Pioneering research from 1988](#) states tutors improve self-esteem and interpersonal skills by giving feedback. Tutees realize these benefits by asking questions and receiving immediate clarification. A [later study](#) of at-risk students echoed these advantages.

Increased Comfort and Openness — The same 1988 study indicates that “students generally identify more easily with peer helpers than with adult authority figures.” This helps create an environment in which students are more comfortable to ask questions and work through challenging problems in an environment free from class ridicule.

Versatility — You can run a range of peer teaching exercises based on different subjects and objectives, possibly involving other grades and classes. Lots of ideas can lead to lots of fun for your students.

Sub-Unit B2. Disadvantages and Limitations of Peer Training

There are reasons why other teachers hesitate to run peer tutoring activities, many of which concern how students interact with each other.

Here are four disadvantages to weigh against the aforementioned advantages:

Peer Inexperience — Although you can share teaching tips and guidelines with students, they won't become expert educators. There's always a chance the tutor won't properly support the tutee, giving ineffective feedback or unneeded criticism. Many peer teaching activities fail due to this, according to a [book of compiled research](#).

Peer Hesitancy — Pairing peers together can backfire, as some may feel inferior being taught by certain peers. On the other hand, some tutees won't [put effort into the exercise](#), as they won't be keen on it from the get-go. This can lead to tense relationships and, according to the same book, scarce content coverage.

Lack of Confidentiality

In many types of peer training scenarios, other peers can clearly see who's the one less prepared. This means there may be too much transparency with regards to who's excelling and who's struggling.

Perpetuates errors

If a peer trainer has bad habits, this will only perpetuate them. If there are within the peers, peer-to-peer training is a good way to multiply them.

In the end, **no training is perfect**, everything has its limitations.

However, **peer training** can offer a lot, if properly used, **can educate and expand good practices among peers**.

It can change the way peers approach their duties and **make the community better**.

Sub-Unit B3. Strategies for Peer Training Success

Role playing is a way of working through a situation, a scenario, or a problem by assuming roles and practicing what to say and do in a safe setting. This kind of learning experience has several benefits and advantages when it's implemented skillfully by a good trainer or teacher. Instructors can supplement their teaching methods with role playing in any context where it seems relevant.

Role-playing collaboration activities

Role Play/Practice: Making connection with quiet child

Practice making a connection with a child who is quiet, shy, or sad. Think about how to be close to that child without overwhelming him/her.

Role Play/Practice: Daily greeting students individually

Set up practice where teacher greets students individually in the morning. Instruct students to represent different personalities (happy, exuberant, shy, angry/difficult

Role Play/Practice: Daily goodbye ritual

Ask teacher to demonstrate his/her regular daily goodbye ritual (may change with developmental level - songs for younger students, verbal or signals such as thumbs up for older students).

Role Play/Practice: Helping discouraged child

Practice how to respond to child who is discouraged and frustrated about assignment.

Role Play/Practice: Phone call to parents

Practice phone call to parents to establish a positive relationship. Focus of the call should be to get to know parent, open lines of communication, and convey enthusiasm about child (Nothing negative!). After doing one practice in large group, have teachers practice in pairs.

Role Play/Practice: Encouraging peer relationships

Practice setting up a situation where a more competent student helps a peer who is struggling. Think of ways to do this so that all students feel valued.

Preventing Behavior Problems Role-playing activities

Role Play/Practice: Teaching children rules

Break teachers into groups of 4-5 people. Assign each group one rule and ask the group to brainstorm developmentally appropriate ways of helping students understand the rule (e.g. role

plays or games students might do, visual cues). Then have the group pick a teacher to demonstrate how to teach to his/her students, using their brainstorm ideas.

Role Play/Practice: Sharing stretch games

Ask teachers to share stretch break games or songs they use in their classes. Have at least one teacher taught his/her song/game to the whole group.

Role Play/Practice: Transitions

Have a teacher practice leading a transition including a warning and then directions for the actual transition. Coach him/her to praise students who are ready. Use developmental principles to suit age group of students.

Role Play/Practice: Opening circle time

Practice a transition to circle time. Emphasize beginning a song or other interesting activity that will capture student attention and minimize waiting. Have students join circle at various points. Have teacher focus on students who are engaged; ignore those who are not.

