

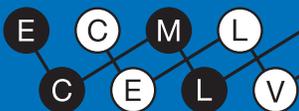
First steps in teacher training A practical guide

“The TrainEd Kit”

Gabriela S. Matei, Mercedes Bernaus, Frank Heyworth, Uwe Pohl, Tony Wright



First steps in teacher training a practical guide



European Centre for Modern Languages
Centre européen pour les langues vivantes



Trained

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Council of Europe Publishing

French edition:

Guide pratique du formateur

(*Kit TrainEd*)

ISBN: 978-92-871-6138-3

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Cover: Gross Werbeagentur, Graz

Layout: Christian Stenner

Printer: Bacherneegg, Kapfenberg

Council of Europe Publishing

F-67075 Strasbourg Cedex

France

<http://book.coe.int>

European Centre for Modern Languages / Council of Europe

Nikolaiplatz 4

A-8020 Graz

Austria

www.ecml.at

ISBN: 978-92-871-6139-0

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Acknowledgements

The project team would like to acknowledge the important contribution of the participants in the two TrainEd central workshops at the ECML - whose names can be found on the CD-Rom - and those who attended the regional events. They gave good advice, friendly and constructive criticism and resourceful help in the development of the TrainEd Kit. We would also like to thank the ECML and its staff for continuous support, help and its unfailing friendly efficiency.

This guide is accompanied by a CD-Rom which contains resources to use in your training practice.

How to use the TrainEd Kit

The TrainEd Kit has been designed primarily for the use of inexperienced teacher trainers, although more experienced trainers may find it useful too. The “kit” has been prepared in two parts: the guide and the CD-Rom.

The guide contains basic information about teacher training. We take you through some key principles for teacher training, discuss the “shift” from teacher to teacher educator and then through some basic activities that teacher trainers do before, during and after training. In each section there are awareness-raising exercises to help you think about issues, and for you to explore your previous experience.

Think about this

We signal these with “Think about this”. “Important” material is self-evident, but we felt that it would be useful to guide readers by highlighting what we see as important for the teacher trainer. When we think it would be helpful to discuss something with colleagues, we use the symbol on the left.



You will find links to the CD-Rom throughout the guide. These are highlighted using the symbol on the left. The CD-Rom contains a multitude of materials to support your learning as a teacher trainer. You will find self-analysis worksheets, guides to specific trainer activities, specially prepared bibliographies on training topics, links to websites and more.

A note on working with the TrainEd Kit: the kit is a collection of resources to help the inexperienced trainer get started and subsequently to develop, and is designed with the individual user in mind. It is not a training course, though the material in it can be used in training activities. However, you will find that if you work on the guide and the CD-Rom with a colleague or, better still, a small group, you will get much more out of it. The benefits of discussing the issues raised by the guide and the CD-Rom materials should not be underestimated.

Enjoy using the TrainEd Kit!

Glossary

In the literature on teacher training many terms are used interchangeably. In the kit we have decided to try to be economical with terms and have used the following:

Participant – any person attending a training course.

Initial teacher trainee – a person taking an initial teacher training course for pre-service teachers.

(Training) course – any teacher training event, from a one-hour discussion to a four-year degree course for teachers.

Teacher trainer – a person who conducts training courses, also known as a “teacher educator”.

1. Introduction

WELCOME TO THE WORLD OF TEACHER TRAINING

When we take on a major new job like teacher training we have many questions. The guide tries to answer the questions that may be uppermost in your mind, as a new trainer, for example:

- What does it mean to be a trainer? Do I need special kinds of knowledge or skills to do this job?
- How do I go about planning a training workshop or course?
- How do I best present what I would like a group of trainees to learn about?
- Is training very different from teaching? In what ways are training groups different from students in the classroom?
- What if things start getting difficult during training sessions? How do I react? How do I manage?
- How can I find out whether the training has achieved its aims?

In short, our guide aims to assist you in starting to make the transition from teacher to trainer.



Worksheet
My first training experience

1.1 A look at training and teaching

SO WHAT IS DIFFERENT ABOUT “TRAINING”?

You probably have a lot of expertise and experience of teaching students and wonder if teaching and training are very different. Clearly, you may think a good trainer – like any good teacher – knows much more about their subject than the participants they are training. This is probably true if you are asked to train student teachers on their initial training course. But perhaps less so in the case where your training participants are experienced teachers like yourself. Here is what one trainer said when asked about the similarities and differences between teaching and training:

“It is similar and different. How I see it being different is when you do training you can switch into a different working mode. If you work with teachers as if they were students, then it’s very similar to teaching. But when you switch to reflection mode, then you look at the things you’ve just done from the perspective of teachers and then it’s different from teaching.”

So training involves shifting perspectives and modes in order to help trainee teachers and experienced teachers learn more about teaching and learning – professional learning. Part of your role as a trainer is **to facilitate** such shifts. This also means that you will need to combine your classroom teaching expertise with knowledge and skills beyond teaching. You may also find that the content, approaches and aims of teacher training are different from what you experienced in your initial teacher training or during in-service training. All of these factors may lead you to expand your professional identity or even develop a new one.



Worksheets
Teaching and training
Becoming a trainer
Trainer voices

1.2 Our view of teacher education

The material you find in this booklet strongly reflects our own experience of how professional learning happens and of the factors that help or hinder such learning. First and foremost, our view is grounded in a view of how teachers learn, and how knowledge is created, which happens in both informal and more formal settings.

This is the training world of experiential learning and reflective practice.



Articles and extracts
Teacher development
Starting from where they’re at
Facilitator training

An individual teacher’s learning draws from experience. It is very much a question of immersion in experience and the ongoing construction of knowledge about what works in the classroom (and what does not). It is also social and cultural, in the sense of entering the occupational culture of teaching, and the cultures of the institutions where we work. There are also strong affective or emotional elements in teaching because teaching means forming relationships with people and working in very complex and uncertain circumstances to which we have to respond. All of this also applies to training.

Many of these features of informal learning may be lost in a formal educational setting, and we may have to work hard to re-create them in our training sessions. In our sessions we also need to create opportunities for teachers and student teachers to reflect on what they do and what has happened to them in the past, and to think about new possibilities for their practices.

On the more formal training courses we contribute to in our trainer role, we are also likely to be concerned with the knowledge base of our subject – in this case languages.



Worksheet

Categories of professional knowledge

1.3 Some principles for training

A set of interrelated working principles guide the way we plan and conduct training sessions. We summarise the main ones here.

“Start from where participants are”

In practice we enable participants to explore and share their previous experience and knowledge as language learners, school students or teachers. New and more experienced participants alike will perceive everything you offer them during courses or workshops against this background. New or inexperienced trainee teachers may also need shared new learning experiences to explore in the sessions. Past and new experience is the essential basis of new ideas in teaching.

Facilitate discussion between participants

The exploration of experience and ideas entails conversations between participants, which can be stimulated by personal narratives such as stories, anecdotes and critical incidents. However, the successful exchange of such experience and ideas does not just happen: it needs to be facilitated by the trainer. This involves attention to individual and group characteristics, the ability to structure communication in a group and the skilful handling of participants’ contributions to the sessions.

Provide opportunities for active learning, personal review and reflection

We believe significant learning happens when participants are truly engaged in activities and talking, exploring ideas, designing solutions to teaching problems and planning for classroom activity. Participants also need time to pause and think, to reflect, and to allow new ideas to “digest”. A good balance of doing and reviewing activities thus contributes to deeper learning which is more meaningful and has lasting effects.

Help participants to conceptualise when appropriate

We want participants to leave our training sessions with new ideas and concepts which they are beginning to internalise. These concepts are built on previous knowledge and experience as well as new insights that have emerged from training activity. At certain points in training sessions, a trainer thus needs to be ready to contribute ideas, concepts or theories, that is when participants are ready to relate new input to their own understanding and practice, typically after intensive exploration of experiences and ideas.

Create links with the real world of teaching – Classroom, teachers' room, schools

Participants come to us from the world of the classroom and that is where they go after training. This is why participants expect training to be relevant to their immediate or future teaching contexts. One way of meeting this expectation in training is to work actively with real cases of teaching situations, perhaps drawn from participants' classrooms during observations or their previous experience. In addition, we find participants appreciate opportunities to make new plans or to try out ideas for classroom activity.



Articles and extracts

[Working principles for training](#)

Slide show

[Training principles](#)

2. Your professional identity as a trainer

You have probably been teaching for a few years now, and you have taken part in a lot of in-service training courses and conferences. Your colleagues often ask you for advice or ideas about teaching. So your next step might be to run in-service sessions for colleagues, make presentations at conferences or perhaps become a teacher trainer.



