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# METHODS AND GOOD PRACTICES for trainers of low skilled adults HANDBOOK



EUpTrain Project

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AKMI  
THE ALLIANCE OF KNOWLEDGE  
INNOVATION AND RESEARCH

aproximar

ДАЯНА-X

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## Introduction:

Working with low-skilled adults poses many challenges for instructors. Often there are people with different backgrounds and experiences in the courses, which requires a constant balancing act: both meeting the different needs and performance levels of individuals (e.g. due to low language skills) and creating a good and harmonious learning environment. Distance learning has made this even more difficult.

This manual is intended to provide trainers with suggestions and assistance for working with low-skilled adults in the following three areas:

- Training Design, Facilitation, and Presentation.
- Innovative learning methods and digital learning
- Group dynamics and conflict management.

Before the project began, a survey of 85 trainers identified the challenges that many trainers face: how to improve communication with trainees, especially when language skills are low; what to do when trainees have low digital skills; how to increase trainees' motivation and engagement; how to bridge language barriers and cultural differences in the group; how to act when conflicts arise.

Since national education and training systems vary across Europe, low-skilled adults are classified using EQF levels 1 and 2 in order to have a common reference framework. From a variety of ideas, 16 best practices have made it into this handbook - concrete activities for courses with ideas on how they can also be used in e-learning. To fill the general method box, 8 methods are presented. There is a chapter on the trainers' attitude and ethics, as they are essential for the perception of the situation and the relationship with the trainees.

The manual was developed as part of the Erasmus+ funded project EUpTrain, which ran from October 2020 to March 2022 with the 8 partner organizations: ÖJAB, ipcenter, CEIPES, Aproximar, Wifi Hungaria, DAYANA, CFF and AKMI. A diverse team from Austria, Italy, Portugal, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria and Greece was involved in the preparation of the manual.



## General Principles & Ethics

According to various scholars and educators (i.e. Karl Rogers), the role of the trainer is not only to transmit knowledge to his/her learners. For example, Rogers believes that all human beings have a natural talent to learn and a willingness for behavioural change. Thus, the trainer should not act as a “knowledge transmitter”, rather as a “facilitator” of the whole learning procedure. Learning is about knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and emotions. In other words, it is a combination of cognitive and emotional growth.

All type of learners, **including** low-skilled adults, will be able to learn more efficiently, when the trainers respect the following points:

- They create a positive atmosphere and energy in the classroom;

- They explain thoroughly the learning objectives and the learning outcomes to their learners;

- They organize the learning procedures carefully;

- They provide “resources” and “materials” to be used by the learners in order to discover the “new knowledge” or “behaviour”;

- They share their thoughts and emotions with their students and do not hesitate to express their feelings no matter whether they are in a good or a bad mood;

- They treat their learners as equals, ask for their opinions, and appreciate their feedback and evaluation in order to create a common ground of communication and development;

- They are not judgmental towards their learners or put them under pressure.

As a trainer in multi-dimensional learning environments, you should take into consideration “the four pillars of education” as identified by the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-First Century .



### LEARNING TO BE

Be able to act with ever greater autonomy, judgement and personal responsibility

### LEARNING TO KNOW

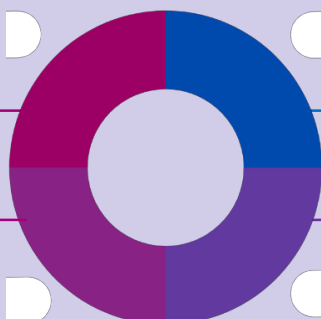
Combine sufficiently broad general knowledge with the opportunity to work in-depth on a small number of projects

### LEARNING TO DO

Ability to communicate effectively with others, aptitude toward team work, social skills in building meaningful interpersonal relations, adaptability to change in the world of work and in social life.

### LEARNING TO LIVE TOGETHER

Develop an understanding of other people and an appreciation of interdependence, carry out joint projects, learn to manage conflicts, respect values pluralism and cultural diversity



## Basic ethical issues when working with low skilled adults

Adult learners come to the learning programmes from different backgrounds, and their needs and motivation must be taken into consideration during the learning programme design and implementation. Share your personal experiences with them. It may help you understand your learners better and build bridges of communication and mutual trust;

It is important to observe your learners (i.e. if they show any symptoms of “bad psychology” or home issues);

Ensure equity in the service rendered to the learners;

Consider the rights and responsibilities of all parties involved;

Examine if outcomes are positive or harmful, and correctly maximize the former and minimize the latter;

Care for the learners at their disposal.

## Practical Tips for the trainers

Here are some practical tips for trainers/tutors in order to apply the above-mentioned adult learning principles within their course/class/training programme:

Incorporate learners' histories, traditions, value systems and their further cultural aspirations;

Help them embrace their cultural heritage, their cultural identity, language and values;

Make use of local resources and ideas;

Organize study visits and field trips;

Create links with the community they live in;

Adapt your teaching material to their learning needs and the needs of the market they want to access;

Promote active participation in the learning process.





