

COURSE DESCRIPTION

PROPOSED

ADVANCED POLITICAL OFFICERS' COURSE

The description includes

- rationale for formal training of mid-level political officers
- a statement of the course's
  - (a) goals and objectives
  - (b) content and method

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ADVANCED POLITICAL COURSE

WHY TRAIN POLITICAL OFFICERS?

Political Officers at mid-level practice both a craft and a profession. Since there are no cookbook formulas for teaching relevant skills, on-the-job learning in demanding assignments will remain critical. Equally critical for successful career development, however, is a solid grounding of knowledge in history, political analysis, and professional skills. The education an officer brings into the Service quickly becomes dated and is often lacking in one or more areas necessary for full diplomatic effectiveness. Formal professional education and systematic intellectual preparation have certain advantages in supplementing on-the-job training in (1) improving readiness for demanding assignments, (2) broadening analytical perspectives, and (3) providing a knowledge of the most up-to-date approaches to problems. Individual jobs and supervisors vary widely and so does the quality of on-the-job training. Individual assignments cannot cover all professional aspects and, at mid-level, generally focus too narrowly, with little opportunity for reflection.

In a systematic mid-level course, officers could confront theories with operational relevance, generalize new approaches from shared individual experiences, share and debate the conclusions of others, update their knowledge in their own fields, be exposed to new fields of knowledge at an advanced level, learn standards and techniques of rigorous analysis, and achieve a better understanding of the policy process which focusses their

work, in a way jobs alone cannot provide. At present, most political officers get no formal in-service professional training during their careers while there is a clear need to update skills. The course described below is intended to remedy this situation.

## GOALS

The advanced political course is designed to deepen mid-career political officers knowledge and professional skills and improve the quality of their reporting and policy work, thus enhancing their qualifications for performance in eventual senior positions.

## OBJECTIVES

The course has seven major objectives:

-- enhance self-knowledge

Help political officers to assess and deal with their own strengths and weaknesses through a better understanding of the thinking process. Officers will learn the role of biases, perceptions and assumptions in forming judgments, study the process of evaluating information, drawing conclusions, formulating hypotheses, and testing them for accuracy, relevance and value.

-- increase analytical rigor

Improve methods by which political officers work, through critical application of techniques useful in examining events and political change. An understanding of what rigorous analysis is, with an appreciation of and the ability to use the rules and tools of logic, plus increased self-awareness, will improve the analytic and predictive quality of their reporting.

-- broaden the analytic perspective

Change the quality of the information base from which officers work. Officers will learn to draw both on the perspectives

of history and of future trends. An integrated awareness of broader national, regional, and global influences and issues, and of U.S. perceptions and reactions, can help officers more accurately to understand and report current events in their posts of assignment. They will expand their application of what is necessary to consider for purposes of analysis.

-- focus policy perspective

Increase the relevance of officers' work through a better understanding of U.S. policy processes and goals, their determinants and structures, especially the domestic elements of foreign policy issues. Enable them to better set priorities through an examination of the U.S. policy impact.

-- increase awareness of bureaucratic imperatives

Provide officers with background and understanding of the Washington decision-making context and the Department's role in the foreign affairs and national security machinery, thereby improving their interagency effectiveness in influencing the formation and implementation of foreign policy. A basic purpose of the course is to make political officers more deeply aware that the Service must be actively involved in supporting the formulation and implementation of policy.

-- augment supporting skills and knowledge

Provide political officers with advanced mid-level technical skills necessary to support the above objectives and make them more effective in operational, as well as reporting, roles. Provide training and practice in better speaking and

briefing, quantitative and forecasting methods, team skills, interpersonal relations, bureaucratic politics, and negotiations, thereby supplementing the mid-level management course's coverage of these areas.

## CONTENT AND METHOD

### Global Issues Focus

The organizing focus of the course will be major global issues, considered both in general context and for their impact on U.S. interests in specific problem areas. The program objectives will be met through a rigorous analysis of these issues, focussing on (1) the rapidly changing context of international relations and (2) the factors which seem to be responsible for relatively dramatic shifts. A variety of basic theoretical and analytic approaches to understanding these issues and factors of change will be examined and analyzed. Officer participants will develop their intuitive and judgemental skills by applying these various explanatory systems to real-world events similar to those with which they must deal in their professional careers, identifying and explaining the general trends which shape the events, and examining the impact of these events on U.S. interests and policy options.