TRAINERS HELP BRING ABOUT CHANGE

Successful training is a complex set of activities; which can bring about change, either in the attitudes and actions of participants, or their subsequent teaching behaviour in a school or institutional context.

What do trainers do?

THE SCOPE OF TRAINING

As a trainer you will not only be communicating your own ideas and presenting information, but you will also need skills as a discussion leader and a facilitator to enable participants to explore and clarify their own ideas. Many training and development tasks are based on observation of teaching so you also need to be able to analyse what teachers do in classrooms and give feedback to them.



Articles and extracts

- Teacher development
- Facilitator training
- Starting from where they're at

Slide shows

- What trainers do (1)

Worksheets

- Purposes of training
- What trainers do (2)
- Types of training events

Think about this

WHAT MAKES TRAINERS SUCCESSFUL?

Think about successful training experiences you have had – what was it that made them successful? What about the least successful ones?

Make a list of the features of successful and unsuccessful training

“Good trainers ...”



Worksheets

For the success of the novice trainer

Successful training activities – Worksheet

Activity instructions

Successful training – Trainers' instructions

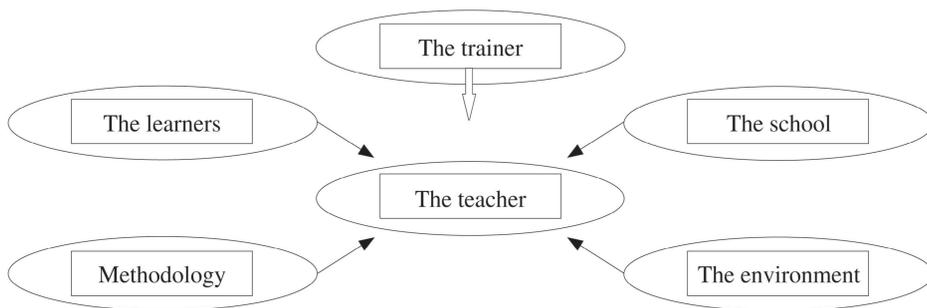
2.1 Your professional environment

Training does not happen in a vacuum. In both state and private systems it is influenced by:

- the realities of schools;
- the curriculum;
- the policy of the Ministry of Education;
- parents;
- prospective employers;
- universities.



WHO ARE YOU RESPONSIBLE TO?



We can see that teachers are influenced in several ways. Serving teachers may be concerned about changes in the syllabus, about job security, about discipline problems, about how to teach the present perfect or the traffic jams on the way home. As trainers, we need to understand the factors affecting teachers. Our own professional environment also influences us, and we too need to reflect on where our responsibilities lie – is it to the teacher, the learners, or the institution they work in? This is especially true if trainers have to assess new or practising teachers.



BE REALISTIC ABOUT THE TRAINING CONTEXT

The training of teachers – both initial and in-service – is influenced by the social, political and economic environment in which they live and work. These influences can have a national flavour – reduced curriculum hours for your subject, for example – or be specific to a school, a department or an individual – responsibility for the pastoral care of students, for example. Some factors have a positive effect, some negative.

Which are positive and which are negative in your context?



Worksheets

Positives and negatives in my context

The context of teacher training (1)

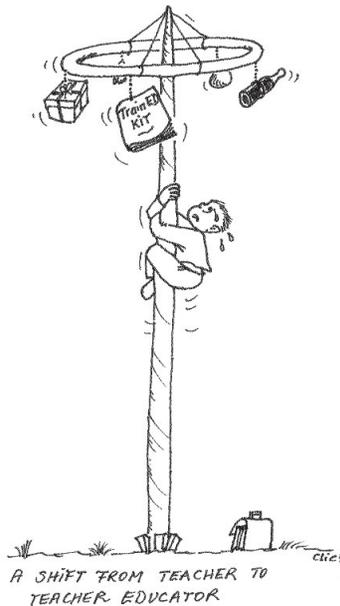
The context of teacher training (2)

Think about this

YOUR PROFESSIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Does your attitude to the professional environment change when you think as a trainer, rather than as a teacher? In what ways? Write some notes for yourself.

2.2 Motivation and training



Motivation is a key concept in education and training, and it is vital for trainers to have an understanding of what it means for their work. Are trainers motivated? What is the effect if they are not? What about student teachers and experienced teachers in training – are they motivated? Can we motivate them? The following is a helpful way of looking at motivation:

Motivation: forces acting either on or within a person to initiate behaviour. The word is derived from the Latin term *motivus* (“a moving cause”), which suggests the activating properties of the processes involved in psychological motivation.

www.britannica.com/eb/article-9110429



Worksheet

Trainers' professional images

Slide show

What keeps teachers and trainers going?

Self-motivation as a trainer

WHY IS MOTIVATION ESSENTIAL FOR TEACHER TRAINING?

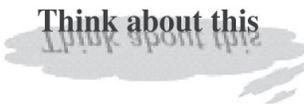
Motivation is significant for trainers, teachers and trainees because it can lead to the need to satisfy basic human needs, such as *autonomy* (that is, experiencing oneself as the origin of one's behaviour), *relatedness* (that is, feeling close to and connected to other individuals), and *competence* (that is, feeling efficacious and having a sense of accomplishment).



Self-assessment

Assess your motivation

Motivation and teachers



HOW CAN TRAINERS MOTIVATE THEMSELVES AND THEIR TRAINEES?

Answer these questions about motivation.

What are the implications of your responses for your work as a trainer?

- What would you change in your career to feel more motivated?
- What would you do to motivate your trainees to continue their career successfully?

Share your answers with a colleague or a group of colleagues and make a more extensive list of motivation strategies for your trainees (for example, being motivated oneself)

When you have discussed your answers with a group of colleagues, ask yourself if your strategies would enable you to help motivate and energise a group. Can you see how you might become an emotional amplifier for a group?

We have a great influence on students' or trainees' motivation if we ourselves are motivated by our job. When we are motivated we become:

“... a powerful motivational socialiser. Teachers being the officially designated leaders within the classroom, they embody group conscience, symbolise the group's unity and identity, and serve as a model or a reference/standard.”

(Dörnyei, 2001: 35)

Our motivation is:

- fundamentally intrinsic (for example, drawing from work satisfaction or enjoyment);
- closely linked to the status of the profession as well as to institutional demands and constraints;
- a lifelong process of ups and downs, which is clearly revealed when talking about career structure and promotion possibilities;
- particularly fragile, especially when it is exposed to several powerful negative influences (some being inherent in the profession).



Worksheet
Motivated and unmotivated trainers
Trainer motivation questionnaire

2.3 The trainer's competencies

The *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (2001) presents a model of communicative competence. As language users, we process information and create discourse in order to carry out tasks in a social context. We perform well in tasks which involve communication when we use our various competencies: linguistic, pragmatic and strategic. We can think about the work of a trainer in much the same way; this guide identifies various trainer competencies and offers advice on developing them.



Web link
Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/CADRE_EN.asp)



BECOMING A GOOD TRAINER REQUIRES SKILLS AND PRACTICE

Many of our trainer competencies are receptive and involve understanding and processing information. For instance:

- classroom observation requires skills in perceiving and interpreting what happens in lessons;
- facilitating a discussion needs good listening skills, often to identify what is not said and which lies under the surface of the questions and concerns expressed.

Other trainer competencies are proactive, such as:

- efficiently organising events;
- making clear, memorable presentations;
- leading discussions so that they are constructive and illuminating;
- dealing with problems in training, when a group is not working together well, or not participating fully;
- facilitating groups so that a group's combined wisdom enables it to reach fresh and creative solutions to the issues discussed.

We also have a number of more general roles – adviser, support provider, motivator, assessor – and one of our strategic competencies is to know which role is appropriate in a given situation.



Worksheet

Knowledge, skills, awareness for trainers

What kind of trainer are you?

Here is a checklist of some of the things that teacher trainers have to know or be able to do.

Use it for self-assessment and to plan areas you need to work on.

	I can do this	I need to learn this
<i>Background knowledge</i>		
I have a sound background of theoretical and practical knowledge about the key aspects of language teaching – linguistic, methodological, intercultural.		
I have a sound background of theoretical and practical knowledge about adult learning and motivation.		
I am familiar with a range of different approaches and methods for professional training and development.		
<i>Organisation and presentation</i>		
I can analyse training needs and decide on suitable training and development priorities.		
I can plan training events, with appropriate timing, mix of activities and selection of resources.		
I can use a range of presentation devices from PowerPoint to flip charts efficiently and appropriately.		
<i>Training methodology</i>		
I can explain a teaching technique, clearly, with relevant examples.		
I can design and animate a group task, with clear instructions, getting feedback and summarising the outcome.		
I can run a discussion, encouraging contributions from participants, making sure all have an opportunity to express their point of view.		