## Subject Area. Training design, moderation and presentation

### Challenge. Difficult communication with trainees

#### Talking Pictures

**Training settings**  
(individual/group, size of the group, language)  
Group, 10-15 Participants, English/German

**Time / Materials / How many participants / online vs f2f**

**Time:** 30 min.

**Materials:** pictures (with a word written on the back),  
printed words in the target language e.g. in English,  
tools for writing

**How many participants:** 10-15

**Possible both online and f2f**



#### Challenge concerned

Difficult Communication within a multi-lingual and multicultural group

#### Description of the situation

When learning a new language, it is important to acknowledge the languages the participants already speak.

To do so, a platform should be given to participants to share certain words/sentences in their language and link them to a picture. Therefore, this exercise is suggested in order to convey vocabulary through pictures and link the words to daily situations that the participants already know.

The idea of this exercise is to create a so-called 'word-salad' and in turn, through pictures (visualisation) to integrate the vocabulary in a process which will be easily remembered.

#### Steps of implementation

**Step 1:** Choose the needed pictures for the 'word-salad' (e.g. picture of a cutting board, a salad bowl, salad etc.) and print them

**Step 2:** On the back of the picture write the word corresponding to the image, in the language that is supposed to be learned

**Step 3:** Show the picture to the audience, starting from the first one, and ask them how it is called in their own language, write it down and share it with the class.

**Step 4:** Then ask them to say it in the language taught.

**Step 5:** Show the solution

**Step 6:** Move to the next image, and follow Steps 1-5 until all images are shown.

**Step 7:** Create a story, sentence out of the words shown e.g. "To make a salad we start with a cutting board ..."

#### Expected outcomes

Easier to understand a language through storytelling and visualisation

More successful to link the vocabulary

#### Variations (specially for online activities)

The pictures will be shown in PowerPoint and each participant can be called on by the trainer to go through the process.

The class will then be divided in Rooms (Zoom), continuing with the activity while the trainer moves from Room to Room.

#### Additional resources

<https://create.vista.com/create/animation-maker/>

<https://picteller.com/>

## Challenge. Cultural differences among the group

### Cultural flower

#### Training settings

(individual/group, size of the group, language)

Heterogeneous classes in general and culturally heterogeneous ones in particular

#### Time / Materials / How many participants / online vs f2f

**Duration:** 45 min

**Material:** One page or copy per person, pencils

Individual and group work

Possible with small and bigger groups

Possible online (using [www.miro.com](http://www.miro.com) or <https://jamboard.google.com/>)

#### Challenge concerned

Especially in culturally heterogeneous classes, the pupils become aware of their culturally unifying elements and their individual cultural imprints by means of this exercise. This is an important prerequisite for intercultural competence and understanding of cultural differences.

#### Description of the situation

Classes – especially with low-skilled adults – are often mixed and the trainees have various backgrounds. This may cause a lack of mutual understanding, respect and interpersonal conflicts at the end.

#### Steps of implementation

##### Introduction (5 min)

First, the trainer explains the activity by creating his/her own cultural flower as an example for the students.

A flower with leaves can be drawn individually or a copy can be distributed. The flower represents the individual; the leaves are filled with individual cultural aspects or experiences.

These can be the following aspects (and more):

- My first language
- Rituals I grew up with
- Food that was cooked in my family
- Important people who have shaped me
- Events and experiences that have shaped me
- Intercultural encounters with people from other cultures that have shaped me
- International experience and stays in other countries and cultures
- Religion, gender, and more....

##### Individual working time (10 min)

Then each trainee creates her/his own personal cultural flower, using words or drawing.

##### Presentation (20 min)

Everyone presents his/her own cultural flower in as much detail as he/she wishes. They choose and share what is important to them. Each result is individual, personal and unique.

It is important that each presentation is met with interest, respect and acceptance. The trainer can point this out in advance. If there are condescending comments, those should be firmly dealt with.



### Reflection (10 min)

The reflection can take different directions. Similarities and differences among trainees can be found. Individuals can ask questions of interest to each other to foster mutual interest and understanding.

Different cultural concepts can also be compared with the previously presented content.

Guiding questions can be:

- Two people who come from the same country have had completely different experiences. Can one then speak of a uniform culture?
- What components make up culture?
- Do we move in ONE culture or in many parallel ones? (e.g. the family, a club, a class culture, etc.).

### Expected outcomes

- Improvement of intercultural competences
- reflection on different cultural levels and individual imprints
- increased sensitivity for cultural aspects
- improvement of the group atmosphere
- reflection on the concept(s) of cultural identity
- better mutual acquaintance

### Variations (specially for online activities)

The simplest version is just with a simple flower, with blank flower petals.

To structure it more, the flower petals can be labelled in advance with reflection ideas.