### Theory

No single social science theory adequately explains change, but the issues and case study approach -- supplemented by lectures, readings, simulations, exercises, role-playing and class projects-- can be designed to develop a greater self-understanding, analytical rigor, and a better policy perspective, as well as a deeper understanding of the kinds of people, forces, and ideologies which drive change.

### Case Study Method

The primary teaching approach of the course will utilize case studies in such a manner to illuminate and provide practice in applying and assessing the usefulness of theoretical approaches. Background material will be supplied in lectures and seminars. The course will require active involvement in analyzing, critiquing, writing, and debating. To the extent practicable, case studies will be selected so that they may be useable repeatedly in different contexts. This will permit better students to see the consequences of using different analytical approaches in various situations. Cases will also be selected to demonstrate the inter-relationships among different issues.

Case studies will:

- be preceded by short presentation lectures covering theory, analytical frameworks, and topical background;
- focus on realistic policy and reporting problems;
- exercise analytic, problem-solving, and decision-making techniques;
- address problems of immediate concern with which mid-level officers may be expected to deal at embassies or in Washington at the staff level, as reporters, or in support of senior policy-makers;
- be supplemented by studies generated by officer-participants based on their own Foreign Service experience;
- teach ways of thinking about critical issues and problems, but also provide examples in case materials of the strengths and weaknesses of different analytic approaches, and different writing and persuasion styles.



## Unit Approach

The course will be divided into six subject units, plus a parallel skills track, each roughly equivalent to a graduate-level university course of one quarter duration. Each unit will have from 30 to 45 contact hours, corresponding to a range of 3 to 5 graduate credit hours. By careful scheduling of the units, the course will provide variety and stimulation to the students, with considerable interchange among subject areas. Different teaching methods will be used in different units as appropriate to the subject matter.

## The Units

### 1. Contemporary Global Issues

#### Content

This unit introduces the course through examination of what is sometimes called the "problematique" or "the predicament" -- the key set of major global issues affecting mankind. Examination of these issues now is increasingly vital because of the emergence of an integrated global system of production and distribution. Introduction to the "problematique" through a select number of relevant foreign affairs problems will serve as (a) an analytic context for succeeding units; (b) a broadening experience; (c) an opportunity to bring international and domestic affairs and policies together; and (d) a means of challenging the participants to examine deeply held world views. Initial emphasis will

be on the very concrete global energy problem -- its origins, scientific basis, impact on growth, income distribution, stability, regional and superpower tensions. Stress will be on linkages between energy and related global issues. Related issues to be covered in depth are world food problems, population (migration), environmental tradeoffs, and direction of development. Associated issues can be technology and post-technology (technology transfer), changing concepts of security; environmental issues including ecopolitics and ecodevelopment, global commons (including space and oceans development), North-South and East-West changes, human rights and change in nationalism concepts.

#### Method

This four-week unit will focus primarily on energy and linkages to food, population and development. The course will require the participants to sketch the interrelations between these and associated issues. The unit will have a single coordinator, supplemented by guest issue-experts to provide substantive background information necessary for an understanding of the roots, essential elements, and probable future course of each global issue. The unit will have a holistic emphasis, however, looking at the relationships among issues and their impacts on disparate events, rather than simply attempting to impart an expert's knowledge of any one issue. As the understanding of global issues and related

changes in the international system underlie the mid-career program, this unit could be used as the initial segment of all of the advanced (primary) courses in the mid-level program.

2. Global Political Economy

Content

Politics and economics are so closely interrelated to today's world that Foreign Service Officers should be well-grounded in international political economy. The rediscovery that politics and economics are not separate represents a return to the unity at the time of Adam Smith. Understanding will require an examination of general concepts and principles of international political economy, current conditions, and the reciprocal linkage between politics and economics as they have an impact on broader change and development. The unit should enable officers better to understand how political economy issues affect U.S. foreign policy, as well as the ways U.S. policy and the international political economy affect host-country developments. This is not intended to be a unit on conventional economics but rather a supplement and critique of political international relations theory. Its aim is to expose officers to various contending explanatory systems for trade and development vs. international relations and stability, in particular how others see these issues. There

will be stress on points of difference in the North-South dialogue, emergence in LDC's of repressive left- or right-wing regimes and imperatives of development. The unit will begin with the basic concepts of the traditional liberal theory of trade and development and contrast that to various Marxist perspectives, dependency theory, and newly emerging explanations. Case studies will mainly emphasize Brazil. Other possibilities are Chile, Tanzania, Taiwan, Nigeria and Sri Lanka.

