

# Didactical teaching method cards



**Dutch National Program Learning for  
Sustainable Development**

*October 25th, 26th and 27th 2010*





# Didactical teaching method cards

*Dutch National Program Learning for  
Sustainable Development*

Name: .....

# Index

<b>Part 1: Teaching method cards.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<i><b>Introduce</b></i>	
One picture tells more than a thousand words...8	
Looking for.....	10
True or false?.....	12
Standing on a piece of paper.....	14
<i><b>Inform</b></i>	
Listen carefully!.....	16
Reconstruction.....	18
Theory Sandwich.....	20
<i><b>Exchange knowledge</b></i>	
Buzzing.....	22
Collect all the cards.....	24
Dilemmas.....	26
Think ahead.....	28
The student as expert.....	30
<i><b>Create support</b></i>	
Backcasting.....	32
Glasses.....	34
Need assessment.....	36
<i><b>Reflect</b></i>	
Three words.....	38
<b>Part 2: Reflection cards.....</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>Part 3: Unwritten teaching method cards.....</b>	<b>47</b>

# Introduction

In this booklet you will find teaching methods. A **teaching method** is a structure or approach trainers use to teach content. Giving a presentation is just one of the possibilities. As a trainer you can choose many different methods to instruct your students.

The teaching methods in this booklet encourage students to take an active role. They have to exchange their views and ideas, discuss possibilities, answer questions and use theoretical knowledge in practical situations. By doing this, students process content in an active way so the new learned knowledge will be remembered better.

The teaching methods are grouped into five categories:

**1) Introduce:** you can use the introduction methods to help students to get to know each other and/or to introduce the topic of the training. By using a introduction assignment, you can also discover the students' background and prior knowledge.

**2) Inform:** the main focus of the inform methods is the transfer of your expert knowledge, for example a theory or model. Students get an assignment, so they have to listen actively to your story.

**3) Exchange knowledge:** the students exchange knowledge, experiences and/or ideas with each other (either with the group or in small groups/couples).

**4) Create support:** students consider an issue, question or project from different perspectives. This stimulates a broader perspective (a more complete set of ideas, concerns, interests and opinions) and mutual understanding. It can also lead to more support for a project.

**5) Reflect:** students reflect on a situation (for example: a course day), subject, experience and/or their own development.

In part two of this book you will find reflection cards. These cards contain questions, and help to to reflect on your own learning (for example: reflection on a subject, experience and/or your own development). You can also use these questions when you give a training.

Part three contains unwritten didactical teaching cards. When you think of an interesting method, you can write it down on one of the cards.

Good luck!



# Part 1

## Teaching method cards

# One picture tells more than a thousand words

## In a nutshell

This is an introduction teaching method. From a collection of postcards (with photos of nature, sports, people), students choose a card which represents themselves and/or what they would like to learn during the training. They use the card to introduce themselves in front of the group.

## Why use this teaching method?

Using a photo during the introduction stimulates creative thinking. In addition, students are stimulated to tell more about themselves, compared to a 'standard' introduction. By using a postcard, the introduction is more personal and in-depth.

## Method

Preparation: collect postcards with striking pictures. Make sure you have at least three times as many cards as the number of students, so students have enough choice. Also ensure that there is enough variation in the subjects of the photos.

**Step 1:** Put all the postcards on a table.

**Step 2:** Explain the assignment and the goal of the teaching method (getting to know each other).



**Step 3:** Ask the students to choose a postcard, which they can use to introduce themselves. Make clear what you expect from the introduction (for example: name, organization, a short story about their personal lives and what they would like to learn).

**Step 4:** Let everyone introduce themselves using the card.



# Looking for...

## In a nutshell

This is an introduction assignment. Every student gets a question. He has to collect as many answers as possible from the other students. For example: 'What was your first job?' 'What do you find most interesting in your work?' 'What would you like to learn today?' After this round, every student is assigned a name of a fellow-student. Now he has to collect all the information concerning this person. Finally, everyone takes their seat again, and introduces the student from whom he gathered information.

## Why use this teaching method?

If you would like your students to be actively involved, it is important to activate them at the start of the training. Moreover, when students do not know each other, an introduction assignment helps them to find out who their fellow-students are. This stimulates a safe atmosphere where the students can learn.

## Method

Preparation: prepare several introduction questions.