### Additional resources

**GER:** <https://www.ofaj.org/media/ablauf-und-unterrichtsmaterial-fur-lehrerinnen-und-lehrer.pdf>

**ENG:** [http://www.ifm-sei.org/files/up/membershipcampaign\\_powerprivilege.pdf](http://www.ifm-sei.org/files/up/membershipcampaign_powerprivilege.pdf)



# Behind Every Name

## Training settings

(individual/group, size of the group, language)

Any age group or skill group. Heterogeneous groups, particularly multicultural groups

## Time / Materials / How many participants / online vs f2f

-10-15 minutes

-For some variations, a ball could be used, a whiteboard or a big piece of paper, and pens

-There is no maximum number of participants, but a minimum of about 4 would be necessary to generate an interesting conversation

-Both online and F2F

## Challenge concerned

Cultural differences in the group (a lack of empathy, interest, respect, and awareness of other cultures.)

## Description of the situation

At the beginning of the training, in case a potential issue concerning cultural differences is identified, the facilitator could choose this activity as an ice-breaker / getting- to- know-each-other activity. It can serve as a preventative measure against the development of issues due to cultural differences.

## Steps of implementation

-Participants take turns (with or without a ball to choose a participant).

They can be sitting or standing.

-When it is their turn, they should answer several questions:

What is your name?

Are you named that for a particular reason? If so, who or for what reason?

Do you like or dislike your name?

Explain why or say what you'd like to be called.

Where were you born?

What is important to you about your heritage?

What one thing would people be surprised to know about you?

What are you proud of?

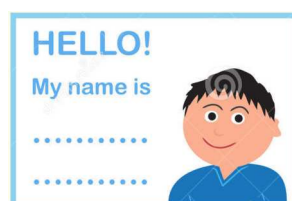
-These questions should be listed somewhere for everyone to keep in mind

-After each participant has had their turn, an open debriefing session should be conducted, with the following questions:

What did you discover about the others in the group?

Did you discover anything you have in common with the others that you hadn't realised before?

How does your heritage (family, cultural etc.) enrich your life?



### Expected outcomes

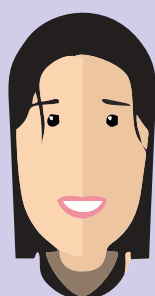
- Starting a conversation about culture in a respectful way
- Awareness of other cultures and their importance to other trainees
- Empathy and understanding of other cultures and some of the meanings in them.
- Knowing other participants better, developing trust and connection between them

### Variations (specially for online activities)

- Option 1) small groups – groups of 4-6 do the activity
- Option 1.1) small groups then feedback to the large group, participants tell the large groups about the names of other members of their small group, write names on the whiteboard/paper
- Option 2) one large group – use the ball to select participants, write names on the whiteboard/paper

### Additional resources

<https://www.ambitia.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/2%20Intercultural%20Trainig%20Exercise%20Pack.pdf>



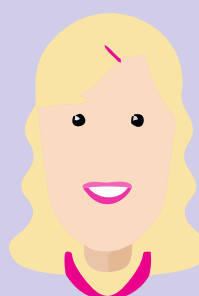
Mila



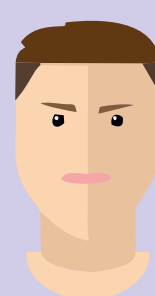
Jonah



Benedict



Reese



Channing

## Subject Area. Innovative learning methods and digital learning Challenge. Low literacy level

### Connection to known objects or processes

#### Training settings

(individual/group, size of the group, language)

Adults with too few language skills in the teaching language

Adults who enter a specific training/coaching program but do not yet possess the needed literacy skills

#### Time / Materials / How many participants / online vs f2f

**Time:** Depending on the kind of topic that is presented and the creativity process of the trainer

**Materials:** None

**How many participants:** 10-15

**Both online and f2f:** It is possible to conduct both ways provided that participants have access to the necessary technology.

#### Challenge concerned

Low literacy levels (in the teaching language)

#### Description of the situation

When teaching a topic, it may be easier to explain content using a metaphor, especially when conveying (complex or abstract) relationships, processes, and interrelationships, such as how a computer works. Depending on the topic of choice and learning content, a comparison with everyday situations of the participants can be used, which helps them to relate and learn the information.

#### Steps of implementation

Preparation

- Selection of a suitable metaphor/everyday situation. It is important here to make a selection that can count as "common knowledge". Specific knowledge (e.g. about sports, finance or similar) is not useful, because it cannot be understood by everyone.

- Visualization of the situation/context with e.g. pictures, objects or actions

- In general, pay attention to the complexity of the comparison: it should be as simple as possible, but complex enough to meet their own needs.

**Step 1.** Create a common knowledge base by, for example, breaking down the metaphor/context into steps and images to discuss with the group so that everyone has the same understanding of the context or metaphor. Break down the process into steps.

**Step 2.** Decide on a metaphor into which the process can be integrated, e.g., the connection between a CPU, working memory, and data processing can be represented in the form of an everyday story about cooking

**Step 3.** Integrate the story into an everyday scenario with objects that everyone uses, for example: The working memory is represented by a refrigerator where you keep things like information and open it when you need to get something like data out.

The CPU is represented by a cutting board where all the data is presented in front of you.

