

Recipe 14: Diversity training

The situation

The organisation is a telecommunications company employing around 2,000 white collar and blue collar staff. As part of a broad management initiative to encourage a more diverse and harmonious workforce, and to avoid claims arising because of infringements to equal opportunities legislation, the company intends to have all employees participate in a diversity training programme. There is a small knowledge component to the training, but the main requirement is to shift attitudes positively towards diversity both as a concept and in terms of actual behaviour.

Learners vary dramatically in terms of age, educational level, the type of work they do and their existing attitudes to diversity. Most are technically literate and all have access to computers, whether at their desk, in dedicated learning centres or at home.

The strategy

The company has chosen to adopt a guided discovery approach to the training, as they feel this provides the best chance to positively influence attitudes.

The blend

Elements	Methods	Media
Preparation	Confidential questionnaire regarding attitudes to diversity (pre-course) One-hour interactive self-study programme, including stories, personal accounts and case studies	Online on the intranet CD-ROM (for use at home or work)

Elements	Methods	Media
Delivery	Group ice-breaking activity Group activities including games and role-plays Facilitated group discussion	Classroom Classroom Classroom
Application	Reading (case studies, updates to legislation, etc.) Facilitated group discussion	Web pages on intranet Discussion forum
Evaluation	Confidential questionnaire regarding attitudes to diversity (post-course)	Online on the intranet

The rationale

The centrepiece of the course is a face-to-face workshop in which learners participate in a series of activities designed to provide new perspectives on diversity. These activities need to be conducted in a social context in which learners find it easy to reflect and share their thoughts and experiences, making the classroom the obvious choice.

The introductory CD-ROM allows learners to acquire a basic knowledge of diversity concepts and current legislation in their own time. It also raises a number of issues for learners to reflect on in advance of the workshop.

The intranet provides a means to keep the messages from the course alive and to encourage ongoing debate using a discussion forum.