I know how to listen carefully to trainees, identifying areas of concern even if they are not expressed explicitly.		
Facilitation		
I know the theoretical justification for facilitation, rather than training, and am able to identify in which situations facilitation is appropriate.		
I can facilitate discussions and activities in an open, but non-directive manner.		
I can steer facilitation activities, to provide opportunities for participants to learn and to gain insight into their professional identity.		
Observation		
I am familiar with a range of techniques for observing classes – for professional development, for quality control, for teacher support.		
I can handle feedback sessions with trainee and experienced teachers in a constructive and sympathetic way.		
I have clear criteria for lesson observation and can assess observed lessons, fairly and accurately.		
Attitudes		
I trust my colleagues and believe that professional improvement is possible for all.		
I am committed to personal professional improvement, to lifelong learning and to sharing my experience with colleagues and trainees.		
I believe that professional development is helped by habits of reflection on my and others' experience.		
I respect confidentiality as a feature of many training and development activities.		
I do not believe that I know everything, and will admit when I do not know the answer to a problem or question.		

<i>Motivation</i>		
I work hard to prepare my courses/seminars.		
I am committed to personal professional improvement.		
I am up to date with the most recent literature on teacher training.		
I enjoy training pre-service/in-service teachers or trainers.		
When I have a new course/seminar I look forward to meeting the participants.		



Self-assessment

Trainer competencies (version of the above self-test on the CD-Rom)

Think about this

TRAINERS NEVER STOP LEARNING

Reflect on your self-assessment and then make a self-development action plan in which you set priorities for the areas you want to work on. When you have finished working with the kit look at this table again to assess the progress you have made.

3. The training experience

We have already spent some time looking at your professional identity. Now it is time to examine what we actually do before, during and after training sessions – the heart of our practice as trainers. It is hard for us to anticipate what sort of event you might be running – it could be a one-hour discussion session on a specific teaching technique in the teachers’ room, or a one-year full-time university pre-service course. We will provide you with general guidelines for preparing any kind of course, and rely on you to adapt these suggestions to your own context.



Activity instructions
Disastrous or successful workshops
What activities shall I use?

3.1 Before training

We will start by discussing with you the principles of course design and provide you with a number of categorised questions to ask yourself (and answer) before setting out to conduct some form of training event, as well as a pre-course checklist to use so that everything goes smoothly when you find yourself in front of your participants.



THE PRINCIPLES OF TRAINING DESIGN

Below, we provide you with a list of training course design principles (inspired by quality assurance principles), which we believe will be very helpful if you want to conduct high quality training.



Slide show
Principles of training design

Principled practice

The following questions can help you build in an evaluation process into your training event from the very beginning, and are also a useful “quality check” to run over the whole design.

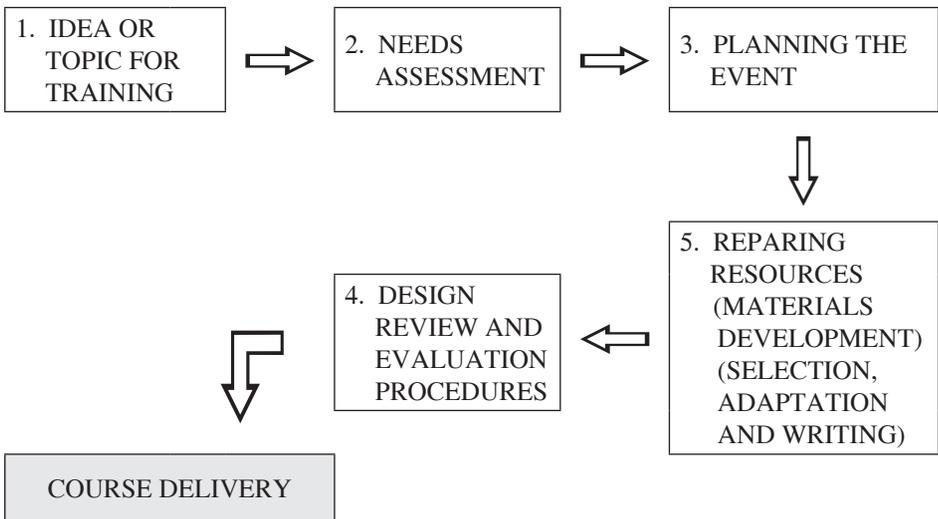
- Which principle tends to be uppermost in the design of training in your professional context(s)?
- Which principle is most significant for you personally/professionally?
- Would you suggest any other principle?

	Quality slogan	Principle
1.	<i>“Good training is when participants’ expectations are exceeded.”</i>	Teacher education is relation (people)-oriented: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ it must start with an identification of the “client” of the training activity (in our case, more or less experienced language teachers); ■ client needs, wishes and motivation must be analysed; ■ opportunities for negotiation and feedback are provided; ■ there are procedures for measuring short-term and long-term satisfaction.
2.	<i>“Doing the right things, doing them right.”</i>	Teacher education is process-oriented: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ it requires an analysis of the processes of design, delivery and evaluation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ design – fixing aims, objectives, sequencing, content; ■ delivery – facilitation, presentation, managing activities, setting tasks, dealing with difficulties within the group; ■ evaluation – assessing results, affective impact, efficiency of processes.

3.	<i>“What do participants get out of it?”</i>	<p>Teacher education is result-oriented:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ it is intended to implement change – in practices, methods, approach, attitudes, ways of understanding, etc; ▪ it requires specific measurable objectives, indicators of success; ▪ it starts with the baseline – what is the starting point? (See our first principle in the introduction to this guide.); ▪ it needs steps for “institutionalising”, making the training part of everyday procedure.
4.	<i>“Training without clear values is like a monkey learning new tricks.”</i>	<p>Teacher education is value-driven:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ it involves identifying the values in training content and practice: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ respect for the individual; ▪ personal development; ▪ social cohesion; ▪ intercultural understanding.

The process of course design

In order to put these principles into practice, we think it is helpful to try to follow a particular series of steps, as shown in the flow chart below.



We will now go through this process of course design step by step:

Step 1: THE IDEA

A training course starts from an “idea” which may be yours, or you may have been asked to plan training in response to a client’s (teacher, inspector, school principal, etc.) request. The course may also be a follow-up to an existing or previous programme; for example, introducing teachers to new textbooks, improving reading skills, focusing on intercultural issues, etc.

Step 2: TRAINING NEEDS ASSESSMENT

We cannot emphasise enough the importance of this step. We think you have got the picture by now, from all the issues discussed so far, of how important it is to start from where participants are, and that participants’ needs, wishes and motivation must be analysed. We have found, however, that what participants say they want may not necessarily be what we think they need. Needs also change during a course, and we believe that they should be assessed day by day, throughout a course. In what follows and on the CD-Rom you will find some guidelines and activities that we hope will help you in finding out about your participants’ needs.



Articles and extracts

Starting from where they’re at

Slide show

Before training

Worksheet

Assessing training needs

Questionnaire

Example of needs assessment questionnaire



ADAPT COURSE MATERIALS AND LEARNING ACTIVITIES TO YOUR PARTICIPANTS’ NEEDS

Before the training event we should attempt to find out about participants’ short-term needs – which may enable us to offer “just-in-time” training on, for example, how to use the board. Longer-term needs are more difficult to diagnose, but we should try to find out about them so that our training helps teachers satisfy these needs. In addition, we should also keep in mind that challenge is always necessary for learning to occur (Vygotsky, 1979), and we need to try to exceed participants’ expectations. Our training

activities should thus lead participants to a more complete understanding of the particular knowledge or skill in question than the one they had before the training course. Needs analysis is thus a prelude to effective learning.

Think about this

QUESTIONS ABOUT PARTICIPANTS

Participants

- Why have the participants decided to join this course?
- How many participants will there be?
- Are there likely to be any problems among participants (friction, tension, insecurities)?
- How will I deal with participants' different (cultural) backgrounds, learning styles, personalities?

Think about this

ASSESSING TRAINING NEEDS

Before consulting the CD-Rom resources, try to answer the following questions about needs assessment:

Which method of needs assessment do you consider most appropriate for your particular training context? How time- and cost-effective is it? Can you manage to use it on your own or do you need help?