The processing of data is the knife, a tool that you use to process certain data

And when you are done, you put everything back into the refrigerator (RAM)

#### Expected outcomes

- Better visualization of content, which in turn leads to better retention of information
- Deeper understanding of a process
- Increased motivation

#### Variations (specially for online activities)

Variations are according to the context and topic.

#### Additional resources

<https://www.adultliteracyleague.org/resources/>

## Challenge. Language barriers within the group

### Illustrated dictionary

#### Training settings

(individual/group, size of the group, language)

Any group with difficulties with the language of instruction

#### Time / Materials / How many participants / online vs f2f

- This activity requires very little time but should be consistently updated throughout the training.
- Paper/ a notebook
- Pens and/or pencils
- No minimum or maximum number of participants
- Can be online or F2F

#### Challenge concerned

Language barriers/difficulties

#### Description of the situation

Groups in which participants have difficulty with the language of instruction may face impediments, particularly with the vocabulary of the training content.

#### Steps of implementation

This activity can be done individually, in small groups, or as a whole class.

- When a certain difficulty regarding words is identified, it should be added to a collection of new vocabulary, either using paper, or a blank notebook.
- Each new word should be accompanied by an illustration, done by the participant(s), which will provide visual stimulus and help with the process of remembering.
- An option is to have participants also study the root of the parts of the word, and to add them to the definition.
- The illustrated dictionary should be re-visited to consolidate understanding and updated with new vocabulary whenever appropriate.

#### Expected outcomes

- Improved language ability in the concerned fields of the training as well as other areas, including the language in general.
- Teamwork and empathy between members of the group is among the envisioned outcomes to be developed.

#### Variations (specially for online activities)

To do this activity online, a document version of the illustrated dictionary should be made. Participants should have to choose whether to find pictures online and to use them, or to use a digital drawing tool to make the pictures themselves.

#### Additional resources

A ready-made online and interactive illustrated dictionary can be found here:  
<https://www.languageguide.org/>



## Challenge. Low level of digital skills

### Content adaptation



#### Training settings

(individual/group, size of the group, language)

Adults without access to the digital world, or without knowledge of certain digital tools

#### Time / Materials / How many participants / online vs f2f

**Time:** n/a

**Materials:** palpable materials, smart phone, tablet

**How many participants:** 10-15

**Both online and f2f**

#### Challenge concerned

Low digital skills level

#### Description of the situation

In the present, written assignments can usually be uploaded to a shared platform or downloaded for them to be corrected. Some groups are advanced enough to use Google Drive and collaborate on such a document. However, some time ago, the situation was undoubtedly different. Many students had technical disadvantages (missing hardware or software, and sometimes both) thus trainers had to find different approaches.

**For example:** an assignment would be photographed, and a photo shared between a trainer and the participant via MMS.

In some extreme cases, participants would use the SMS/MMS system to write assignments and thus send them to a trainer. The trainer would send the reviewed version back with few hints about certain points of focus that should be addressed in the future.

In order to make the process more efficient and make everyone more comfortable with the digital world, a safe space will be created in order for the participants and the trainer to clarify and express the needs of both parties and to use trial & error for the digital solution.

#### Steps of implementation

**Step 1.** Choose tools that also have apps suitable for smartphones (play-store and apple store) such as Whiteboard, Miro, Zoom, Teams etc.

**Step 2.** Present to the class the foreseen digital tools and processes that will be implemented throughout the course to deliver the content and ask if participants have used those tools before and if they are comfortable using them

**Step 3.** If not, a quick run-through of how the tools work should be carried out (the participants should also do a run-through)

**Step 4.** Leave room for trial & error and emphasise on the need for everyone to be able to use the provided tools

**Step 5.** If additional information is required, provide a step-by-step guide of the most used platform on paper, per text or email

#### Expected outcomes

Increased digital readiness of the participants

Increased productivity

Reduced frustration for the trainer and in turn for the participants

Fewer time-consuming activities such as manually grading papers

#### Variations (specially for online activities)

If the lessons take place online, extra room can be given to explanations in Rooms.

#### Additional resources

<https://academy.itu.int/itu-d/projects-activities/research-publications/digital-skills-toolkit>

## Subject Area. Group dynamics and conflict management

### Challenge. Low level of involvement and motivation

#### Country rules at group work

##### Training settings

##### (individual/group, size of the group, language)

This is a role-play exercise that helps to present the rules of a youth exchange in an enjoyable way, while triggering creativity and driving group dynamics and interaction during the first day. Suitable for people aged over 17.

##### Time / Materials / How many participants / online vs f2f

-45 mins

-Cards with roles and instructions

##### Challenge concerned

Share power and control - give agency to the participants /self-made rules

##### Description of the situation

'Persona' is a very common tool used in design thinking process. It enables to clarify for whom project is planned. And defines the group common traits and characteristics.

##### Steps of implementation

The participants are divided into groups of 5-7 people and are given cards with roles and instruction.

##### 1) Criminal

-You have to try and create the easiest rules. Your motto: "more party, less work". Let the craziest ideas flow.

##### 2) Priest

- You are the conscience of the group, create opposites from the criminal's ideas for the healthiest and nicest rules. Your motto: "have a good time, but mind others and things around". Let the most discipline-oriented and ethical ideas flow.

