



1.2 Training and the trainer

1.2.1. Different understandings of the trainer

We have seen that there are different conceptions of training, therefore it is no surprise that the word trainer can also have different meanings and associations. To make it even more complicated, participants that come from a range of cultural and educational backgrounds can have different expectations towards the trainer, based on different understandings of their role and place in the learning process. Apart from the basic fact that a trainer is a person who is involved in an educational process where the trainees learn something, much else may be ambiguous. For a team of trainers this is not enough to know. In order to deal with the sometimes unpredictable demands of a training situation, trainers need to think through their roles in relation to each other. The following exercise can give you the opportunity to explore your shared-understanding as trainers in a training.

Where do you stand ?

Note: this exercise is a real methodological four-wheel-drive: you can use it for nearly every subject!

Instructions: Draw an imaginary or real line (tape, rope) in your training room. Place a sign at each end, one with YES and the other with NO written on it. Read (and visualize on a flipchart) the following sentences. Be careful with questions of clarification, as the exercise tends to focus on understandings of the terms as well as the central issues.

Statements

1. Everybody can be a good trainer.
2. Training should be fun.
3. The trainer should help the participants to reach the conclusion that the trainer wants them to reach.
4. The purpose of every training is personal development.
5. The trainer should leave personal values at home
6. Skills and methods are at the heart of training.
7. Training results should be measurable.
8. Practice is the best school.
9. Training is to transmit knowledge.
10. In a training course, participants need to receive recipes.

Adapted from Council of Europe and European Commission *Training for Trainers* 2000

The table below begins to sketch out the 'trainer' in relation to other educational roles, and compares her to teachers and facilitators across a range of factors.

Educational roles	<i>Teacher</i>	<i>Trainer</i>	<i>Facilitator</i>
Process	Less important	Important	Important
Task/content	Central role	Important role	Co-responsible
Educational methods	Often frontal	Methodological mix	Methodological mix
Communication style	Mainly input	Range depending	Minimal input
Power	Absolute	Absolute-shared	Shared
Examples	School teacher	ICL trainer	Conflict moderator



In reality it is obvious that in many cases the different roles can't be separated so clinically. The trainer in particular may be called upon to occupy several roles within a program, from running a training component, to facilitating a group decision process or delivering an input or lecture. That said, the trainer always has to balance these roles with her meta-role as trainer, without confusions arising over the question of power. For example, if a trainer is facilitating a group activity but realises it has become counter-productive to the training process, can she take the decision to end the session, or must she continue in the role of facilitator? (Questions of this nature are discussed in the following sections).

Another interesting blurring of these roles may be observed in the ways that the traditional teacher role has been changing in recent years to integrate more elements of training and facilitation. Contemporary debates in many European countries concerning the school as a place for social learning and not simply for the transfer of intellectual knowledge illustrates this evolution.

Suggestions for reflection

1. Which trainer or trainers have impressed you most in your life? Why?
2. What is your worst educational experience as a participant in a training? Why?
3. Do you agree with the suggestion in the table, that a school teacher has more power than a youth trainer?
4. What kinds of different power may be involved?
5. You are also welcome to answer for yourself the different points of the confrontation exercise.

1.2.2. Trainer values and their impact on training

She who knows the people is a wise person, she who knows herself is illuminated.

Laotse

This T-Kit has been written with certain underlying educational, cultural, political and ethical values. In relation to training in our context, core values should be mutual respect, diversity, empowerment, democracy, participation. This section considers the nature of the trainer's values, their relation to her motivations, and their influence on the training process.

Suggestions for reflection

1. Why am I a trainer?
2. When I'm working as a trainer, what is my favorite role? friend, teacher, educator, partner, manager, organiser, older sister, tutor, coach, supervisor, joker, participant, seducer, thinker, star...*why?*
3. How is this favorite role linked to my personal values?
4. Why did I become a member of the organisation I'm working for?
5. In my organisation, what are the values that we transmit in our training? What are the values that I transmit? Are they the same as those of my organisation?
6. In my organisation, how would I describe the training aims; political, social, educational, cultural, professional, religious...?