Role Play/Practice: Commands

Have a teacher give clear, positive commands for a transition (make situation developmentally appropriate to age group).

Role Play/Practice: Nonverbal signals

Have a teacher practice using a nonverbal signal while conducting circle time (e.g. finger to mouth/quiet hand up).

The Importance of Teacher Attention, Coaching and Praise Roleplaying activities

Role Play/Practice

Ask a teacher to circulate among several students who are working on academic tasks. Challenge him/her to give each student a descriptive praise, using the list of academic persistence coaching statements.

Role Play/Practice: Praising positive social behaviors

Set up a situation where children are following directions, listening, or attending (e.g. lining up, circle time, transitioning). Have teacher focus on praising positive behaviors (listening, hands to self, calm bodies). Ignore minor off-task behavior.

Role Play/Practice: Social Coaching (large group)

Choose two teachers to be students and have them play cooperatively with toys. Have a teacher use social coaching (use hand out) to reinforce helping, sharing, waiting, taking turns, etc.

Role Play/Practice: Social Coaching (small group)

Break up into small groups. Ask several teachers to role play being children while one “teacher” practices social coaching and one is an “observer.” After the practice, the observer gives feedback on the types of social behaviors coached. The “children” give feedback about their feelings. (Use the Teacher as Social Coach handout.) Reiterate instructions for children to be cooperative.

Role Play/Practice—Proximal Praise

Pick several participants to be students and ask a teacher to model/demonstrate proximity praise.

Role Play/Practice: Ignoring

Set up a practice with a student calling out answers. Coach teacher to ignore calling out, and praise prompt and quiet hands.

Role Play/Practice: Persistence coaching

Practice persistence coaching using the academic/persistence coaching handout. Have teachers praise persistence, trying hard, keeping at it, trying again, sticking with it.

Motivating Children Through Incentives Role-playing activities

Role Play/Practice: Transition incentive

Set up a role play using incentives for a transition time. Have the teacher use a transition warning, clearly give instructions for the transition, and then use a developmentally appropriate system to reward child who follows directions (hand stamp, getting to line up first, ticket, or points). Make sure to combine incentive with coaching and descriptive praise. Instruct a group of children to get ready at different rates, so teacher can practice giving incentives as children are ready, but make sure all children do comply with directions.

Role Play/Practice: Not earning reward

Set up a scenario where a child does not earn a specified reward. Have teacher give this information to the student in a way that focuses on future chances for success.

Role Play/Practice: Spontaneous rewards

Set up a circle time and have teacher use a spontaneous reward to highlight children who are paying attention.

Role Play/Practice: First/Then

Set up a practice using the “first/then” rule (e.g. first you finish cleaning up, then you can have a snack).

Decreasing Inappropriate Behaviour Roleplaying activities

Role Play:

Teacher working with two students at table. One student is off task with minor disruptive behavior and the other student is mildly distracted but is working. Teacher ignores disruptive behavior, focuses on positive. Looks for chance to engage disruptive student.

Role Play:

Practice ignoring a tantrum during circle time. Instruct child to be loud, but not destructive. Brain storm with teachers' ideas for keeping the class engaged while ignoring.

Role Play: Contrasting styles

Set up a role play where child engages in disruptive and disrespectful behavior (name calling, back talk) during circle time. First, have teacher try to stop student with commands, threats, warnings. In other words - DO NOT ignore, but try to make child stop. Freeze role play and "redo", first brain storming with the group about how to ignore this kind of extremely disruptive behavior (praise others for ignoring, make activity more fun, pull other children closer). Instruct teacher to look for a chance to praise or draw in disruptive child.

Emotional Regulation, Social Skills and Problem Solving Role-playing activities;

Role Play/Practice:

Put teachers in small groups and give each a children's book containing a social problem. Have one teacher read the book and discuss with "students".

Role Play/Practice:

Have teacher coach two "students" who want to play with the same toys. Focus on waiting, patience, sharing, trading, and taking turns.

Peer Coaching

Is an interactive process between two or more teaching professionals that is used to:

- share successful practices through collaboration and reflective practice
- act as a problem-solving vehicle
- reduce isolation among teachers
- create a forum for addressing instructional problems
- support and assisting new teachers in their practice
- build collaborative norms to enable teachers to give and receive ideas and assistance

Peer coaching also provides a mechanism through which teachers can gain deeper insight from workshops. Having a peer coach allows a teacher to try out new strategies learned in a workshop

and get feedback on how these strategies worked in the classroom. Peer coaching also helps teachers to internalize what they've learned and to apply it in their own classroom, and then take part in professional discussion about it.