##### 3) Mayor

-You are the keeper of democracy, listen to the people. Your motto: "People know best". Lead the voting process and write down the rules.

##### 4) Usual citizen

-You listen to the criminal and the priest. Change their rule to a more balanced rule and vote whether it is necessary or not. Your motto: "We need a balanced life of work and fun"

##### 5) Usual citizen

-You listen to the criminal and the priest. Change their rule to a more balanced rule and vote whether it is necessary or not. Your motto: "We need a balanced life of work and fun"

##### 6) Usual citizen

-You listen to the criminal and the priest. Change their rule to a more balanced rule and vote whether it is necessary or not. Your motto: "We need a balanced life of work and fun"





## 7) Usual citizen

You listen to the criminal and the priest. Change their rule to a more balanced rule and vote whether it is necessary or not. Your motto: "We need a balanced life of work and fun"

Once the roles are distributed in the groups, the facilitator announces the story. "Your group is living together in a tiny city, which resembles a group from this Training. The city has a diverse public living together. The city consists of average citizens, a priest, who is working for your good, a criminal who is working for your fun and a wise mayor who listens to his/her citizens. Your task is to come up with city rules, while playing the assigned roles. You have 20 minutes to create 10 rules for your life during this Training"

During the 20 minutes participants discuss the rules. **The process looks like this:**

The criminal suggests a lazy, laid-back and fun rule (For example: We can party with no time limits).

The priest suggests that this rule is barbaric and changes it (For example: We need to think straight in the morning, let's make bedtime 10 p.m.).

The mayor gives the word to the citizens

The citizens create a balanced rule (For example: No music after 11 p.m., if you stay later, then only in the area away from the rooms)

The mayor asks them to vote for or against this rule. If this rule is accepted, the mayor writes it down.

After 20 minutes of discussion, each group has a set of 10 rules. The facilitator introduces himself/herself as president and suggests putting the country's law together and uniting the cities. He/She starts asking the cities to announce their rules and writes them down under discussion if necessary.

### Expected outcomes

- To set the rules of the group
- To get to know each other
- To trigger creative thinking
- To introduce role-play as a tool to the participants

### Variations (specially for online activities)

Online: we can use a ready-made padlet for them to fill in or a jamboard

### Additional resources

- [www.padelt.com](http://www.padelt.com)
- [www.jamboard.com](http://www.jamboard.com)



# Trusting Game

## Training settings

### (individual/group, size of the group, language)

This is an activity that can be delivered with any group of trainees, with no specific aspects.

It is a useful activity to be implemented in a teaching, training or learning activity, especially with vulnerable groups who may not feel motivated, for several reasons, such as low socio-economic level, lack of support, and many more. It is important to consider that this activity should not be implemented in the first session, since participants may not know each other and can feel discomfort in participating in the activity. It is advisable to use it, at least, in the second session or as an energizer after a break and after participants know each other better.

Also, it is an activity that can be used if the trainer/facilitator feels that the group is not getting involved in the activities, during the training action. It can be applied at the beginning of a session, as an energizing activity.

## Time / Materials / How many participants / online vs f2f

**Time:** 20 minutes to implement + 5/10min discussion

**Participants:** as many as necessary. Participants will be divided in pairs.

### Material:

Blindfolds (1 per pair)

Something to mark the starting point and the winning post

Tables / chairs to act as obstacles

This activity should be implemented in face-to-face events



## Challenge concerned

Low level of involvement, motivation, and initiative of the trainees

## Description of the situation

Developed motivational exercises to be conducted in class, possibly also team-building exercises to create a bond between the participants. Team building is an important aspect since it raises motivation and fosters the involvement and communication of the group.

## Steps of implementation

**Step 1:** The facilitator should ask participants to form pairs and explain that each pair should have a volunteer.

**Step 2:** The facilitator should go out of the training room with the volunteers and explain that the other participants will stay blindfolded.

**Step 3:** The facilitator should mark the starting point and the winning post and give 1 blindfold to each pair, and the volunteers are responsible to guide the blindfolded participants from the starting point to the winning post.

**Step 4:** After participants are blindfolded, the facilitator can use chairs and/or tables as obstacles.

**Step 5:** The facilitator starts the activity and each pair should move from the starting point to the winning post. The volunteer guides the blindfolded participant and the pair that comes first to the winning post, wins.

**Step 6:** The facilitator should promote a discussion on the importance of motivation and team building in groups

## Expected outcomes

With this exercise, it is expected that trainees/participants would increase their confidence in the other members of the group.

With higher levels of confidence, the participants' motivation and team-building spirit will increase

## Variations

The facilitator can define shorter courses and change the pairs if there is enough time. In this way, participants can have the opportunity to play the role of both volunteers and blindfolded participants. Also, the facilitator can define other materials to act as obstacles

## Additional Resources

<https://www.games4youthgroups.com/trust-games.html>

# Individual learning plan

## Training settings

(individual/group, size of the group, language)

It is suitable for every learning setting – especially with long-term goals.