In a training situation our core-values guide the way we plan and conduct the training, and also how we conduct ourselves during it. The values we have in relation to training reveal themselves in;

- The choice of training topics.
- How this choice is made, including factors such as the needs assesment (see 4.1) and the degree to which the participants are included in the planning process.
- The degree of training participation made possible by the methodological choices (do we deal with expectations, use feedback and evaluation possibilities and employ active and experiential methods).

Our training values are central to the ways we evaluate and interact with the training process. They have an impact on what we might call our leadership style (*see also Organisational Management T-Kit pp. 46-48*). A trainer in a training situation may be called upon to adopt several roles, and some of these, and the values behind them, may be in conflict.

Consider the following situation:

It is late evening in an intense training course. Many participants seem to be in a training trance, exhausted but intent on carrying on the educational activities. Despite their tiredness, many are prepared to continue, and others won't vote against this as they are afraid of losing face in the group. What does the trainer do?

Should she respect the will of the group, as this is a participative activity, and an authoritarian decision would contradict the very values of the activity? But hasn't she always felt that trainers as leaders sometimes need to make such strong decisions, when activities damage the training process, or when there may even be a physical or psychological danger to the participants? Yet as participants, shouldn't they have the right to decide how they participate? Yet, if her feeling is correct, many do not wish to participate further today, and these rights are being affected anyway.

These questions imply that a very important set of values should also be mentioned here, what could be called professional ethics. Discussions on professional ethics may be familiar to us from the world of politics, or journalism, and it is also a concept that trainers must consider in relation to their own personal list of *do's* and *don'ts* in training.

1.2.3. What makes an ethical trainer?

A woman took her son to see Ghandi who asked her what she wanted. "I'd like him to stop eating sugar" she replied. "Bring the boy back in two weeks time" replied Ghandi. Two weeks later the woman returned with her son. Gandhi turned to the boy and said "Stop eating sugar". The woman looked surprised and asked "Why did I have to wait two weeks for you to say that?", "Two weeks ago I was eating sugar" Gandhi replied.

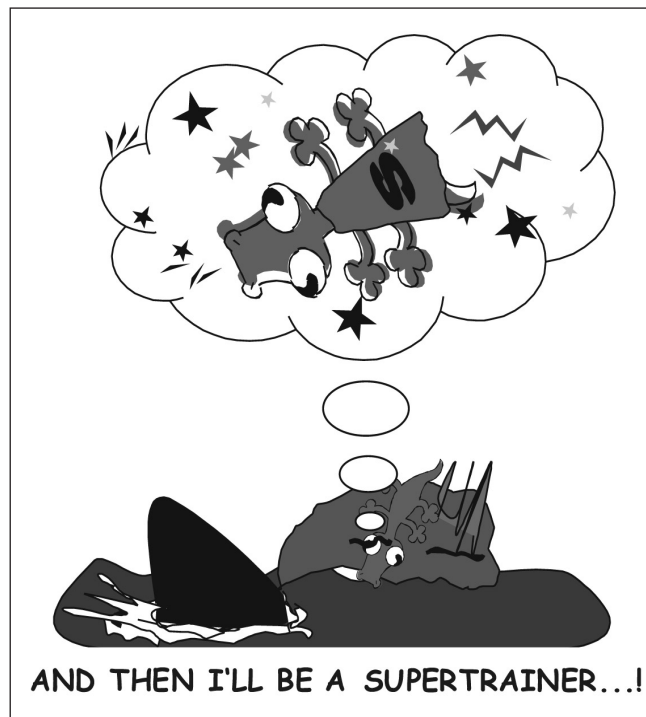
As can be seen in the tale above, being a trainer (and a leader) can be a very demanding role. Placing ourselves in a training situation means developing an awareness of what we stand for, what we can offer, the limits we set, and importantly, how we deal with the expectations of others.