**Step 1:** Assign every student a question. Explain the assignment and the goal (getting to know each other). Tell the students they have to collect from their fellow-students as many answers as possible on their question. Ask them to write the answers on a paper. If you have a lot of students, you can divide them into two or three groups, so it won't take too long to collect the information.

**Step 2:** In the second round, you assign every student a fellow-student. Now everyone collects information concerning this student. Ask everyone to write the answers on a paper.

**Step 3:** Finally, you ask the students to sit down again. Ask everyone to introduce the student from whom he/she gathered information, based on the collected answers.



# True or false?

## In a nutshell

This assignment can be used at the start/introduction of a new topic. The trainer points out two corners. The students are told that a number of questions (true/false) will be asked. One corner represents the answer 'true', the other corner represents 'false'.

## Why use this teaching method?

As a teacher, it is important to know how familiar students are with the topic of the training. This teaching method helps you to discover their prior knowledge. For example, when a lot of students give an incorrect answer to a question, it indicates that this subject needs further explanation.

## Method

**Step 1:** Introduce the subject.

**Step 2:** Invite students to stand up. Explain the assignment, and point out the two corners. Make clear which corner represents the answer 'true' and which corner stands for 'false'.

**Step 3:** Ask the first question. Give students a short time for consideration and for choosing position in one of the corners.

**Step 4:** Ask one or two students to explain their answer. When the answer is incorrect, you can shortly explain the correct answer. Tell the students when the topic will be further discussed in the training.

**Step 5:** Ask the next question, repeat step 3 and 4.





# Standing on a piece of paper

## In a nutshell

This is introduction assignment. Several pieces of paper (A4) lie on the ground, containing topics and/or statements related to the subject of the training. The teacher asks a question (for example: what would you like to learn today? With which topic are you



already familiar?), students walkaround and find a paper that represents their opinion or situation. When the students stand on a piece of paper, the teacher asks them for an

## Why use this teaching method?

Because it is a physical activity (walking and standing), chances increase that students remain actively involved during the training. In addition, the assignment forces everyone to think about the question. As a teacher, you get a quick overview of the students' most fundamental questions.

## Method

Preparation: consider which questions you would like your students to answer at the start of the training. Prepare several pieces of paper containing statements or topics.

**Step 1:** Place the papers on various places on the floor.

**Step 2:** Explain the assignment and invite students to stand up. Also explain the goal, for example: you would like to find out what the students would like to learn, and what they already know.

**Step 3:** Ask the question and tell the students that they can walk around to find a paper which represents their situation. In addition, you can ask people who are standing in front of the same paper to exchange their views.

**Step 4:** Ask several students for an explanation.



# Listen carefully!

## In a nutshell

As a teacher you want to offer students theories and information. Before you start your story, you give the students an assignment that encourages them to listen actively.

## Why use this teaching method?

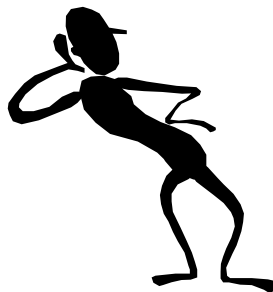
In a training course, students often think about other issues rather than the information you are telling. Daydreaming regularly occurs. If you want students to concentrate on your story, you can give them a listen assignment.

## Method

**Step 1:** Give the students a listen assignment before you start your story. For example: 'find out what the consequences are for your own work', 'write down what is important for you', or 'write down all the questions you would like to ask'. You can also ask the students to write down the core elements of your story, or to consider arguments.

**Step 2:** Tell the story.

**Step 3:** Discuss the listen assignment. Ask for the students' reactions and/or questions.





# Reconstruction

## In a nutshell

Students get a model or procedure which is cut in pieces. The assignment is to reconstruct the model, either individually or in a group.

## Why use this teaching method?

Often teachers start their training with the explanation of a model. If it is important that the students can remember, understand and apply the model, then they have to be able to follow the line of thought of the 'creator' of the model. The reconstruction method offers an exercise to practice with the structure and content of a model.

## Method



Preparation: choose a model or procedure you would like to introduce in your training. Copy the model several times on a paper, and cut it into pieces. It is important that the students can't reconstruct the model by looking at the shape of the pieces. Create a handout of the correct answer.