## Time / Materials / How many participants / online vs f2f

- Individual work of the learner with trainer support (can also be done parallel in a bigger group)
- **Duration:** min 30 minutes
- **Material:** 1 poster per trainee, pens, post-it notes, Optional: images for illustration
- Online possible with Miro

## Challenge concerned

- Raises individual motivation and accountability

## Description of the situation

This activity is specifically designed to be done at the beginning of training, as this is when its greatest effect can be achieved.

Motivation is the key aim in terms of individual goals. Being aware of those as a trainer helps to motivate the trainees and keep them on track. Additionally, a visualization and verbalization of these goals will raise the commitment and accountability for the training itself.

The trainee himself/herself will have a long-term benefit and supposedly large goal will be portioned in smaller reachable milestones.

## Steps of implementation

### Introduction (5 minutes)

The trainer explains the activity and provides the necessary material.

The guiding questions can be:

- What do you want to learn here?
- How can you reach it?
- Where do you want to be halfway through the course?
- What do you want to achieve with the diploma you get here?
- How can the trainer support your learning success?

### Individual working time (15 min)

Each trainee answers the guiding questions, reflects about their own goals and motivation, and writes them down or visualizes them.

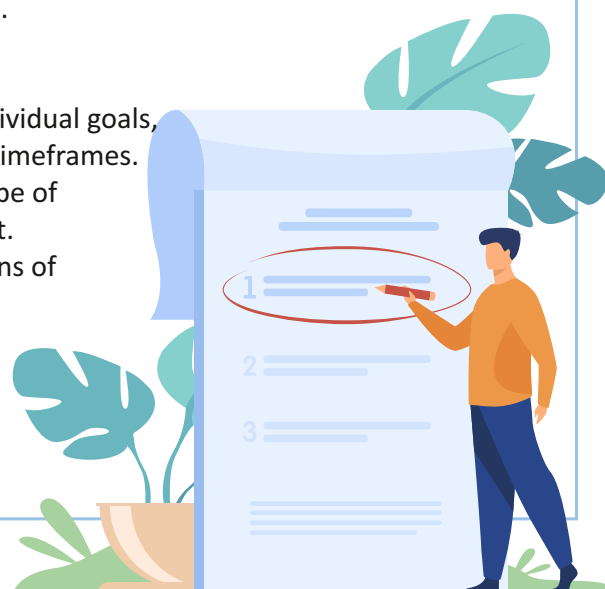
### Definition of goals, milestones and deadlines (20 min)

This requires a one-on-one setting to speak about the individual goals, divide them in achievable intermediate goals and define timeframes.

Even if not all of the goals can be achieved within the scope of the learning opportunity, they should be met with respect.

Here it is also important to clarify the trainer's expectations of the trainee and to ask about the trainee's needs.

Visualizing individual learning plans in the classroom can help keep motivation high. This can be done with the elaborated posters, or even a personal object that should embody the individual goals - everything is possible.



### Expected outcomes

- More motivation and accountability for the learning objectives
- Improvement of the relationship between trainer and trainee
- A better picture of the expectations of the trainees
- Increased self-confidence through realistic and tangible goals
- Empowerment of the trainees

### Variations (specially for online activities)

#### **Vision board**

A vision board is an approach where one first works purely intuitively and collects images on a topic that appeal to a person. These are then clustered, and patterns are sought. This can help one to define wishes more clearly.

Online tools, like Pinterest, are based on this idea. Alternatives are Google Picture.