"I'm always in a public position and a model, whether I like it or not, as a person and a trainer. My behaviour may become an important resource for the learning process. It also means that I can't not not behave (*like I cannot not communicate see e.g. Watzlawick et al 1967*). I must be aware of myself and be able to reflect upon the consequences of my behaviour for the process and the participants. I should be able to participate and at the same time keep a certain distance (have a 'helicopter view!'). I should be open to people even if they seem unsympathetic in the beginning. I should permanently contact participants, even if I'm sometimes just not in the mood. I should stay concentrated even if at the moment I'm just tired or lack energy. I have to realise that I sometimes attract anger which is not actually intended towards me. I am a stand-in



for other participants, delicate subjects or general frustrations, and I have to just deal with that when it occurs. I should throw myself back into things, immediately get mixed up with people, processes and problems and recover in as fast way as possible". *A trainer we know, in discussion.*

This is not the job profile for a new generation of supertrainers.



JoWag2001

This incomplete description simply aims to point out that to be a trainer (and leader) is a complex task, and sometimes even a burdening duty. It demands self-awareness, ongoing training and a variety of knowledges in relation to the realities in which we work. It also necessitates relaxation to avoid burning out and diversity to prevent trainings from becoming too routine (lessening motivation and commitment). 2.2.5 deals with active strategies to support our well-being as a trainer. On the question of ethics, there is clearly no right profile, however the following description provides a basis for reflection and discussion.

The ethical trainer can be characterized as a person who

- Is a lifelong learner
- Is committed to her own (professional) development
- Is committed to the (professional) development of others
- Is aware of and helps to manage the risks that training poses for learners
- Shares knowledge and skills with others
- Is able to keep the right balance between proximity and distance to the participants
- Is openly self-reflective and critical
- Markets skills and programs accurately
- Is sensitive to the needs of learners
- Uses content and processes congruent with available skills
- Establishes supportive learning environments

(Adapted from Paige 1993)



Clearly, trainers need a certain amount of training-related competencies which allow them to be able to do their job with a high level of professionalism. A significant degree of responsibility for this lies with youth organisations. They are responsible for the quality of their educational activities and must ensure that their trainers have an appropriate training profile before they are entrusted with a group in a complex socio-educational setting. From the trainer's perspective, engaging in life-long learning means that trainers should engage in and seek out further training opportunities and keep informed on emerging educational issues, debates and questions.

The concept of a good trainer is of course quite subjective, and depends on our experiences, preferred learning styles, the values of the trainer, training and organisation, to name but a few factors. With this in mind, the key characteristics below could be a useful starting point for thinking through a training curriculum focusing on core competencies.

- An ability to show approval and acceptance of trainees
- An ability to bring the group together and to control it without limiting or damaging it
- A style of teaching and communicating which generates and uses the ideas and skills of the participants
- Knowledge and experience of the subject matter
- Organising ability, so that resources are available and logistical arrangements smoothly handled
- Skill in identifying and resolving participants problems
- Enthusiasm for the subject and capacity to put it across in an interesting and engaging way
- Flexibility in responding to participants' changing needs

(Adapted from Pretty et al. 1995)

1.2.4 Trainer roles

In our lives we play many roles, depending on the environments in which we are active. In sociological terms, a role is a reasonably fixed set of behaviours, values and communicative codes relating to the environment in which the role is activated. So for example in the home we may be sons or daughters, mothers or fathers, and normally we behave accordingly. If we don't, it will be noticed very quickly. At school or university we may be students or teachers, or particular types of students and teachers. In our jobs our professional roles tend to be pretty well defined. Lawyers tend to speak and behave in a certain way, and are not expected to suddenly jump on a table and dance, apart from in Woody Allen movies. For a trainer however, the question of roles may be difficult as the contexts they work in and the expectations that others may have of them often fluctuate. The trainer role can become very complex and diverse because it includes many different responsibilities towards the different actors involved in the training process, from preparation to evaluation. Some of these sub-roles could be as friend, teacher, educator, partner, manager, program manager, organiser, older sister, the guy from country X, tutor, coach, supervisor, joker, participant, lover, thinker, star.

