PREPARING A LECTURE

In order to impart training, one should first decide on the training method to be employed. Each method has its own peculiar advantages and lecture is the ideal method to introduce a topic such as precursor control, which the participants may not be familiar with. Drug law enforcement training institutions in the SAARC region, therefore, employ lectures as primary method of training.

Lecture defined

Lectures have been a convenient method of communicating information to a large number of people. According to the Glossary to Training Terms, a lecture is:

> *"A straight talk or exposition possibly using visual or other aids, but without group participation other than through questions at the conclusion."*

Stages involved in preparing a lecture

Preparing a lecture involves the following stages:

- The Objective of a Lecture
- Entry Behaviour
- The Learning Event
- Deciding the Content
- Planning the Sequence
- Structuring the Lecture
- Use of Visual Aids [Discussed in chapter 7]
- Performance Assessment
- Review
- Feedback

Writing objective of a lecture

An objective should be a precise, clear statement of what the learners will be able to do at the end of the learning event. The objectives for a lecture in Precursor Control, for instance, may be:

- The learner will be able **to define** 'Precursor Chemicals'.
- The learner will be able **to identify** the Table I and Table II substances.
- The learner will be able **to state** the important provisions of law pertaining to precursor control in the country.

- The learner will be able **to explain** the provisions of Article 12 of the 1988 U.N. Convention laying down the basic framework for precursor control.
- The learner will be able **to prepare** a lesson plan.
- The learner will be able **to design a visual** using an acetate sheet.
- The learner will be able **to deliver lecture** using predetermined criteria.

All the verbs in bold in the examples above indicate clearly specified actions required of the learner. The statement of performance is an essential part of an objective and must be written in this manner.

Writing performance related objectives

Thus, when writing objectives the following points should be kept in mind:

- Each statement should deal with a single, specific task.
- A learner and the trainer should be able to read the statement, and relate it to a specific task.
- Use only acceptable terminology, which is familiar to the people concerned.
- Do not include any phrases that have to do with the knowledge needed to perform the task; focus on the skill. Knowledge is not observable so, for example, do not say "Will know precursors", say instead "Will identify precursors", or "Will characterise Table I and II substances".
- Avoid vague and flowery terms such as "correctly", "accurately", and so on. The objective specifies competence to perform a task, to a precise standard. The level of accuracy required for example, should be specified.

Entry behaviour

The next stage in the Learning Unit is assessing the Entry Behaviour. Much of the success or failure of the lecture depends on the trainees. The following points about entry behaviour need to be considered:

- Ascertaining the trainees existing knowledge and previous learning experience.
- Recognising individual differences between trainees.

Since the trainer has to deal with a group of trainees, possibly unknown to him, and whose approach to learning may not be as per his assumptions, his ability to assess their entry behaviour and tailor his lecture accordingly holds the key to his success.

A trainer in precursor control should usually ask the following questions before he prepares for his lecture:

- What is the size of the group?
- What is the nature of their work? Are they enforcement officers or trainers or chemists or judges or are they from the industry?
- What is the level of the participants - field level officers, middle level managers or senior officers? Field level officers will be more interested in learning specific tasks such as testing a suspect material or preparing legal documents while senior officers are usually more interested in the conceptual aspects, general trends so that they can plan how to use their resources.
- Do they have any past experience in drug law enforcement? If they do, they can immediately relate to the relevance of precursor control.
- Do they have any past experience in precursor control? If yes, the basic aspects, such as the concept of precursor control, will be less relevant. It helps to discuss their own experiences and how such cases could have been handled better.
- What other topics have already been covered in the training programme? Often, the topics overlap one another and if another speaker has already covered some aspects of your lecture, you can skip them.

While most of this information can be obtained before hand, the lecturer should again make his own assessment in the first few minutes of his session and fine tune his lecture to match the entry behaviour of the participants.

The learning event

Next comes the structuring of the Learning Event itself, which is the 'live' occasion when the Trainer is actually delivering the lecture and communicating with the trainees. It will help their learning if they know:

- Where they are going
- How they are going to get there

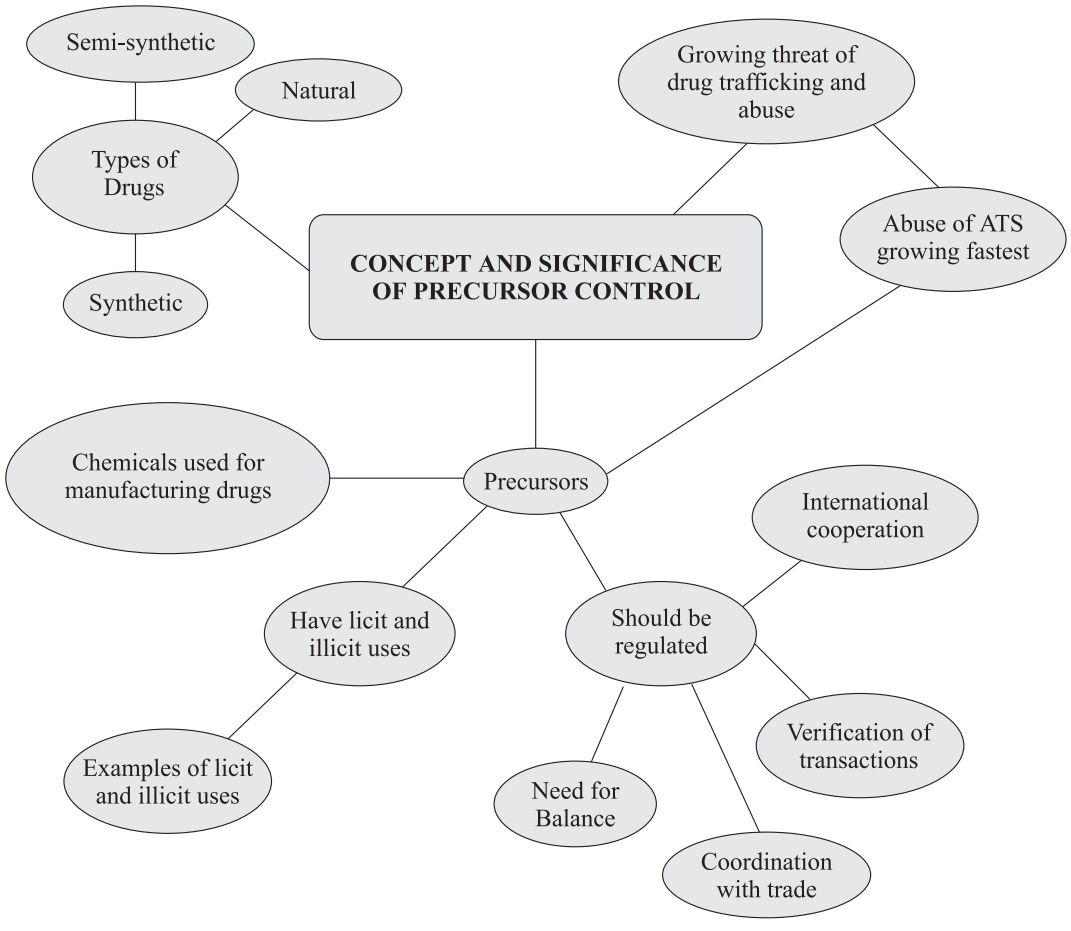
The objective(s) formulated will address the first point. The second point is dealt with by considering the following aspects while structuring:

- Deciding the content
- Planning the sequence
- Structuring the Lecture

- Use of Visual Aids [Discussed in chapter 7]
- Preparing Lecture Notes

Deciding the content

The objective for the lecture provides a clear idea about the information that needs to be communicated. A useful technique to identify these items is the use of the 'spray diagram'. Stating the central theme of the topic starts the diagram, says 'Concept & Significance of Precursor Control'. Around this central theme subsidiary elements are added until the diagram looks something like Figure 5.



SPRAY DIAGRAM FOR A LECTURE ON CONCEPT AND SIGNIFICANCE OF PRECURSOR CONTROL

Figure 5

The diagram is far from complete and more 'balloons' of subsidiary elements can be added, each adding a small contribution to the content that might or might not be included in a lecture on 'Concept and Significance Of Precursor Control'. There is no real end to this process and the spray diagram can continue to be expanded until we have included all conceivable items of information. We can then edit the content shown on the spray diagram, by:

- Categorising items in the diagram that **'could'** be included;
- Reducing 'could' items to ones that **'should'** be included; and
- Reducing these 'should' items still further to ones that **'must'** be included.

The 'must' items form the content of your lecture. After identification, it may lead us to revise the draft objective. We illustrate the process in Figure 6, below:

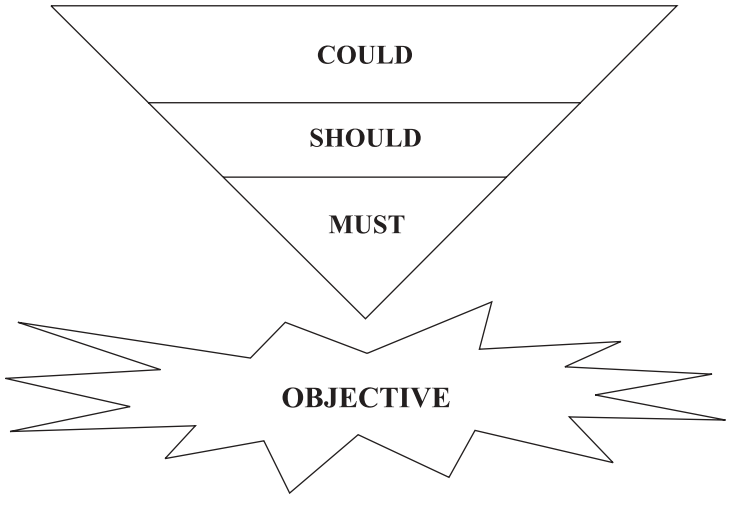


Figure 6

Planning the sequence

Once what should go into the lecture has been decided, the sequence in which the points need to be covered should be considered. This sequence should match the learning process of the participants. It should be kept in mind that people learn by progressing from the:

- Known to the unknown - Most enforcement officers have a fair knowledge of drug law enforcement (*known*). The lecture can gradually evolve from drug law enforcement to the illicit methods of manufacture of drugs and then to the precursor chemicals used in their manufacture and the methods

of their diversion (*unknown*). Thus, the trainees can relate to the topic being discussed.