Other possible case-study subjects: U.S. relations; North-South negotiations 1978; Chile in Africa/Cuba in Africa; the Kennedy Round/Tokyo Round/Non-Tariff barriers.

#### Method

The unit will use a seminar format, with lecturers on the basic premises of various economic explanations of international problems followed by successive reexaminations of major case studies in the light of the economic explanation offered by each competing political-economy theory. In addition to providing a perspective on the political impact of domestic and international economic forces, it will instruct participants in the importance of broad-minded selection of evidence in making judgments.

### 3. World Politics and Theory

#### Content

An examination of how various leading political explanatory perspectives on world politics can be useful in understanding events and problems. The major explanatory frameworks will be balance of power; psychological approaches and models/perception/personalities/biopolitics; foreign policy decision analysis; communication/transaction/community building/integration theory; peace research/conflict resolution; spirals and interaction; ecopolitics/lateral pressures. Emphasis will be on how theories can be integrated and in what situations they can be used. A levels-of-analysis approach will clarify what kinds of questions might be most profitably answered from which perspective, and how questions are linked across levels (e.g., individual decision-makers, their roles, their government, their society, the sets of relations between their state and other international actors, and the global system). Case study possibilities: current evolution of "detente" (U.S.-Soviet relationship), U.S.-Soviet arms spiral; crisis decisionmaking (Cuban missiles, Suez Canal, outbreak of war in 1914).

#### Method

This team-taught unit is designed to expose officers to theoretical approaches and frameworks that may

be helpful in analyzing foreign policies. An academic coordinator, an expert, will provide continuity by challenging successive proponents of the key theories through discussion to bring out the strengths and weaknesses of each approach. Students will be required to produce an in-depth analysis of one of the major case-studies, applying at least one of the theoretical approaches presented. A detailed reading list will be provided to give further background to each approach introduced by a guest lecturer. Active student participation based on advanced reading will be required for each seminar session.

4. Competing World Views/Ideologies

Content

Students will examine how different organizing frameworks -- ideologies and world views -- force particular interpretations of events. Focus will be on the role of biases, perception, assumptions and openness to "dissonant" evidence. By understanding basic principles and conclusions of major ideologies, FSO's will be better able to interpret reactions to events and policies of foreign officials whose outlooks differ from those of Americans. The unit will cover current perspectives and basic unifying assumptions of Marxism, capitalism, conservatism and liberalism, democracy, equity, economic efficiency -- ideas

driving change and their role in current political trends and developments, including a descriptive introduction to the importance of contemporary religions in forming worldviews, e.g., Islam. Possible cases: Iran; the Catholic Church and socio-political movements in Latin America or Poland.

#### Method

This unit will present ideologies through parallel presentations of (1) scholars of ideologies, providing basic definitions of the differing ideological premises, and (2) individuals who are advocates of the various world views. These latter will be asked to focus on and analyze the same relatively current critical events in the cases, with commentary from the scholar. Participants will learn the essential elements of each ideology primarily through their comparison and contrasting of the speakers' analyses of the cases, rather than through lectures. The unit will require ideological role-playing, with participants giving an analysis of an event from the point of view of a particular ideology. This unit will have a heavy reading load to provide additional background material. The unit will conclude with a seminar to integrate the material presented with the participants' Foreign Service experience.

5. Revolution and Socio-Cultural Change

Content

Instability appears to be a chronic condition of the 1980's. The unit will examine various explanations for revolution and social/cultural change, the forces and pressures which shape and drive change, and the ways these pressures lead to stability or instability, revolution and terrorism. Where people anchor their expectations; the psychology of change; mass movements; insights of social psychology; value conflict; trigger points for radical change as opposed to evolutionary change; the role of leaders, popular perceptions, and outside events in facilitating or impeding change; general theories of conflict and conflict management; basic cultural concepts.

Possible case-study subjects: Iran (1976-79), Bangladesh (1970-71), Cuba (Castro revolution or Latin America influence); change in Eastern Europe (Poland in 1970 and 1980; Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia/Tito); reaction to modernization (the Islamic resurgence: Iran, Pakistan, Libya, Egypt; Afghanistan, Islam in the USSR.