Slide show

Before training

Worksheet

Assessing training needs

Questionnaire

Example of needs assessment questionnaire

Step 3: PLANNING THE EVENT

At this stage, you can actually begin to plan the course. The main question to answer is: “What exactly do you intend to do?” This involves thinking through the following:

- your approach to training;
- your aims and proposed learning outcomes;
- the types of activity you plan to use.

We shall now take you through these issues with some thinking activities.

Selecting an approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ What is my approach to the design of this course?▪ How do I see the relationship between teaching and learning?▪ What attitudes and values do I want the workshop/course to promote?▪ What will be the role of the participants in this course?▪ How do I plan to deal with participants’ different backgrounds/experiences/learning styles?
Setting aims and learning outcomes	<p>The main questions to ask yourself are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ At the end of this course, what would I like participants to know, be able to do, or feel that they do not know, cannot do, or do not feel now? Or, in other words:▪ What would I like to be different as a result of my conducting this training? <p>Also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ What are the main aims for the course?▪ What specific learning outcomes do we expect?▪ What knowledge/skills/attitudes do we want to work on?▪ What practical ideas/activities/techniques/tasks do we want to share?

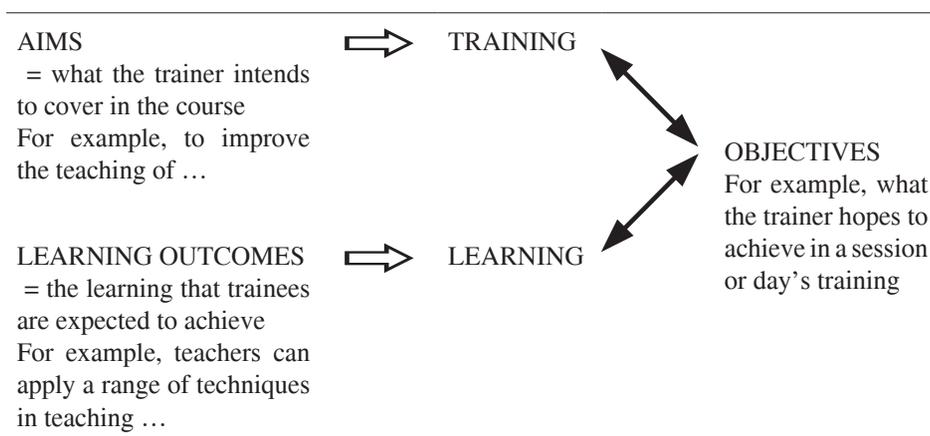
Plan a training event using the steps outlined in this section or the following worksheets on the CD-Rom.



Worksheets
Action plan
Step-by-step planning

Aims, objectives, learning outcomes

We have noticed that teacher trainees sometimes feel confused about the differences between terms like “aims” and “objectives”, “goals” and “learning outcomes”. There are many different ways of looking at this, depending on which book you read or person you are working with. However, in case you still feel a little confused, we suggest the following classification (based on Moon, 2001: 20).



What is the content?

Any training course has some sort of central topic or content, which the activities are designed to explore.

<p>Defining course content</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What do the participants already know about the theme of the course? ▪ What are their known expectations about the content? ▪ What content areas shall I focus on? ▪ What knowledge/skills/attitudes do I want to work on? ▪ In what sequence will I organise the content?
<p>Allocating time</p>	<p>How much time do I have available? Is it enough to deal with the content areas? (In our experience, it is never enough ... remember, in training, as in many other domains, “less is more” – but you may need to learn this lesson the hard way.)</p> <p>When you plan your training, be sure to allow time:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ for ice-breaker/warm-up activities (duration will depend on the length of your course); ▪ for participants to voice their concerns (a “problem-busting” session); ▪ for feedback and evaluation; ▪ for breaks! <p>You may also want to use the “add ten” principle when planning. This working principle invites you to add ten minutes to any planned activity, especially if group interaction and discussion has been planned. It always takes longer than we expect.</p>

Selecting training activities

Once you have decided on the activities you intend to use, it may be helpful for you to classify them in the table below in order to check what they can help you do in the training session, and to aim, where appropriate, for a balance between the categories.

- What patterns of interaction will I use (whole group, individual, pair work, group work)?
- Will there be enough variety of interaction patterns?
- Will the participants work on longer tasks?
- Will they be asked to present group or individual “products” of tasks, for example posters, overhead transparencies, etc? How?



Worksheets
Activities and goals
Articles and extracts
Working structures in groups

Step 4: DESIGNING REVIEW AND EVALUATION PROCEDURES

The process of review and evaluation begins the moment we start the course. This might seem a little strange, but it is worth reflecting on the contribution of well-thought-out evaluation to the overall success of programmes.

The main times at which we may need to do some evaluation are:

- just before the event begins;
- during the training programme, at convenient and appropriate times. It is often best to keep this informal;
- immediately after the event is over

We will discuss the role of evaluation in the relevant sections.

Think about this

INCORPORATING EVALUATION

- How will I get feedback from the participants during and after the training event? What types of feedback do I want?
- Do we need to do formal evaluation of every session in a short training event, or every day's work in a longer training event? Or can I keep this relatively informal, especially at the end of a day when participants might be tired?
- How will the course be evaluated? When will it be evaluated? Who, apart from the participants, will evaluate it?
- Will the participants be assessed at the end of the course? If yes, how will I do this? Will it be standardised?



Checklist
Pre-course checklist

Step 5: PREPARING RESOURCES

Now that you know your group, your aims and learning objectives, and have decided on the content of your course, it is time to assemble the resources you wish to use on the course. You will probably need to prepare handouts and overhead transparencies. You may also require poster paper, audio or video material, PowerPoint presentations and to prepare materials which need to be cut up for distribution among the participants.



Slide show
Training resources

Whatever you choose, remember that materials should help you get participants actively involved in activities.

Think about this

WHAT RESOURCES?

Here are some questions to ask yourself:

- What training materials will I use?
- Are they available or do I need to produce/develop/adapt them?
- Will I give the participants reading tasks, bibliographies?
- What equipment do I need (computer, video projector, flipchart, video recorder, cassette recorder, etc.)? Is it available?
- What stationery do I need?
- How will I arrange the room? In a circle? In a U-shape? In “cafe” (grouped) mode?

Final notes

Thorough preparation before you start a course is a *sine qua non* condition for its success. Preparation, however, does not stop when the course begins. If you are truly sensitive to your participants’ needs and your approach to training is participant-centred, you will need to continue adjusting the course design continuously during the course. On longer courses, you will be able to fine tune your plans as you proceed, drawing on informal and formal feedback from participants as well as your own assessment of the way the course is going. Working in a team makes this part of the work much less scary; different points of view on the feedback we receive help us to be more objective about what is going on.



Slide show

Course design activity EF

Activity instructions

Course design activity

Examples

Course design activity output (1)

Course design activity output (2)

Course design activity output (3) French

Course design activity output (4)

Example of pre-workshop letter for participants English

Example of pre-workshop letter for participants French

Example of workshop flyer

3.2 While training

3.2.1 Getting started

We want to start our sessions on the right foot. The opening session or activity sets the pace and tone of the event and will provide the participants with very strong indications of your:

- educational philosophy;
- approach to training;
- training style;
- attitude towards participants;
- emotional state (anxious, excited).

“Getting started” activities are also excellent opportunities for building on what you have already found out about a training group during needs analysis, as well as learning about their immediate feelings, needs and expectations.

Think about this

AT THE BEGINNING

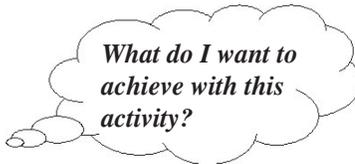
Answer the following questions

- As a participant in a training course, what do you expect from the very first activity?
- As a participant, do you remember any memorable starts of training courses you have attended? Try to recall the factors that led to their success (or lack thereof).
- As a teacher/trainer, how would you normally start your workshops or courses?



START WITH THE END IN MIND

We suggest that you start planning your opening moves by thinking about the following question:



We guess you will want to achieve the following (based on Thorne and Mackey, 2003):

Curiosity	You want them to want to find out more about the topic.
Rapport	You want to create a cohesive group, willing to work with you and with one another.
Impact	You want to raise participants' interest.
Motivation	You want them to realise that the training will be useful for them.
Energy	You want participants to become active, and not be passive observers.