**Step 1:** Introduce the assignment. Ask the students to reconstruct the model, using their own knowledge, experience and logical thinking. Make clear that you do not explain the model. Offer the students merely the information they need to reconstruct the model, for example the type of model, and when they can use it.

**Step 2:** Offer the students time to reconstruct the model.

**Step 3:** Walk around and check when the students are finished. Hand out the right answer, preferably on a paper. Students can check for themselves what was right or wrong. At the end, you can explain the details of the model.



# Theory sandwich

## In a nutshell

In this teaching method, students are encouraged to think about a real-life situation first, before the teacher explains the theory. After the consideration of the real-life situation and the explanation of the theory, the teaching method ends with the previously discussed example. The teacher can choose the practical situation, however students can also choose a personal situation.



## Why use this teaching method?

The extent to which people learn from theories differs from person to person. Some students understand diagrams and models quickly, and know immediately how they can apply the theory. However, for other students the link of theory and practice is more difficult. You can help these students through starting your story with a real-life situation. These examples provide contextual information students need to be able to understand and apply the theory. They learn why the theory is relevant and how they can use it.

## Method

**Step 1:** Give the students a difficult real-life situation. Ask the students how they interpret the case, and how they would deal with it. In addition, you can ask the students to exchange their ideas with their neighbour.

**Step 2:** Invite several students to explain their reaction on the practical situation. Discuss the similarities and differences.

**Step 3:** Explain the theory behind the real-life situation. Make clear how students can interpret the case, using the theory.

**Step 4:** Ask the students if their answer on the practical situation would change, now that they know they theory.



# Buzzing

## In a nutshell

The students first exchange their opinions in pairs, before they discuss it with the whole group.

## Why use this teaching method?

For some people, the exchange of views and experiences in a large group is a difficult task. For them a discussion in pairs feels safer, compared to talking in front of the whole group. When the conversation starts in pairs it is easier to participate in group discussions. With the buzz-exercise, you can help participants thinking about the applications of the theory you discussed.

## Method

Preparation: Create propositions or questions that relate to your story.

**Step 1:** Explain the assignment. Give everyone a handout with the statements and/or questions. Ask the students to exchange their ideas with their neighbour.

**Step 2:** Make clear when the buzzing starts. Walk around to activate the students. Look around to see if everyone has a buzzing-partner. If not so, you can also form groups of three students.

**Step 3:** When the noise drops, you can announce that everyone has one minute to finish their discussion.

**Step 4:** Share the results. Ask a few students to answer the questions or to tell something about the results of their discussion. At the end you can explain a theory or give additional information that relates to the discussion of the students.





# Collect all the cards

## In a nutshell

This teaching method is a short game. A theory is divided in multiple categories or subjects. For each category the teacher creates six playing cards, each containing a concept or definition. The students are divided into groups, and have to collect all the cards related to their category. To achieve this, they have to negotiate with other groups.

## Why use this teaching method?

The game stimulates students to think actively about the explained theory. When a theory contains many different concepts or definitions, the teaching method helps students to order all the concepts. It encourages the active processing of the new information.

## Method

Preparation: divide (a part of) the theory you would like to offer into multiple subjects/categories. Create for every category six playing cards. This can be a simple card, with one word (a concept or definition). Do not mention the category on the card.

**Step 1:** Explain the theory

**Step 2:** Divide the students into groups and explain the assignment. Each group gets its own subject/category. They have to collect all the cards related to their category.

**Step 3:** Divide the playing cards randomly among the groups.

**Step 4:** Invite the students to start negotiating with one another. They have to find out which card is related to their category.

**Step 5:** At the end, ask all groups to mention the cards they collected. If the cards are incorrect, give the right answer.



# Dilemmas

## In a nutshell

Students formulate individually or in the group several dilemmas which they encounter in their work. They exchange ideas and experiences concerning these issues.

## Why use this teaching method?

When a discussion starts with a question or experience of a student, chances are high that the conversation becomes general and abstract. This teaching method helps to ensure that the discussion remains concrete and practical. It clearly states the goal of the discussion: to discuss different considerations and choices.

## Method

**Step 1:** Ask the students to think of dilemmas which they encounter in their work. Let students talk about these difficult situations. Write the dilemmas on a flip-over, and decide together with the students which issue will be discussed.