Method

This unit will require participants to develop case studies from their own Foreign Service backgrounds in addition to analyzing the rich case materials available. Cases will be examined and reexamined



to determine the value and applicability of different theoretical approaches to analysis of ongoing events. Guest speakers will include both academics and experienced FSO's presenting their approaches to the analysis of revolution and cultural change. The unit coordinator will encourage participants to critique and challenge speakers, and to test their approaches for predictive quality against both the participants' case-studies and FSI-prepared case-studies.

6. Washington Policy Context

Content

This unit will examine the constraints, determinants, and process of U.S. foreign policy decision and implementation. Participants will examine ways in which perceptions of domestic and foreign events form U.S. policy, and the roles of different actors in the formulation of policy, especially within the foreign policy machinery through which mid-level officers in Washington will work. The ability of the machinery to cope with global issues will be explored. Officers will examine what Washington wants, and needs to know, the impact of information on policymaking, and the influence of bureaucratic politics on policymaking.

Method

In contrast to other units, the majority of speakers for this subject will be practitioners, rather than academics. This unit will have a seminar format, with a number of panel discussions and role-plays. Students will be exposed to the policy views of other agencies and non-government actors, and their perception of the Department of State and its foreign policy role. To the extent possible, speakers will be policymakers, rather than staff members. Participants will hear from Congress, the press lobbyists, and state officials, as well as federal agencies. Speakers will focus on a limited number of current foreign policy cases, leading to an understanding of both the process by which policy is made, and how the State Department mid-level officers can most effectively support State's role and position in the policy process.

In addition, a Skills and Methods track will parallel the main substantive units.

The first half of this track -- skills -- will stress development of contacts and information sources in both hostile and friendly environments; interviewing and listening techniques; as a supplement to the course's program's management segment, on interpersonal relations, communications and persuasion techniques, negotiating and bargaining. The track will also develop a "literacy" level in statistics, quantitative methodology useful in

Foreign Service political analysis and decisionmaking, and will cover computer applications in foreign affairs.

Emphasis on statistics and quantitative methodology is not intended to elevate the FSO to an expert-practitioner level but rather to enable officers to read critically outside research, government reports, and media accounts written in quantitative terms. Officers should be able to digest the increasing amount of information generally available as quantitative data, to strengthen their participation in the foreign affairs inter-agency machinery using quantitative data sets and, perhaps, to generate their own data where necessary.

The second half of this unit -- policy analysis and testing -- examines techniques available for projecting the effects of alternative policies and strategies, of testing policies for 'surprise' potential, for assessing the durability of policies in the face of possible but unpredictable outside occurrences. Also stressed here are key futures methodologies: including how to look at and evaluate trends and projections; and futures perspectives on problem-solving. A "design" perspective featuring the development of alternatives, understanding the social/political/economic dynamics that lead to major historical trends and identifying points at which intervention might lead to preferred outcomes will be emphasized.

#### Who Will Teach

Teaching will be done by combining the talents of Foreign Service professionals on FSI's staff and in the Department with

academic and technical experts. Academic personnel will be used for background lectures and seminars and will assist in testing procedures. The FSI staff will provide continuity, management of seminars, exercises, and projects, and will supplement academic lectures to provide the Foreign Service context. Teaching materials and procedures are being developed through a cooperative effort of FSI staff familiar with the needs and problems of the Service and academic experts familiar with the latest work in the social science fields. Initial or trial runs of the course will employ a larger number of outside academics than later presentations in order to perfect materials under classroom conditions, but the structure and direction of the course will always be under FSI's control to guarantee focus on the Department's concerns.

#### Testing, Accreditation

Testing, written assignments, readings, and independent study will be central to the course, and rigor in content equal to advanced graduate level will be sought. To this end, FSI will seek graduate accreditation for components of the course, enabling a continuing outside check on the course standards.