Think about this

ACTIVITIES FOR STARTING OFF

There are two broad categories of “getting started” activities: ice-breakers and openers. The main features of both types are outlined below:

Ice-breakers	Openers
<ul style="list-style-type: none">are not usually connected to the subject matter of the training event	<ul style="list-style-type: none">are connected to the subject matter of the course
<ul style="list-style-type: none">can be rather playful and fun	<ul style="list-style-type: none">are more work-oriented
<ul style="list-style-type: none">allow the participants to become acquainted with one another in a meaningful and dynamic way	<ul style="list-style-type: none">are intended to introduce participants smoothly into the topic of the training event
<ul style="list-style-type: none">help to relax the group and build trust among participants and with the trainer	<ul style="list-style-type: none">give participants the opportunity to express their expectations, goals and their learning needs
<ul style="list-style-type: none">help the trainer get to know the group, thus reducing trainer anxiety	<ul style="list-style-type: none">divert participants' preoccupations with other things and help them focus on the training



Worksheets

Ice-breakers for international training events

Warmer – You can sit down if

Suitcase activity – Instructions

Suitcase activity – Principles

Example

Participants' suitcases



A “classic” getting started activity is “Find someone who ...” (Moskowitz, 1978). The instructions are as follows:

1. Make up a series of endings to “Find someone who ...”. These could be ice-breaking – “Find someone who is a cinema-goer” – or opening – “Find someone who has never run a training session before”. The number of sentences should equal the number of people in the room, including the trainer(s), or be slightly more than this. (You may have found some of these out from a pre-course questionnaire.)
2. Hand out the sheet listing the “Find someone who ...”. Tell the group to stand up and mill about, and, in about five minutes, try to find as many people in the group as they can who fit the sentences. When they find someone, they should write the name of the person (and their home town) next to the sentence on their papers. Take part yourself.
3. After the allotted time period, stop the group and tell them to form a circle. Start the revelations by saying, “I’ve found someone who is a cinema-goer. It’s Heinz (from Frankfurt).” “Have you found any more cinema-goers?” Allow this part of the activity to be initiated by participants. Stop when you see that everyone has had a say.
4. A good way of finishing the activity is to go round the circle with each person in turn saying their name and home town.
5. Make sure you provide an opportunity for participants to review the activity, either immediately or later, in order to establish its purpose and significance.



Worksheet

Ice-breaker – “Find someone who ...”



CHOOSE YOUR STARTER ACTIVITIES CAREFULLY

When you select a start-up activity to use in your training, consider carefully the following factors:

Group character	You need to do your homework on your participants: what concerns or interests them; their backgrounds, previous training experiences, age, learning preferences, culture, etc.
Participants' expectations	You need to know if possible their expectations of their role in the learning process: how comfortable are they with an active, experiential role, for instance? This is not always easy to find out, especially if active learning is new to them.
Course content	If this is very new for them, then novel start-up activities can prepare the ground well for the new ideas.
Course length	You can allow more time for ice-breakers/openers in a longer course – for instance, up to a whole session in a one-week course. For a short event, you may have to limit yourself to five or ten minutes.
Cultural aspects	You need to be culturally sensitive, especially if you are conducting the training event in a culture/country different from your own. We have found, however, that participants from very diverse cultures will enjoy taking part in innovative and exciting ice-breakers or openers, once their purpose has been clearly explained to them.
Your own style and personality	First of all, you need to feel comfortable about using a particular “getting started” activity. This does not mean that you should not take calculated risks, however.

If you select starting activities wisely and prepare them carefully it will help you to facilitate them with confidence. Successful starting activities will help you to establish a climate conducive to learning in your training event.

3.2.2 The trainer as facilitator

We think that a good trainer is a facilitator of learning, who helps trainees change perspectives and modes of working. Teacher training is thus concerned with the facilitation of training groups – bringing out and focusing on the group’s knowledge and experience, typically as the group creates something new or solves a problem.



Slide show
Trainer as facilitator



WHAT IS FACILITATION?

To understand what the challenge of facilitation means, read these quotes from a trainer:

“I realised you really have to listen very carefully and not get bogged down in your own ideas but be ready to understand other people’s train of thought. I realised that that is something that requires a lot of effort. I mean, you cannot just make comments on people’s contributions or judge them.”

“It is important to summarise the work or the ideas that have come out of the course from the participants, I mean that outcome should be the outcome of the participants.”

Throughout a training course, the trainer works consciously with the experience, views and ideas of a training group in order to create new insights or find solutions to problems.

While facilitating, trainers combine their knowledge of the content area with attitudes and skills that allow them to draw on their collective knowledge and experience (what we call “the wisdom of the group”).

Do a little self-test...



Questionnaire
Can I facilitate – Self-test

Facilitating group discussions

You have probably experienced different types of discussion in staffrooms, at workshops or on courses. Discussions in teacher education are typically used to share the participants' experience, ideas and viewpoints or to negotiate agreed solutions to problems.

Group discussion activities are a vital part of any trainer's tool kit. But because of their living, dynamic quality, discussions pose a professional challenge to experienced and less experienced trainers alike.



Articles and extracts
Working structures in groups

Think about this

SOME QUESTIONS ON DISCUSSION

Look at these questions, and jot down your responses

- What kinds of discussion are there?
- What makes a good group discussion? For example, does it have identifiable components that make it replicable?
- What are good discussion “triggers”?
- How can I encourage participants to take part in discussions?

- Why use discussion as a mode of training?
- When is a good time to get participants to discuss something?
- What different formats are there for group discussions?
- How do I set up discussion groups so they can be effective?
- What is my role as a discussion leader? How do I facilitate an ongoing discussion? When and how do I stop a discussion?



Worksheets

[Useful language for discussion leaders \(gapped\)](#)

[Useful language for discussion leaders](#)

Types of discussion

A discussion is about the movement of ideas within a group, between its members. When a discussion goes well, we sense there is a feeling of effortlessness, as if the flow of ideas were unfolding as a natural process. In fact, this natural and effortless feeling is usually created by the joint effort of a group of people. Because of this, we find it very hard to analyse a discussion, to take it apart and reveal its constituent parts, and still capture the human interaction that is at its heart.

We believe three basic requirements need to be met in order to call the movement of ideas a discussion (after Bridges, 1988). People need to:

- a. talk;
- b. listen;
- c. respond to each other.

We also find it helpful to distinguish between three main types of discussion (after Mercer, 1995):

- a. accumulative: speakers build positively but uncritically on what others have said. There are more and more ideas added, but there is no concern for linking these emerging ideas. We think this type of talk needs structure and guidance, provided either by a discussion leader or a very self-directed discussion group;
- b. disputational: the energy of competing ideas or arguments drives the discussion. Here the hidden assumption is that the discussion will reveal the “best” (or most convincing) way forward concerning an issue or problem. Characteristically, such discussions consist of short exchanges: assertions, counter-assertions and challenges;
- c. exploratory: members engage critically but constructively with each other’s ideas. “There’s a synergy of the group moving the discussion forward ... moving

whatever we're applying our rigour to, whatever that conversation, that issue that we're discussing" (Moran, 1991: 14).

In other words, it is the joint concentration and combination of different participants' views that drives the group talk forward in an attempt to explore an issue fully. We see group members using their energy to examine the idea or problem at hand, not advancing their own agendas. This is why we often have the feeling of "flow" in such discussions.

It would be wrong, though, to suggest that one type of discussion is more effective than another. In reality, most discussions probably contain elements of all three types. But a good discussion leader may want to be conscious of when it is most productive to steer the group toward an accumulative, exploratory or disputational discussion phase.

Think about this

OBSERVING DISCUSSIONS

If you have the opportunity, it is valuable to try out the activities on the CD-Rom, either before you take on a training role, or during a course, especially if you are fortunate enough to be working with an experienced trainer who uses discussions.



Self-assessment

Roles of a discussion leader

Worksheets

Discussion observation form

Functions and moves of a discussion leader

Functions and moves of a discussion leader French

Functions and moves of a discussion leader Group A

Functions and moves of a discussion leader Group B

Web link

Group facilitation in language teacher education – ECML project
(www.ecml.at/mtp2/GroupLead/)

Example

What workshop participants observed

Some problems of facilitating groups

In your experience you have probably noticed that each learning group is unique. Participants also bring their individuality, preferences and concerns to the life of a group. These and the inter-member relationships which evolve over time give the group as a whole its character. One could even say that groups have personalities.

All this influences the life of a group, and in particular the way it behaves during discussions. We often feel group energies most strongly when, for example, the group is

- focused and alert;
- hitting a low point;
- feeling drained and unable to pay attention.

Sometimes this “moment-to-moment fluctuating balance of mental, emotional and physical intensity ... can be felt like a positive or negative electrical charge in the air as if the [whole] group is switched on or off” (Bentley, 1994: 23).