**Step 2:** The student who mentioned the problem, gives the other students a short explanation concerning the dilemma. Make sure this story isn't too long or too detailed. You end the introduction with a specific definition of the dilemma.

**Step 3:** Invite the other students to exchange ideas en experiences. Discuss considerations and possible choices. You can support the discussion by asking in-depth questions, summarizing and writing important statements on a flip-over.

**Step 4:** If you notice that the discussion repeats itself, you can ask the contributor of the dilemma how he/she now sees the issue. Ask the student to give a brief summary in which he/she mentions the most important considerations and choices.



# Think ahead

## In a nutshell

The trainer tells the students a story about a case. Halfway, however, the story stops. The students are then asked how they think the situation will develop. They discuss possible scenarios and the roles and influence of the people involved. At the end, the trainer tells the students how the situation actually developed.

## Why use this teaching method?

When you tell a story, students have to listen passively. This teaching method encourages them to be actively involved. They are stimulated to think hypothetically, think of different scenarios and the influence of the people who are involved.

## Method

**Step 1:** Tell the story (an imaginary case, or a situation that really happened). In chronological order, you tell them what happened.

**Step 2:** Stop your story. Explain the assignment: you would like the students to think of different scenarios. How does this situation continue? What could happen? Offer the students a short time for consideration. Ask them to write their scenarios on a paper.

**Step 3:** Inventorise the students' reactions. Ask the students to give a short explanation concerning their prediction.

**Step 4:** Discuss with the whole group the different predictions. What are the similarities and differences? What are the roles of the people involved?

**Step 5:** Explain the actual development of the situation. If it is a situation that really happened, you can tell the students what you've learned and if you would act differently next time.





# The student as expert

## In a nutshell

This teaching method builds on the experience of the students. The teacher asks who is already familiar with the subject. These participants take a seat in front of the group. The other students have the opportunity to ask questions about the topic. The 'expert students' answer these questions from their own experience.

## Why use this teaching method?

As a teacher, you have a certain distance to the group. When you want to convince or enthuse students on a particular topic, it can be very powerful if several students give their own experiences. In addition, students are actively involved, either as expert or as questioner.

## Method

**Step 1:** Ask the students who has experience with the subject.

**Step 2:** Two or three students take a seat in front of the group. Introduce these students as experts. Invite the other students to ask their questions, dilemmas and concerns.

**Step 3:** As a teacher, ensure that the process of asking and answering questions progresses smoothly. Summarize answers, and ask interesting questions yourselves.

**Step 4:** Thank the experts. Ask the group which image they have of the subject. In addition you can tell about your own experience.



# Backcasting

## In a nutshell

Together the group creates a project plan. Students write targets ('milestones') and actions on an A4 paper. The papers are placed in chronological order on the floor. When the plan is finished, students literally walk along the steps, to check whether it is feasible, concrete and complete.

## Why use this teaching method?

By visualizing the project plan, milestones and the actions, chances increase that you create support for the project. Moreover, the students literally walk alongside the plan. If an action is too complicated, students won't take the step. When this happens, it is necessary to add additional actions.

## Method

**Step 1:** Explain that you would like to formulate a project plan with the group, and that all steps will be visualised. Invite the group to stand next to you. Ask them to specify the goal of the project, write this on a paper. Ask a student how far off he/she thinks the goal is. He or she puts the paper on the floor, at the other side of the classroom.

**Step 2:** Ask the group to formulate a first milestone (a significant event or stage in the project), in order to reach the goal. Write this milestone on a paper. Ask the students to think of the other milestones in the same way. Put all the milestones in chronological order on the floor.

**Step 3:** The next step is to specify the actions relating to the milestones: which actions do we need to reach the milestone? Write the actions with a different colour pen on the A4 papers and put them in chronological order between the milestones.

**Step 4:** Invite the group to stand next to the start of the project plan. Before the students take the first step, ask them if the action/milestone is feasible, concrete and complete. When a step is logical and clear, the group walks to the next action/milestone. If anyone hesitates, it is a signal that the next step is too complex or unclear. You can add additional steps or reformulate the action/milestone. Walk in this way with the group to the end of the project (the goal).

**Notes**

Here you can write your personal notes concerning the teaching methods.

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# Glasses

## In a nutshell

This is a discussion assignment. All students are assigned a role ('glasses'), from where they start the discussion. Each student approaches the discussion topic from the assigned perspective. They have to try to identify with their role.