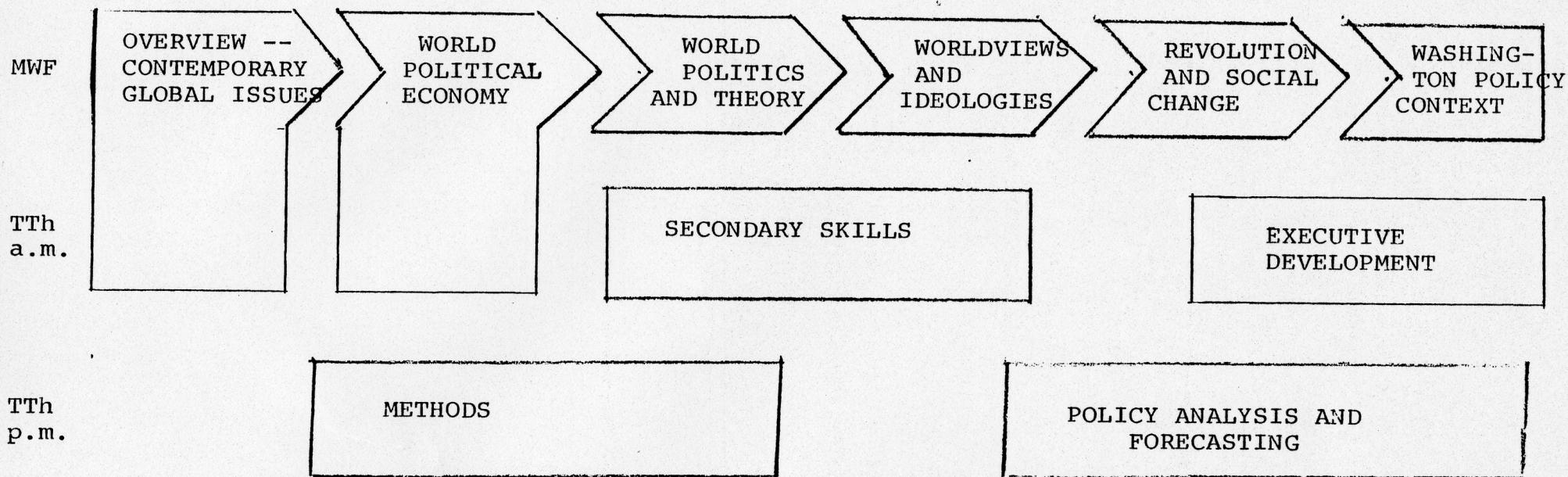
(Contact hours will be similar to college graduate seminars.) Accreditation will also enable participants to fulfill partial requirements for a graduate degree, increasing their motivation.

The advanced political course of the mid-level program like the other advanced courses, is not intended to stand alone,

but is to be fully integrated with a mid-level executive development segment, with a program of electives designed to provide an equally rigorous but less directed exposure to another career specialization, and with the programs of other advanced courses. Units will be scheduled to be mutually reinforcing. Where needs cut across the career fields, course segments may be taught for participants in all four advanced areas, or for some members of each. The first unit of the advanced political course (above) could be designed, for example, for all four areas.

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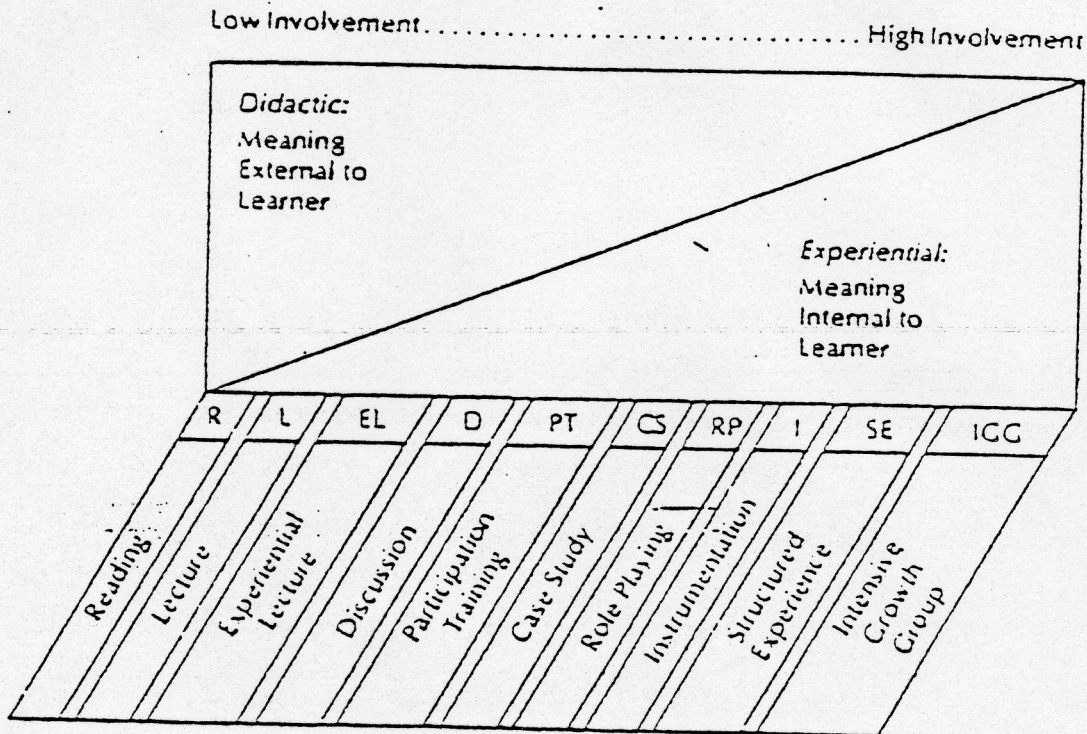
ADVANCED POLITICAL OFFICERS' COURSE