Frequently, we may encounter challenging or disruptive individual behaviours. Such trainee behaviours make it hard to remain focused and work in a facilitative mode.



This morning we are going to talk about conflict management

Think about this

WHAT CAN I DO ABOUT DIFFICULT GROUP BEHAVIOURS?

Working with “difficult” groups can be very energy-sapping and anxiety-provoking. We recommend you try our “problem buster” for working in these situations, as well as the other activities on the CD-Rom mentioned below.



Worksheets
Problem buster
Dealing with group incidents
Difficult group situations

We suggest the following in order to deal with such behaviours. You might also consider some of the potential risks in these actions. Some are more appropriate for particular behaviours and less appropriate for others.

As you read consider which strategy best deals with which behaviour.

- empathise by focusing on the people, not the problem you have with them;
- remain neutral and do not take anybody's part or side;
- "divide and rule", for example, by reseating problem participants and giving them a self-observation sheet;
- "charm" difficult people, even inspire them;
- remain positive when you respond to negative participants or contributions;
- if needed, do not avoid "total confrontation" but open up the difficult situation in front of the group and discuss it with everyone;
- remind yourself that we cannot please all of the people all of the time in our training groups.



" CLASSROOM STRATEGY "



Worksheet

[Micro-facilitation handout](#)

[Questionnaire](#)

[Evaluating micro-facilitation](#)

3.2.3 Lectures and presentations

As well as working in interactive modes we also need to provide input through presentations or lectures. These can range from a short (for example, five minute) presentation of a new idea at the beginning of a sequence of training activities to a full one-hour talk. Our rule of thumb for moving into this mode is fitness for purpose.



Worksheets

[Lecturer vs. facilitator \(A\)](#)

[Lecturer vs. facilitator \(B\)](#)

As lecturers, we are “exposed” in a way that a more facilitative approach would avoid. All eyes are on us. We also have to be seen to know our stuff – it is risky for the presenter, who is potentially open to criticism. The risks in a more facilitative context, on the other hand, are mainly borne by the participants, who carry the burdens of speaking and disclosing.

Sometimes it is absolutely necessary to work in this way. In fact, good presentations and lectures can be just as participant-centred as more facilitative formats used in training. It is appropriate to move into presentation or lecture mode for several reasons:

- to introduce a group to a completely new set of ideas which need exemplifying, before beginning more interactive work with them;
- to summarise what has happened in a discussion-based session;
- to provide rationale or justification for activities, procedures, etc., which participants have experienced in a session.

We mention other reasons below in this section. However, we maintain that it is probably more effective to experience new teaching activities before talking about them, whereas it may be helpful to talk first about principles and new ideas.

Why give lectures or presentations?

- You can communicate your enthusiasm for a new topic more visibly – and it can become contagious. This is likely to make your audience take more interest in your topic, which will motivate them to use it, take it further, research it, improve it, and so on.
- You can structure the content more clearly. You can emphasise certain points of view (including your own), raise issues, relate the topic to others in the training event, explore practical applications of the main ideas, and so forth. In this way you can help trainees gain access to new ideas.
- You can provide up-to-date material. Although many resources may be available to your participants, they are not always the latest. As a trainer you may well have access to new books and papers which may be less accessible to participants. In a presentation or lecture you may include your own current work or ideas you have for research that would be worthwhile to conduct. Experienced teachers can judge the extent to which the material is relevant to their own working contexts, and you can provide less experienced trainees with guidance about the relevance of material.
- You cannot use another format. This is often the case when you are faced with very large audiences. In quite a few situations, giving a presentation is more cost-effective than repeating a small group seminar a large number of times.

Some guidance for avoiding problems in lectures or presentations

- Presentations can be passive events for participants (you can, however, make them more interactive. Allow participants time to discuss ideas in these sessions, to enable them to process material).

- Presentations may simply replicate material available elsewhere in a more easily-digestible form (you are wasting valuable time if you do this. Think carefully about why you are talking).
- Presentations may be at the wrong pace for some of the participants (you may try to pack in too much in a short time and rush through the material. Participants will not be able to absorb this in the detail required. Depth is often preferable to breadth).
- Presentations (especially long ones) can be difficult to follow, and can become rather taxing for participants' attention and memory (you may be guilty of creating information overload for your participants. Better to have short meaningful talks with material which can be easily processed).

(Based on "Giving a lecture",
at www.staffs.ac.uk/schools/sciences/learning_and_teaching/LTMlect.htm)



Worksheet

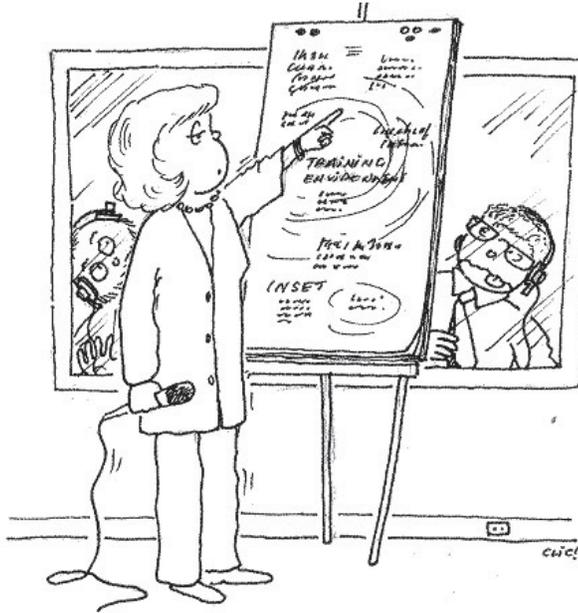
Memorable lectures



FOR ALL LECTURERS AND PRESENTERS

We swear by the "Three Ps" of presentation:

- prepare;
- practise;
- present.



We believe there is no substitute for excellence in preparation, with attention to all levels of detail at this stage. Inexperienced presenters find that practice, particularly before a “set piece”, is very helpful for assessing if the order and sequence, the visuals and the content work. We will probably be memorable on more occasions than not if we are likely to give presentations that are:

- clear and uncluttered;
- supported by effective visual material;
- relevant to the trainees’ or teachers’ contexts and levels of knowledge and experience;
- well-timed;
- interactive for some of the time, either in the form of questions or among the members of the group.



Slide shows

[Presentation traps](#)

[Preparing a presentation](#)

Articles and extracts

[Using the OHP](#)

[Using the OHP French](#)

3.2.4 Observation and feedback

Classroom observation

Not all trainers' duties include observing teachers at work in the classroom. However, for many of us it is a basic part of our job. For example, some of us are already mentors to trainee teachers in schools. Some observation occurs when subject advisers visit schools to either inform themselves about what is happening, or to evaluate teaching. They are not intended to be of immediate assistance to the teachers involved. Training needs may be identified in these circumstances.

Whatever the purpose or the occasion, it is clear that we require skills for observing in classrooms. These skills might extend to observing in schools, to see how teachers behave towards students out of class or with colleagues.



Slide shows

Observation

Observation French

Observation in pre-service



WHY TEACHER EDUCATORS SHOULD OBSERVE LESSONS

In many initial teacher training contexts, successful observed teaching is a requirement for a trainee teacher to obtain their teaching qualification. However, we believe the main reason for observation is to assist teachers in their professional growth by focusing on their classroom work – the core of what they do. Moreover, observers can provide practical feedback, suggestions and advice based on the evidence they collect in observations to help teachers develop their skills.



Thus, when lesson observation is viewed as a developmental process rather than an evaluative one, it is extremely useful. In such circumstances, the trainer-as-observer’s job is not to make judgments on what happens during the lesson, but to record what goes on and, during a post-observation discussion, assist learning by reflecting on issues from the lesson raised by both observer and teacher, and provide feedback to the teacher. Peer observation – teacher observes teacher – is a very valuable alternative, and some training sessions could be devoted to training teachers to work with each other for mutual benefit in this mode.

Risks involved ...

There are also good reasons for not observing our trainees. Observation:

- usually causes stress;
- “pollutes” the classroom, because observers are usually perceived as intruders and may influence what happens in the classroom;
- can also generate too much information which cannot be processed within the time constraints of a training situation.

Formulate some rules for dos and don'ts for class observation, after trying out the activities on the CD-Rom.