In a training, or any other kind of structured learning process, we bring our trainer roles to life with our personal and professional qualities, skills, abilities and interests. The way in which the role lives is influenced by the expectations of the participants and the content of the training itself. And the trainer role alive involves a certain degree of power. All of this suggests that a training team may need to take the time at the beginning to negotiate their roles according to the required profiles and the known expectations of the participants.



Suggestions for reflection

1. What are the different roles you play as a trainer? Do they correspond with the list above?
2. Which is your favorite one?
3. Is one of your favorite roles missing?
4. Is there a hidden role nobody else knows you have?
5. Is there a role you are often forced into (or you push yourself into) during a training?
6. How do you negotiate your role(s) and their power with the group of participants (and your team colleagues)?
7. How do you deal with the ambiguity of the trainer's position with regard to occupying a role of authority within a peer group context?

1.2.5. Well-being: also an issue for trainers

The worst you can do is to forget about yourself

Laotse

Trainings, especially youth trainings, can be demanding, tiring and even stressful (*good general information about stress can be found in the Organisational Management T-Kit*).

We have probably all had the experience of coming home after a week-long training feeling exhausted, perhaps happy, perhaps empty, or somewhere in between. It may even happen that a few days off are welcome (if not always possible) to recover and make contact again with our normal life, our partner or our friends and with the rest of the world!

Being involved with the life of a training is not a classic nine-to-five job. For the team of trainers it often means that the day starts with a working breakfast and hopefully stops sometime close to midnight, during or after some social or party activities.

The artificial situation of a training, very often learning *and* living together, can be very supportive for the learning process, allowing the participants to stay in constant contact with each other, sharing formal and informal moments together. Involving ourselves in this process, not to mention dealing with organisational issues and the training programme itself, can become an all-consuming task for the trainer.

On the other hand, a working trainer is not just responsible for the functioning of a training and (within limits) for the well-being of the participants, but also has to take care of herself and her energy levels to maintain (and sometimes improve) the quality of work.

There are many ways to make training life easier – before, during and after the training. The following questions can be seen as a personal checklist for taking care of yourself during a training and before subsequent sessions.



Make Life Easier! Hints and Suggestions

Before the training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which environmental conditions (atmosphere, comforts, personal time, sports and hobbies, food) do I need for this training? • What issues from the outside world (my organisation, other projects) do I need to block out or delegate so that I can really focus on the training and not be distracted by other things? • If I am aware that I drink or smoke (too much) during a training, which alternative strategies to reduce my stress could I use? • What "luggage" (health or private problems) do I carry with me? With whom (of the team) could I share it and what kind of support do I need during the training? • Is the program adopted to the climate and are there enough breaks foreseen (even for a siesta)?
During the training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can I sleep well during the training? (arrive earlier and check the room and its suitability; is it near potentially noisy environments? Other strategies: use ear-plugs, bring my own quilt and pillow, use relaxation methods when I'm stressed...) • What support do I/we need during the training or for short-term preparation on location (persons, material, books, media...) • How can I share the responsibility for the evenings with my team colleagues to ensure some free evenings or more sleep? • What kind of food and leisure activities do I need to feel good in my body, heart and soul? • How can I stay connected with my partner/friends and the rest of the world?
After the trainings General aspects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did I organize my own learning process and professional development? • How do I assess the balance between 'old' and 'new' subjects in my training portfolio? • How do I assess the range of 'simple' and 'complex' training subjects and participants I engaged with during the last year? In what areas am I asking to much of myself, and when is it just the opposite? • When can I be a participant and when a leader? How do I feel in these situations? • What does my life as a trainer and my absences mean to those with whom I'm living in a private or professional capacity? In this context, what is the price I willing or have to pay for this existence? What is the price the others have to pay? • What are the fantasies or fears my partner could have regarding the fact that I meet many people, men and women, in such personal and unusual circumstances? How do we deal with eroticism and sexuality? (see also 5.3.3. about relationships) How do we speak about these and similar questions and fears? • How is my circle of friends? How much contact have I got with different groups, or friends outside of my work context? • With whom can I share difficult professional situations and (personal) problems? • What did I do or read during the last months that was not connected to my professional activities? • How much time do I really have for myself? Is there anything left after commitments to my family or my partner, my job, participants and other people? • How important are sport and leisure activities to my lifestyle? How do I approach nutrition? How central are stimulants, legal and illegal drugs to my life? • As a freelance trainer, how much money must I earn to make a living? Bearing this in mind am I working too much for too little money and/or for too many customers who cannot pay me properly? What do I get from them instead?