A Peer coaching activity consists of three basic parts:

- Pre-conference

During the pre-conference, teachers meet and discuss the elements that the teacher being observed wants to focus on. They discuss the specific lesson planned, its context, and other relevant factors that influence student outcomes. The peer coach is responsible only for providing that teacher with another perspective of the learning environment so they can mutually improve teaching and learning.

- Observation

The peer coach observes in the teacher's classroom as an observer.

- Post-conference

The peer coach schedules a post-conference, to discuss the outcome of the lesson. The observed teacher should take the lead in this conversation, with the observer adding factual information about what happened during the lesson. They may discuss what worked well, what didn't work at all, and what could be changed or improved to have a positive impact on the teaching and learning in the classroom. Important aspects of this stage are:

- The observed teacher is in control of the lesson.
- The emphasis is on reflection on what has happened during the lesson and analysis of its impact on student learning

Peer coaching is not:

1. One teacher acting as an expert and the other a novice or apprentice.
2. It is not based on evaluating and judging performance. This is a system for continual improvement and growth for both educators.
3. It is not just a process for initiating new teachers into the profession.
4. It is not intended to be part of an evaluation process.

Peer coaching, is built on a trusting relationship between a pair of teachers that is designed to be noncompetitive and mutually respectful focused on the continual improvement their teaching methods.

Learning Unit C. The Road-Map of Peer Training

Sub-Unit C1. The principles for potentiating learning on peer training

Peer learning is most effective when learning objectives are clear, and peer engagements are structured to maximise these objectives.

When individual peers are matched appropriately and authorised and empowered to engage effectively, peer learning is optimised. Learning is best facilitated when peers do things together, and reflect regularly on what they are learning.

Other driving factors for successful peer learning are that peers engage with each other in an honest and committed manner; they engage with each other over a medium to long run 2 periods and they engage in multiple ways, including through shared work and site visits.

It is important that the learning gains of individual peers are communicated back to those authorising the engagement of these peers, to ensure continued support for the learning process. This is enabled when the home organisations of each peer commit to allow peers to communicate their learning back into the organisations, and structure a strategy to ensure this is done regularly. Peers should be encouraged and empowered to share their learning back into their organisations. This process is facilitated if the organisations authorising peers to engage give formal authorisation to these peers.

It is important for facilitators to simplify the process of peer engagement, to ensure peers find this process as easy-as-possible (with limited administrative demands and costs). The many facets of peer learning gains are evaluated—from initial engagement through individual learning, to organisational learning (from the peers) and final reform impact.

Sub-Unit C2. The stages of peer training

Research suggests common stages involved in the peer learning process. These stages combine into a peer training process map and involves:

A pre-foundational engagement where consideration is given to basic questions about peer engagement, followed by:

1. A foundational event
2. A period whereby peer engagement is sustained over time (to build trust and sharing)
3. Structured engagements to actually foster relevant learning outcomes in individuals
4. A period whereby learning is diffused from individuals to organisations to foster impact at scale.

Achieving deep individual peer training, that also diffuses and leads to impact, requires addressing challenges in all four stages; initiatives that do not pass through these stages can still add value—facilitating peer engagement, for instance, or adding to the learning of individuals—but the real potential of peer learning involves covering the full territory shown in this process map.

In the pre-foundational stage, it is important to remember that peer training is a specific tool and needs to be adopted when appropriate and possible. Clarity about the goals of peer training is vital. Peer learning can be a valuable approach to generate and disseminate knowledge and even a motivational tool in many sectors, it tends to work best when targeted at a specific sector or area, when a community of practice already exists to mobilise peers to participate in the learning process.

Peer training is valuable in fostering learning about many dimensions of reform, but the most valuable dimension is in facilitating the sharing of tacit knowledge among peers. One can also note that peer engagement is valuable to foster more than learning (like professional networking or support).

The more effective peer training initiatives are clear about what the peers are expected to learn from each other. This does not mean they are prescriptive, but they can describe whether the initiative is about disseminating technical, process or other knowledge. This clarity helps in attracting peers and in designing the peer training process. Peer training initiatives should target peers carefully. Peers are individuals, not organisations, so there is a need to target real people — and ensure that the type of peer can be described before the initiative is launched.