- Simple to the complex.
- Concrete to the abstract- Case studies often receive the best response in precursor control training programmes. One case study discusses the modus operandi used by the traffickers, the methods of collecting intelligence, the investigative methods adopted, the legal paper work done in the case and the complications therein. After discussing a few cases, one can generalise the trends in diversion of precursors, the *modus operandi* used for diversion, etc.
- Observation to theory.
- General to the particular.

So, sequencing may start by looking at the situation from the trainee's point of view. Find something to 'switch them on', to justify learning theory.

Structuring the lecture

Introduction

The beginning of the lecture is often the most important part of the session as it sets the tone for the trainees' response and receptivity. A poor introduction can turn the participants off while a good introduction can make even the dullest subject interesting. Let us examine the following six-step process for introduction:

I
- Introduce self - this helps the participants relate to the speaker.
- State something interesting to gain trainees' attention - your similarities with the group, an anecdote, a telling incident highlighting the importance of the topic, etc. can break the ice and make the participants very receptive.

N
- Need - Establish need for learning - Many trainees may find a topic like precursor chemicals rather dull and uninspiring unless this can be talked in terms of a means to reduce drug trafficking.

T
- Title - State clearly the title of the subject.
- Time - Specify the time frame - This helps the participants understand the scope of the subject. It helps to specify whether doubts can be clarified during the lecture or at the end of it

Questions can often lead to more questions and discussion, which may end up stretching the lecture beyond the time unless the time is managed effectively.

R ➢ Range - trainees should know what to expect and how they may participate. A lecture on 'Concept and Significance of Precursor Control', for instance, may cover also the international conventions if there is no separate session on the subject. Similarly, in a session on modus operandi of diversion of precursors, we may or may not cover methods of collecting intelligence depending on whether or not there is a separate session. Whatever is the scope of the lecture, it helps to tell the participants in advance.

O ➢ Objective - Objective of the lecture, should be shared, so that trainees know what they are expected to achieve. This could be, e.g., 'the trainees will be able to explain the significance of precursor control' or 'demonstrate the use of field test kits to identify precursors', etc.

Thus start with I N T R O

Major Points

This is where the trainer can effectively communicate information. It should be in an organized form that is logical to the trainee, preferably by linking to his/her experience. All essential major points should be communicated during this period.

Summary

The major points of the lecture - the ones that the trainees should remember must be summarised. The technique of interim summaries may be adopted. However, consolidation of learning is effective if the following steps are followed:

- S ➢ Summarise
- L ➢ Link to future learning
- A ➢ Ask questions
- T ➢ Test Understanding
- E ➢ Extend Learning by providing handouts

Preparing lecture notes

To be an effective trainer, it is necessary to prepare lecture notes. Such notes:

- Should be kept as simple as possible
- Should be easy to read - One may be at some distance away from the notes
- Colour should be used to ensure that no major points are missed
- Use sketches to indicate where a visual aid is to be used
- Include a time schedule

Performance Assessment

The fourth and last stage of a lecture is the provision for assessment of learning. Before the trainee leaves the Learning Unit [LU], it is necessary to ensure that the training objectives have been achieved. Quizzes, questions, discussions are but a few ways in which this learning can be assessed.

To summarise, we need to:

- Describe in general terms what the trainees need to know.
- Develop a 'spray diagram' to show the possible extent of the content of the lecture.
- Carefully edit the spray diagram to eliminate all points that are not essential to the content of the lecture.
- List the major points of the lecture - the points the trainees must be able to recall.
- Alongside this list, note how to assess whether they have learned the point.
- Review the content, taking a critical look at the list of major points, particularly ones that we cannot assess. Ask whether we MUST include them.
- Write the objective for the lecture.
- Briefly describe the entry behaviour of the trainees. This might be based on precise knowledge, or on certain assumptions.
- Does the entry behaviour affect the objective? Review the objective if necessary.
- Decide the most appropriate structure for the lecture. Do this by relating the objective, the content, the entry behaviour, and how assessment will be attained.
- Structure the content of the lecture, taking into account the:
  - Objective

- Analysis of the spray diagram
- Likely entry behaviour
- Lecture structure considered the most suitable
- Time available

- Plan visual aids in relation to the structure of the lecture.
- Review the structure of the content to ensure that all main points are suitably presented in visual form.
- Prepare lecture notes and visual aids.
- Run through the lecture mentally to check sequence and logic. Adjust where necessary.
- Check lecture room and the equipment intended to be used.

A sample format, which a trainer can use in the preparation of a lecture, is at **Appendix I**. A lecture checklist is at **Appendix II** and a list of Do's and Don'ts in the process of lecture is at **Appendix III**.