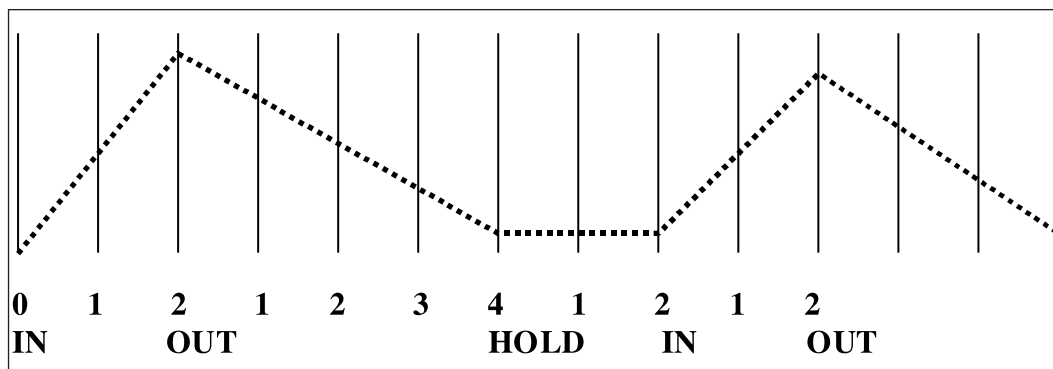
Exercise: breathing and relaxation

Stress has a big influence on our breathing; when stressed our breathing becomes irregular, flat, limited to a small region of the upper part of the chest, and we do not breathe out properly. The result is pretty obvious: the largest part of the body is under permanent tension. The following exercise (which is very easy to learn and can be done everywhere, except perhaps under water) focuses on this symptom. The basic principle is that breathing out slows down our heartbeat while breathing in accelerates it.

2-4-2 breathing

1. Breath in for 2 seconds, into the lower stomach (belly). Use your nose without broadening your chest, concentrate on the sensation of the incoming air.
2. Breath out for 4 seconds, after exhaling continue by using your stomach muscles to press more air out of your lungs.
3. Stay without breathing for two more seconds
4. Repeat steps 1-3 (1 entire breathing cycle at least 6 times: also watch the relaxation of tongue, teeth and chin)

TE-2



1.3 Intercultural Learning and Training

The field of intercultural learning in youth training is addressed by an entire T-Kit (No.4) in this series. However, in some ways, this is also a T-Kit entirely concerned with the subject. In other words, this whole publication is informed by a philosophy of interculturalism, and the various factors in training are approached from this fundamental premise. It is the authors' view that intercultural learning is not just something you do in a workshop, or on a rainy Tuesday afternoon (although it is clearly important and beneficial to deal with it as a subject in specific program components). It is a political philosophy that motivates international youth work, it is a body of educational practice that should arguably be everpresent, and crucially, it is a body of knowledge that demands reflexivity and the development of key skills by the trainer. As outlined in the introduction, this is something to bear in mind while reading very different sections, and intercultural learning is also explicitly addressed in other parts of this publication. The aim of this section is a bit like the blurb on the back of a best-selling novel; giving the basic