Sub-Unit C3. Phase 1 – Establishing Foundational Engagement

Peer learning processes usually begin by assembling potential peers together. There are many ways to do this, and it matters how it is done. **Effective foundational engagements can build commitment and trust and interest in future engagement and sharing.** Less effective engagement can undermine future learning potential. If one wants **to foster learning among peers, it is vital to bring the right group together and facilitate an effective communication and sharing environment.** Peers who learn from each other are individuals, not organisations. This means that you cannot match an organisation with another organisation. You must match people in the organisations, who have ideas to share and brains to receive.

It is often effective to involve peers in the matching process, asking them to complete surveys before the peers are assembled (where they note the challenges they are facing, for instance). This pre-foundational engagement often helps build motivation and interest in peers.

One can match peers based on a variety of factors, but some stand out as more effective than others. **Evidence shows that one of the most effective when matching is doing it according to shared challenges and problems.** Learning also happens when matched according to position and task or policy initiative.

Peers find each other in foundational engagements when those attending engage fully, which is encouraged by ensuring that peers are motivated to attend. **It is important to make communication easy between peers, ensuring the engagement space and agenda allow easy interaction, making peers confident to engage, and fostering commitment among peers. Trust is the cornerstone of all peer learning.** Trust building exercises must be incorporated in the foundational phase in order to enable later stages.

Who the peers are

- Identifying the peers to engage with/involve in the process
- Ensuring peers are effectively matched through initial events.
- Managing differences among peers (personalities, cultures, etc.).

Getting peer to engage fully

- Building trust among peers
- Ensuring all peers have the same willingness to learn
- Ensuring peers are fully engaged from the start
- Ensuring peers have authority to engage fully in the peer learning process

Logistics of peer interaction

- Ensuring peers have the time to engage with peers (at face-to-face events)
- Ensuring peers have the means and the time to engage with peers (after face-to-face events)
- Finding the appropriate venues for face-to-face peer engagement

- Finding the appropriate media for non-face-to-face peer engagement
- Ensuring logistics are effectively and continuously addressed (so as not to get in the way of peers wanting to engage)

Sub-Unit C4. Phase 2 – Achieving sustained engagement

This is the stage in the peer training process map, after the foundational engagement, where peers keep connected and engaged. It is the stage where they build trust and learn from each other in a potentially deep and experiential way.

Few facilitators of peer training activities have explicit strategies in place to foster sustained peer engagement. However, peers learn from each other most effectively when they engage over long periods of time. In order to foster deep and experiential sharing between peers, ensuring sustained engagement is key.

Different tools promote different parts of the peer learning process

	Interaction Facilitation	Knowledge Generation	Sharing and Exchange
Creating the foundational engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purposeful matching • Big group meetings • Small group meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common assessment product • Externally produced knowledge products • Peer produced knowledge products • Training sessions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expert group peer review • Single peer self-assessment • Multi-peer self-assessment

The tools most commonly used to sustain individual contacts include paired engagements, online networking, peer produced knowledge products, cite visits, joint peer activities, and a variety of tools to foster sharing and exchange.

Sustained engagement is not just about having the right opportunities, peers need to be committed and motivated to continue engaging. This requires ensuring that they have a personal commitment to the process, are interested in continued engagement, and have the support of their home organisation to continue engaging. **The most effective tools to ensure peers remain motivated and committed to engaging involve face time connections where peers get to be with each other and even work together or experience each other's work environment first-hand.**

Peers will keep connected to each other if they have an explicit incentive to do so. This need not be financial, and is probably most effective if it ties to their career progress or effectiveness at

work. Peer training initiatives that connect activities to actual work tend to be more sustained than others.

There is a need to ensure that there is a specific reporting process for the training, and that this process emphasises the value of continued peer engagement for the participants and their organisations.

Continued peer engagement requires technological solutions for communication. Peers who want to engage with each other will be put off if they have to organise all the engagements. Sustained engagement is more likely if a facilitating agency provides logistical support to peers who want to continue engaging.