Worksheets
Being observed
Observer metaphors

Think about this

STAGES OF THE OBSERVATION PROCESS

Pre-observation

Teacher and trainer/observer discuss and agree on what should be observed – in other words, together they set the agenda for observation. As most teachers confess to feeling anxious about being observed, we have a responsibility to put the teacher at ease. Remember our purpose is to help the teacher in their professional growth. Therefore, we need to discuss in detail how we will conduct the observation process, and try to involve the teacher in setting the agenda for feedback, by asking for feedback on particular areas of practice.

During observation

When actually observing the lesson, we try not to add to the teachers' anxiety – for example, by writing a great deal very quickly or staring at him or her. Also, we try to be as unintrusive as possible so as to minimise “the observer effect” on the atmosphere and activity in the classroom. We may want to use a (self-designed) observation checklist or something similar to record our observations (see the resources on the CD-Rom, and Wajnryb, 1992). We need to remember too that observation sheets are not tests, and the outcomes should not be kept secret from the observed teacher.

Post-observation

After the observation, it is important for observer and teacher to find time to discuss the lesson in detail. A completed observation sheet can help a lot in giving focus to this discussion, and thus in helping the teacher reflect and learn. The teacher will expect honest and sensitive feedback from us. We will discuss this issue in the next section. The observer and the teacher discuss the lesson and determine areas for the teacher's

development. For example, we can use questions to help the teacher articulate a rationale for his/her actions, for example, “Why did you choose this activity?”, “How do you know that the students learned the new structure?”.

The post-observation discussion is also a good time for teacher and observer to agree on appropriate follow-up. Observation should not be a one-off activity – it should be part of an ongoing process of learning from experience in the classroom. As trainers, we can assist in this long-term process with sensitive yet honest observation and support for teachers.



Example
Discussion observation form

Article and extracts
Observation types
Observation in quality assurance

Feedback

What is feedback?

Apart from dictionary definitions which usually include synonyms and explanations like advice, criticism, opinion, information about how good somebody’s work is, we find this definition useful:

Feedback = information on the effect of your actions.



Articles and extracts
Mental pictures of feedbacka

Slide show
Giving and receiving professional feedback

In the context of teacher education, there are two main categories of feedback:

1. feedback that we give to a teacher or trainee after observing them teach;
2. feedback we receive from participants in training events, and that we give to participants as they engage with activities and respond to activities in the training room.

Why give and receive feedback?

Feedback is necessary to:

- inform trainees of their progress;

- motivate them by emphasising their strengths;
- help them to improve their performance;
- help teachers gain confidence in their skills;
- assist them in critical reflection;
- help them understand the professional role of the teacher;
- lead them towards independent judgment and practice.

Secondly, we ask for feedback on our own performance as trainers to improve what we do and to grow professionally by getting an honest reaction to our work from participants. We will refer to this in the next chapter (Evaluation and follow-up).

Think about this

EFFECTIVE AND INEFFECTIVE FEEDBACK

Effective feedback is:

- descriptive rather than evaluative;
- specific rather than general;
- well timed;
- directed towards behaviour that the teacher/trainee can control;
- motivated by a desire to help.

Ineffective feedback can be the opposite of the above, but may also be:

- too critical;
- too “fuzzy”;
- too soft when the person would obviously benefit more from more direct feedback;
- too subjective;
- too theoretical;
- too prescriptive;
- incomprehensible.



Think about this

FEEDBACK HAS TWO SIDES

Feedback is both given and received. As trainers, we give and receive feedback both during observation encounters and in our face-to-face training sessions. Teacher educators have frequently confessed to having problems with giving critical feedback. Here is an “ABC of giving criticism” for trainers prepared by a trainer colleague:

- avoid scoring points;
- begin and end on a positive note;
- choose the time and place wisely;
- describe the behaviour – do not “label” the person (for example, as “disorganised” or “insensitive”);
- express how you feel and not how the teacher ought to be.

When giving feedback, we also try to maintain a balance between praise and criticism because feedback is meant to help trainees improve, not to demotivate them.

The language of feedback

The language we use when giving feedback influences the way in which the feedback is perceived. We think that different types of trainees may require different uses of language. For example, initial teacher trainees may require clear and direct feedback, neither too critical, nor too kind, whereas more experienced teachers can probably understand better the professional jargon, and may appreciate the subtleties of more facilitative language.

Inappropriate language in feedback can hurt teachers’ feelings and discourage them. This can contribute to resistance to suggestions for change. Rather than beginning our comments with, “you should (not) have ...”, “why didn’t you ...?”, “where you went wrong was ...”, “everything was OK until you ...”, trainers can begin their feedback with phrases like “I noticed that you ...”, “another option available in that situation is ...”, “the advantage there might be ...”, “what do you feel was the advantage of taking that option?” (based on Woodward, 1989: 21).



Worksheet

Helpful feedback language

We also find that practising giving and receiving feedback at every opportunity, when preparing for training, or after a team training session, for example, keeps us alert to its value and its pitfalls.

3.3 Evaluation and follow-up

Types of evaluation

We all want to know how well our training sessions are going, and ultimately to know if they have worked. There are thus three main types of evaluation we want to carry out:

- formative – information we gather from participants during a course; helps us regulate and fine tune the course;
- summative – information gathered at the end of a course or later; helps us to make judgments about the relative success of a course, and how well it was received by participants;
- developmental – essentially focused on ourselves; can also be tried by participants; also referred to as self-evaluation.



Slide show

Evaluating training

Worksheet

Evaluating training events

Good practice in giving and receiving feedback

If you are running a training event it is usually good practice to end each day or sequence with a short session of reflection and feedback on the experiences of the day.

There are a number of formats which can be used for this. These include:

- give out cards (colour coded) for participants to write – “things I liked in today’s workshop”; “things I liked less”; “questions I have”; “ideas to take up in the next sessions”. The cards – which do not ask people to put their names on them – can be pinned up on the wall or pinboard;
- same approach but with the rubric “Five things I remember from today’s sessions”;

- same approach with “Write a list of five dos and five don’ts for trainers as a result of your reflection on today’s sessions”.



IT IS A GOOD IDEA TO VARY THE FORMAT AND THE CONTENT IF YOUR EVENT HAS A NUMBER OF SESSIONS.

ALWAYS ANALYSE THE FEEDBACK AND REPORT ON IT IN THE NEXT SESSION, SUMMARISING WHAT HAS BEEN SAID AND ANY ACTION YOU PLAN TO TAKE.

We have all completed evaluation forms at training courses we have attended, but are we ready to create and manage ones to give to our own participants?

Think about this

EVALUATION ISSUES



There are several practical issues which we must tackle if our evaluation procedures are to be useful.

1. Information is typically more useful to us than judgments from participants. Asking for opinions about training experiences may not be particularly helpful for us. Opinion can fluctuate with emotional state, for example. So we think it is more appropriate to elicit information about what participants experienced, rather than their judgments.
2. Evaluation information is not always reliable. Simply because a group of trainees has told us that they found a particular activity unhelpful is not necessarily the trigger to revise radically a programme. We must beware of a knee-jerk reaction to what participants say. This is difficult when we do not have experience, though – hence the value of team training.
3. Participants use evaluations for their own purposes. Participants can use evaluations for all sorts of “non-evaluatory” reasons, and this is another reason for them not being wholly reliable.
4. End-of-course evaluation is not always very helpful to either trainers or trainees. “Final day evaluation” has become a ritual. Some of us like nothing better than to retire to a quiet place and read the completed evaluation forms, and luxuriate in the warm glow that they provide. This may not be entirely helpful though. How participants feel and what they think important on the last day is significant, but it is transitory. How the training influenced the participants’ work in the longer term is what we really need to know.

There are several ways in which we can avoid some of these pitfalls. The ideas which follow are designed to assist in building a repertoire of effective practices for obtaining feedback on training sessions or workshops/courses.



Worksheet

Opinions about evaluation

What makes for effective post-training evaluation?

Here is an experienced trainer talking about her practice:

“One thing I’ve done several times in my training work is to elicit expectations at the beginning of a workshop, process them into a list which I type up and then give these out at the end of the workshop. Each participant gets a copy and ticks those expectations which have been met for him or her. I sometimes vary this with a Likert scale, where I ask participants to rate an activity or input on a 1-5 scale.”

This trainer is avoiding the problem of empty or biased opinions by asking the participants about their own thoughts and opinions and whether or not they believe that these have been influenced by the training event. This has advantages over producing an evaluation procedure and documentation (“instruments”) before the training event, and in effect meeting predetermined expectations.