## Why use this teaching method?

This assignment encourages students to let go their own perspective. Instead, they have to think and react from the interest of someone else. It can result in more empathy, mutual understanding and a broader perspective (a more complete set of ideas, concerns, interests and opinions) on a topic or issue.

## Method

Preparation: choose a discussion topic (one or more statements or questions) and distinguish different roles.

**Step 1:** Introduce the topic and the goal of the assignment. Explain clearly the different roles (for example: the ideas and interests of the hypothetical person). Write the roles on a white-board, and divide them. You can give every student a different role, or you can give a group of students the same role.

**Step 2:** Repeat the goal of the assignment, and offer students a short time to think about their role. If necessary, they can exchange ideas with their neighbour.

**Step 3:** Start the discussion. Ask the students for their input. You can summarize their ideas, ask questions and write the statements of the students on the board.

**Step 4:** Summarize the discussion. At the end of the discussion, you can ask the students to let go their assigned role, and react on the discussion from their own perspective. Which new understandings are a result of the discussion?



# Need assessment

## In a nutshell

The students are divided into three or four groups. Each group is assigned a target group or – for example – groups of people who are involved in a project. Students make an inventory of the interests and needs of these people.

## Why use this teaching method?

This assignment encourages students to think from the interests of someone else. It can result in more empathy, mutual understanding and a broader perspective (a more complete set of ideas, concerns, interests and opinions) on a topic or issue.

## Method

Preparation: distinguish target groups concerning one issue, question or theme. Write the name of every target group on a different flip-over.

**Step 1:** Divide the students into three or four groups. Each group goes to a flip-over. During ten minutes the group makes an inventory of the interests and needs from the point of view of the target group. The students write this on yellow post-it papers and put them on the flip-over.

**Step 2:** After ten minutes, every group walks to another flip-over. Ask the students to read the results of the first group. They can add additional interests and needs. After eight minutes the groups go to the last flip-over.

**Step 3:** After finishing the last flip-over, students have five minutes to group the interests by priority.

**Step 4:** Finally, each group gives an summary of the interests and needs the target group has.



# Three words

## In a nutshell

Students react on a reflection question. Their answer contains three words. You can use this teaching method at the end of a training.

## Why use this teaching method?

Open questions for reflection result either in long-winded answers, or a person remains silent. If you want a short inventory, and you would like to use open questions, than it is important to choose an approach that specifies the answer you are looking for. In this teaching method, you ask the student to give an answer in three words. You can ask additional questions, to deepen the answer.

## Method

**Step 1:** Write a reflection question on a flip-over. Tell the students that they have to answer the question in three words.

**Step 2:** Offer the students time to reflect (several minutes).

**Step 3:** Ask the students to exchange their answer with their neighbour. This preliminary discussion helps the students to explain their ideas in front of the group.

**Step 4:** Invite a student to share his three words with the group. When there is enough time, you can ask him to further explain one of the words. Ask three or four students mention their words.





## Part 2

**Reflection cards**

# Reflection card 1

## Questions

1. What did I wanted to learn today?

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2. Did I achieve this learning goal? Why (not)?

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3. The most important situation of today's training for me was:

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## Questions

4. What did I learn during this moment?

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5. How can I use the new knowledge/skills in my work?

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6. Formulate a learning goal for the next training day.

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# Reflection card 2

## Questions

1. What did I wanted to learn today?

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2. Did I achieve this learning goal? Why (not)?

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3. The most important situation of today's training for me was:

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## Questions

4. What did I learn during this moment?

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5. How can I use the new knowledge/skills in my work?

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6. Formulate a learning goal for the next training day.

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# Reflection card 3

## Questions

1. What did I wanted to learn today?

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2. Did I achieve this learning goal? Why (not)?

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3. The most important situation of today's training for me was:

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## Questions

4. What did I learn during this moment?

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5. How can I use the new knowledge/skills in my work?

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6. Formulate a learning goal for a possible follow-up training.

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## **Part 3**

# **Unwritten teaching method cards**

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# Colophon

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Reference teaching methods:

Dirkse-Hulscher, S., & Talen, A. (2007). *Het groot didactisch werkvormen boek*. Drukkerij Wilco: Amersfoort