Sub-Unit C5. Phase 3 – Achieving training outcomes

Peers can engage with each other in sustained ways but not learn from each other; or they can learn only easily observable things, with little transfer of latent knowledge of shared experience. This can undermine the value of a peer learning initiative, where even individual peers fail to learn from each other. There are a number of practical ideas to help ensure learning goals are met. The most effective peer learning focuses on sharing of tacit knowledge between peers, which includes knowledge about how to do reforms (managing politics, and more). This is only one kind of learning goal, however (others include formal knowledge sharing, peer to peer support and collaboration, specific training support, and more).

Most peer training engagements do not specify the details of what kind of learning is expected or hoped for., however this actions are something the most successful trainings have in common.

Using evidence in the peer learning process helps provoke real learning. Real and deep peer training is often effectively produced through meaningful and inclusive conversations between the peers.

Many peer trainers note the value of combining more directed and specific training activities (sometimes tied to certification) with other peer training activities. The training activities have stand-alone value for individuals (and their organisations) but could also provide opportunities for peer engagement and relationship building, and offer ways of framing more flexible follow-up peer training connections.

Reflection is a key part of improving the effectiveness of individual learning and of providing guidance on the overall impact of the peer training community so that strategy and direction can be improved for the future. Research has shown that taking time away from the process of training and reallocating that for reflection on what has been learned significantly enhances peer training.

It is useful to communicate learning objectives before starting a peer training initiative, and to report on learning gains as the process progresses. It is important to have a mechanism to evaluate the learning gains from peer trainers; this is used to guide the trainers about what is

expected, to promote the kind of tools that will maximise the learning, and to ensure accountability in the process (for peer to peer and facilitator to the involved organisations).

However; the common factors captured in evaluations of peer learning engagements do not focus on actual learning outcomes of individuals. Research shows that evaluations tend to focus on initial engagements and overall outcomes and not the intermediate learning objectives. Intermediate learning objectives need to be evaluated.

Sub-Unit C6. Phase 4 – Creating change at scale

The final stage of the peer training process map involves diffusion (or scaling) of lessons learned from peer engagements back to each of the participants’ organisations, sectors, and communities. This is the stage where peer training at the individual level is ratcheted up to impact actual reform progress—and hence where the practical tacit knowledge gained from peers helps improve the success of reforms.

Unfortunately, there is limited evidence that this kind of diffusion happens very often. The following ideas will assist those designing peer learning engagements (or engaging in such) to diffuse more often.

Effective diffusion starts with some knowledge of what is being diffused. **Organisations that know what learning they are trying to facilitate tend to have a better chance of structuring an appropriate and effective diffusion process.**

Getting peers to share forward	Ensuring “peers” reflect effectively on their peer training gains
	Ensuring “peers” are willing to share learning back into their organisations
	Ensuring “peers” are able to share learning back to their organisations
Ensure “home” organisations are open to learning	Ensuring organisations are open to learning from “returning peers”
	Ensuring organisations are willing to invest in learning from “returning peers”
	Creating time and spaces to bring lessons home

In order to ensure diffusion and scaling of peer learning, both the peers and the organisations in which they work need to be considered.

Not all home organisations are open to learning. The peer learning initiative needs to ensure that home organisations actually want their peers to learn and return home with new ideas.

Individual peers are more likely to share forward into their organisation if they are aware of this as a requirement up-front, and if methods of sharing are established by the home organisation

Peer learning can diffuse from individuals to organisations through networks; these can be constructed in various ways, including as mimics of the outside peer network where the peer individuals are accessing new lessons. Building local peer networks is thus an interesting strategy to promote diffusion of learning.

There are other tools that can be used to create links between the home context and the learning environment; the appropriate tool should be chosen for each situation. Learning in groups is an effective way of ensuring diffusion of peer lessons; group-based learning involves people from the home organisation working alongside colleagues who have benefited from external peer training. They work together on the job and this gives opportunities for diffusion to the colleague who has been through external peer learning.

Coalitions are very effective means for diffusing lessons, especially when these lessons involve tacit knowledge transfer. Organisations should invest in coalition building skills among both those who benefit most directly from peer training and those who are targeted as secondary beneficiaries.

Diffusion of peer learning gains may be enhanced if it is actually measured. This is difficult to do, but could be possible and influential if organisations are clear about the kinds of lessons they expect to come from the peer training and how they expect these to impact home organisations and scale into reform impacts (as will have been identified in any theory of change).

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