Offline: as an idea for people with lower language skills or literacy

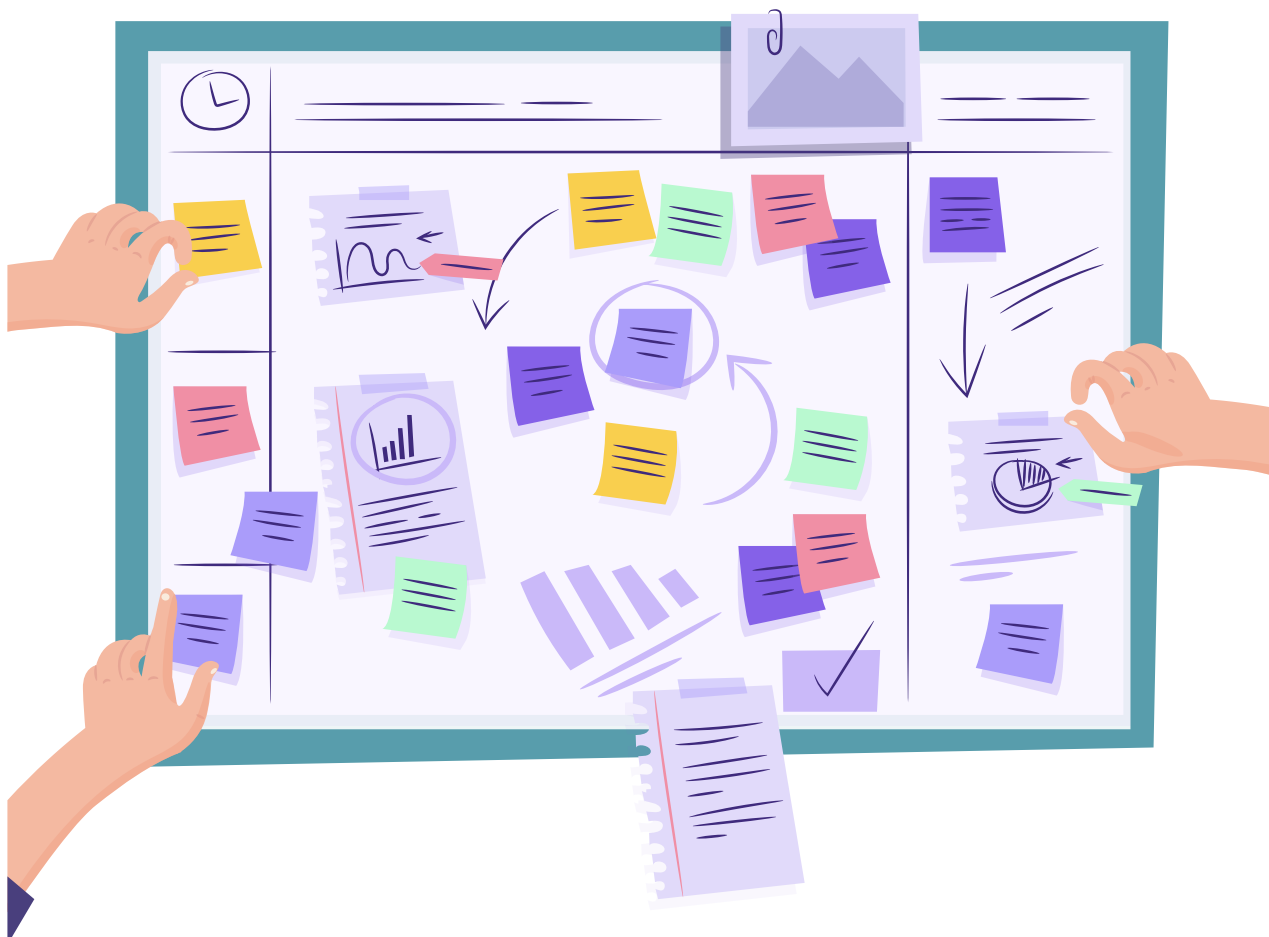
People can collect pictures and make a collage.

#### **Questionnaire**

With a pre-made questionnaire, the activity can be sped up and can be done more easily with large groups. Nevertheless, it is important that the trainer takes some time for each trainee individually to clarify expectations, agree on realistic goals and also familiarize themselves with the individual situation.

### Additional resources

<https://www.britishcouncil.org/voices-magazine/two-tools-help-you-set-learning-goals>



## Clarifying individual learning objectives

### Training settings

(individual/group, size of the group, language)

This activity should be done especially at the beginning of the training, as this is when the greatest effect is achieved.

### Time / Materials / How many participants / online vs f2f

- **Duration:** min 45 minutes
- paper, markers, pencils, colour papers, newspapers, glue, cutter, scissors
- **Online:** we can use a ready-made padlet for them to fill in ([www.padelt.com](http://www.padelt.com)) or a jamboard ([www.jamboard.com](http://www.jamboard.com))

### Challenge concerned

- Cultural differences among the group
- Share power and control - give agency to the participants /self-made rules

### Description of the situation

Individual goals are motivating. Knowing these as a trainer helps motivate the trainees and keep them on track. Additionally, a visualization and verbalization of these goals will increase the commitment and accountability for the training itself.

The trainee himself/herself will contribute to a long-lasting benefit and the perception of vast goals will be divided in smaller reachable milestones.

### Steps of implementation

**Part 1 (30 min)** Each participant gets a paper. Firstly, the participants will have time to think about their past life. Which were the key moments? Who was helping/supporting/inspiring them? What did they achieve? What would they like to achieve next? What were the challenges? Each participant will try to answer these questions drawing their life as a river. They are allowed to use everything they want and to be as creative and expressive as they wish or can.

**Part 2 (15 min)** Participants will come back to the plenary and, on a voluntary base; some of them will present their rivers and their milestones in their life.

To raise awareness about knowledge, competencies and skills already acquired and the ones needed for the future.

To realize the group key points of learning and development.

It can also be implemented in small groups (3pax) to increase the level of understanding among the participants.



### Expected outcomes

- More motivation and accountability for the learning objectives
- improvement of the relationship between the trainer and the trainees
- a better picture of the expectations of the trainees
- Increased self-confidence through realistic and tangible goals
- Empowerment of the trainees

### Variations (specially for online activities)

#### Vision board

A vision board is an approach where one first works purely intuitively and collects images on a topic that appeal to a person. These are then clustered, and patterns are sought. This can help one define their wishes more clearly.

Online tools, like Pinterest, are centred around this idea. A suitable alternative is Google Picture.

Offline: as an idea for people with few language skills or literacy

People can collect pictures and make a collage.