EVALUATION IS PART OF THE TRAINING PROCESS

You have probably been doing some formative evaluation as the programme has unfolded, either informally by chatting to participants between sessions, or more formally with mini-questionnaires or short activities at the end of a day’s training. You have been monitoring and evaluating everything that has been happening as the workshop has proceeded and have a sense of what has worked and not worked. As one trainer colleague noted:

“As each day passes I build up a better picture of what we have or have not achieved, whether I have succeeded in getting my points across or not, if the group have enjoyed the work and so on. I need this information in order to adjust my plans and make sure the next step follows somehow naturally on from the last.”

Formative evaluation

FEEDBACK FOR YOU AS TRAINER



We find that feedback is helpful if elicited under the following conditions:

- make sure that you explain clearly why you are asking for feedback, and choose a means (questionnaire, feedback sheet, or other more imaginative ways) that is not very complicated. We can thus help our participants give thoughtful and honest answers;
- participants will usually give more honest feedback if it is anonymous, so do not ask them to sign the feedback;
- it is important not to leave a formative feedback session to the very last minute. Try to plan and allow sufficient time for it so that participants do not feel rushed; giving honest and useful feedback requires us to concentrate and to recall;
- it is not helpful to do evaluations if participants are feeling too tired or are in a hurry to get somewhere else.



Worksheet
Example of mid-course evaluation

Think about this

DIFFERENT PROCEDURES

What are the advantages of each of the following procedures?

- share the objectives of the training event with participants at the beginning, and then provide them with an opportunity to discuss these at the beginning and the end of the event;
- explain why you are eliciting feedback whenever you do;
- allow participants to know your criteria for interpreting their responses; then tell them how you have analysed and used their feedback – your learning or raised awareness;
- provide ample time – at the right time – for feedback;
- elicit feedback at different times of the day, and incorporate changes made on the basis of this information. Do not forget to tell participants about what you have done and why;
- use elicitation devices like “If I (trainer) were to do this activity/session again next week, what do you think I should do differently, if anything?”;
- allow written feedback to be anonymous;
- eliciting feedback from trainees some time after the workshop – three or more months later, for example.

Think about this

PROCESSING FEEDBACK WE RECEIVE

If we ask participants for feedback, it is important – and fair – to let them know how we interpret their opinions. We like to take the time to process the feedback and communicate our analysis to them, either during (in the case of ongoing/mid-term – formative – evaluation, for instance) or after the workshop. It is a good model for our participants, for instance, if we emphasise the learning we have extracted from their feedback, and how we proceed after taking into consideration their feedback.

In the case of longer workshops or courses, we get a clearer picture of what the participants are learning, or how they are progressing if we elicit feedback several times (for example, at the end of each day, or once at the middle of the course and then at the end). This will also allow us to make any changes necessary to the programme in order to better respond to our participants’ needs. Moreover, this type of developmental, ongoing evaluation will also be a model for our trainees, and they – and their students – will benefit from using it in their own classrooms.



Examples of evaluation instruments

Examples of feedback forms (A, B, C, D, E)

Examples of processing feedback (A, B, C, D)

Example of feedback on materials (French version)

Example of approaches to materials evaluation (French version)

Example of approaches to event evaluation (French version)

Example of feedback on a particular activity or session (Evaluating micro-facilitation)

Ideas for self-evaluation

Even experienced trainers are very self-critical at times, perhaps overly so. But that does not mean that we should avoid any self-evaluation, which is helpful for developmental reasons. As with participant evaluation, we need to gather information in order to begin the reflective process. Useful sources of information, as well as participant feedback, include:

- a “teaching log” – a journal in which you record your thoughts about the training at regular intervals during the training event. Reading this material through at “distance” from the event can provide valuable insights. You can even share extracts with participants when you feel more confident;
- recordings – video, audio, photographic – of sessions can provide a wealth of information of, for example, how we use language, our body language and facial expressions, our movements in the training room;
- peer feedback. Work with a partner and ask him/her to observe you and provide you with feedback.

Other after-training activities

Very often we may want to stay in touch with a group, or to assist them in staying in touch. It is always interesting to find out what individuals have done as a result of a training event, and whether the work done has been of longer term value.

The Internet provides several means:

- setting up a team or open blog for individuals to contribute to;
- setting up discussion forums on an institutional website;
- email bulletins to which participants contribute;
- short experience reports which can be collected and circulated as e-newsletters.

Of course, going to visit teachers in schools is hard to beat, but that may not always be possible.

Try this!

Here are two ways of combining follow-up evaluation and self-evaluation over a longer term which we have found productive.

“MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE”

At the end of a training event, ask participants to write a letter to themselves about the training event, describing and evaluating it in as much detail as they want. They write their letters and give them to the trainer who undertakes to post them to self-addressed envelopes in six months' time, or send them to email addresses provided by the participants. Participants agree to respond to the letters by writing, six months later, to the trainer, telling them how they felt when they got the letter and the extent to which they had changed since they wrote the original letter. This part could be done on email.

‘POSTCARD TO A COLLEAGUE’

At the end of the event, pair up the participants and ask them to write a postcard to their partners about the workshop. Use real postcards for this, and make sure they are addressed properly. The trainer collects the cards and undertakes to post them at a date after the workshop to be agreed (three or six months seems to work well). Participants agree to respond by email, to both the sender and the trainers giving their reactions to the messages on the cards.

Think about this



FEEDBACK FOR DEVELOPMENT

We develop our capacities and skills as trainers through our experience above all. By eliciting regular feedback from participants, and by self-evaluation and reflection, we generate valuable information on what we do and how we come across to trainees which enables us to improve.

A final reminder from a trainer on evaluation:

“Elicit feedback on specific aspects of training practice; this is more helpful than eliciting judgments or opinions from trainees. We must learn not to be over-reliant on our participants’ good feedback if we are to be genuinely self-critical.”

A final word

We hope you find the kit useful as you embark on your teacher training journey. We trust that the basic advice in the booklet and the collection of resources and ideas on the CD-Rom are helpful, and that there is something for everyone here. We would appreciate your feedback when you have some for us. It will help us develop our practice as educators and also as producers of material to support learning.

The TrainEd Team

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[Thematic bibliography](#)

[References for the CD-Rom materials](#)

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The TrainEd Team

Mercedes Bernaus is a teacher in language education at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (Spain). She has experience in pre-service and in-service teacher training. Her research is mainly focused on attitudes, motivation and second/foreign language learning in multilingual settings. She has been involved in several European projects dealing with plurilingualism and pluriculturalism, and she co-ordinated LEA (Language Educator Awareness), one of the ECML's second medium-term projects.

Frank Heyworth is special adviser to EAQUALS (the European Association of Quality Language Services). He has participated in numerous projects of the ECML with work on teacher training, quality assurance, project management and innovation. He is a programme consultant to the second medium-term programme. He has also been involved in the development and application of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* and is working at present on the development of competence descriptors in other areas, such as citizenship.

Gabriela S. Matei is a trainer of trainers, teacher educator and consultant, and manages her own training company, EduPlus Consulting, in Timisoara, Romania. She is also an EAQUALS inspector. Her research and professional interests lie in teacher education, teacher research and intercultural communicative competence. Previously, she worked for many years in tertiary education, focusing on in-service and pre-service teacher training for modern language teachers. She has been involved as a project team member in several other teacher education projects of the ECML.

Uwe Pohl is senior lecturer at the Department of English Language Pedagogy (DELP) of Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest where he is currently head of department. His fields of interest are intercultural communication, ELT methodology and training English language teachers.

Tony Wright is Reader in Language Education at The College of St Mark and St John (Marjon), Plymouth, UK. He has many years' international experience of trainer training, and currently leads postgraduate taught and research programmes for language teacher educators at Marjon. He is also a consultant on several international language teacher training initiatives and is actively involved in publishing and research on professional development.

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First steps in teacher training: a practical guide

“The TrainEd Kit”

Gabriela S. Matei, Mercedes Bernaus, Frank Heyworth, Uwe Pohl, Tony Wright

This book and CD-Rom have been produced as a practical guide for those who are beginners in the field of teacher education – though experienced teacher trainers may find it interesting and useful, too.

The book covers four main aspects of a teacher trainer's work:

- the professional identity and the roles and tasks of the trainer;
- preparing for training events (including analysis of training needs);
- running training courses (with emphasis on facilitation and managing discussions);
- assessment and evaluation of training.

The CD-Rom which accompanies the book is a very practical complement with over 60 worksheets which can be used as activities in training courses. In addition there are PowerPoint presentations which can be used and adapted by the teacher trainer, together with background articles and bibliographies.

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<http://www.coe.int>

ISBN

978-92-871-6139-0



9 789287 161390

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Council of Europe Publishing

€19/US\$29