Perhaps the most important factor in determining how the course will be taught is the decision concerning the degree or intensity of learning desired for each aspect presented. The work of J. William Pfeiffer and John E. Jones is helpful in thinking about this issue. The material reproduced below is taken from their volume, Reference Guide Handbook and Annuals, 2nd edition. University Associates Publishers and Consultants, 7596 Eads Avenue Lajolla, California 92037, Series in Human Relations Training, 1977.

The following chart\* illustrates the relationship between learner involvement and the locus of meaning in human relations training. With *experiential* approaches—those that primarily stress active participant involvement vs. passive receptivity—the learning is presumably internalized more effectively.

\*Based in part on Hall's learning involvement continuum and Tannenbaum and Schmidt's continuum of leadership behavior.

### THE TECHNOLOGY OF HUMAN RELATIONS TRAINING



Reading along the bottom of the chart, we see a classification of human relations training design components, ordered according to the extent to which they incorporate learner involvement. The least involving intervention is reading, in which the learner is in a *reactive* mode, passively receiving and vicariously experiencing. The most involving intervention is the intensive growth group, in which the learner is encouraged to be *proactive*, to take responsibility for his own learning. In between these two extremes are activities that range from lectures to structured experiences.

The experiential lecture is more involving than the traditional lecture approach because it incorporates activities on the part of the "audience." Interspersed among the sections of content are brief interactions among participants. These interruptions are designed either to personalize the points of the lecture and/or to generate readiness for the next topic.

Discussion is a time-honored teaching intervention, which has been extended and refined in participation training, particularly by adult educators at Indiana University. The case-study method, popular in business education, is closely related to role playing, in which a "case" is acted out in a semistructured format.

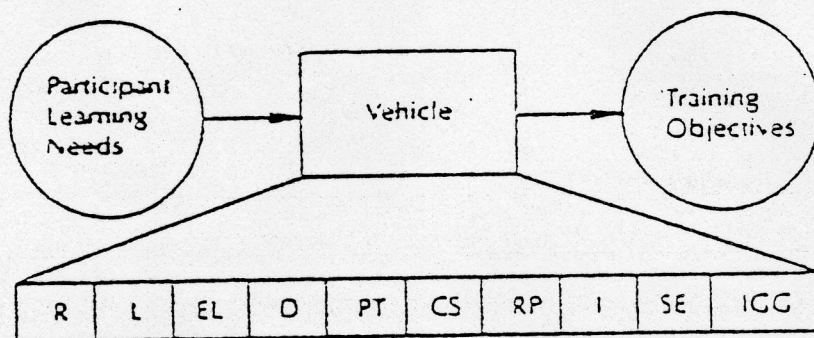


In instrumentation, which involves learners in self-assessment, the didactic component comes from the theory underlying the items of the scale. Structured experiences stress high participation and "processing" of data generated during interactive activities.

Intensive growth groups exist in many forms, such as counseling, T-groups, encounter, and therapy. They are characterized by high learner involvement and interaction. The data for learning come from the life experiences and here-and-now reactions of the group members. Participants are expected to integrate their learning into new self-concepts on their own terms.

The involvement continuum in the chart can be seen in the same relationship to other dimensions, such as risk, self-disclosure, and interaction. Each design component is useful for a different purpose, and there are training situations in which each would be appropriate.

Facilitators are continually faced with the task of planning activities to meet the learning needs of participants. The design problem can be graphically represented as follows:



The choice of an effective intervention is made after an assessment of the learning needs of participants and a statement of training objectives. The maturity of the group, the skill and experience of the facilitator, and the environment in which the training takes place determine which approach is used.