Questionnaire

With a pre-made questionnaire, the activity can be sped up and can be done more easily with large groups. Nevertheless, it is important that the trainer takes some time for each trainee individually to clarify expectations, agree on realistic goals and familiarize themselves with the individual situation.

### Additional resources

<https://eclearn.emmanuel.edu/courses/1285497/pages/how-to-write-measurable-learning-objectives/>

## Self-made rules

### Training settings

(individual/group, size of the group, language)

At times creating a group persona at the beginning of the training helps incorporate the common-ground values of the group. Persistent reminding may help bring the trainees to their core values. This activity should be done especially at the beginning of training, as this is when the greatest effect is achieved.

### Time / Materials / How many participants / online vs f2f

-45 mins

-paper, pens, flipchart, markers, persona form



### Challenge concerned

Share power and control - give agency to the participants /self-made rules

### Description of the situation

'Persona' is a very common tool used to design the thinking process. It enables us to clarify who the project is planned for. It also defines the group common traits and characteristics.

### Steps of implementation

#### Part 1 (30 min)

1. Give the participants an explanation on what is the reason to use 'persona' as a tool. Highlight that 'participants' is a general term that they are a diversified group, and the aim is perceive all of them as one.
    - b) Participants have very diversified needs and problems
  2. Ask participants to recall their memory about themselves:
    - a) A few words about: how old exactly they are, what's their family situation, where they go to school/work, where they live;
    - b) Important issues: what's their values, what they want to do in the future, what they are passionate about
    - c) Communication: how they communicate, which communication tools work for them
    - d) Does not like: what makes them angry, annoys them, and makes them sad. Treat the above description just as an inspiration. You can ask very specific questions in any field, depending on the peculiarity of the training/problem you work on.
  3. Discuss with the group if they had any problems while completing the form, if they were aware of their needs and problems.
  4. Draw a group persona form on the flipchart
  5. Look together at all forms and discuss if there are any values and problems which are more common than others, note them on the common persona
  5. Discuss the outcome, how many of the notes are more common
  6. Discuss what you gained thanks to thinking about people you work with and you as particular persons not a target group
- To make the activity more dynamic you can provide materials to make collages instead of write the answers for the questions in the form

### Expected outcomes

- More motivation and accountability for the learning objectives
- Improvement of the relationship between the trainer and the trainees
- A better picture of the expectations of the trainees
- Increased self-confidence through realistic and tangible goals
- Empowerment of the trainees

### Variations (specially for online activities)

Online: we can use a ready-made padlet for them to fill in or a jamboard.

### Additional resources

[www.padelt.com](http://www.padelt.com)  
[www.jamboard.com](http://www.jamboard.com)



## Challenge. Weak discipline in class

### Managing the focus

#### Training settings

(individual/group, size of the group, language)

- Job seekers and currently employed people
- Specifically, the training was developed for people targeting executive job positions in local metal processing factories, but it
- Can be applied to professionals that aim/need to improve their digital skills



#### Time / Materials / How many participants / online vs f2f

**Time:** approximately 30/40 minutes (it will depend on the discussion and group behaviour)

**Material:** no specific material required (in the case of this example, the trainer used the personal smartphone)

**How many participants:** 12 (it can be as many participants as necessary)

**Both online and f2f**

#### Challenge concerned

Weak discipline in class (Reflection on own performance with activity)

#### Description of the situation

This example originated from a training of a group composed by an employer organization in Sliven Region where the present vocational and educational centre had the role of a subcontractor regarding core learning activities. The training has been organized under the Bulgarian HRD Operational Programme.

The training is within the framework of the pre-qualification of job seekers and currently employed people. The course is oriented towards refreshing and upgrading the digital skills of people targeting executive job positions in the local metal processing factories. At such places, employees are supposed to apply these digital skills in various operations with the equipment.

The profession of machine technician - adjuster of CNC machines and systems (digital program control) - is generally related to the application of the basic principles of programming and tuning of metal-cutting and metal-working machines. Exercising the profession requires a rational use of different commands, knowledge of the basic principles in the preparation of the control program, optimization of control programs for parts of medium complexity for the main groups of metal-cutting and metal-working machines, as well as performing various types of machine settings and technological equipment. Throughout this occupation, the employee performs daily activities related to setting programs for CNC machines (milling machines, lathes, grinders, drills, etc.) from drawings and data that provide a product according to the relevant specification. The profession also requires skills for reading diagrams and drawings, as well as, if necessary, making corrections for deviations from the requirements of the drawing. The profession is directly related to the modernization and optimization of the production process and supports the improvement of the organization of work in the enterprise. The adjuster of CNC machines and systems is responsible for the implementation of the production plans and follows the strategy for continuous development of the production.

The training is part of a series of approved trainings by the Employment Agency under a program for development of key competencies and in particular under key competency 4 - Digital Competence.

Digital competence includes computer literacy and information technology knowledge. The training topics cover Basic computer competency, Computer literacy and Information Technology, Computer literacy and Information Technology - hardware and software for personal computers, Computer literacy and Information Technology - working with basic word processing programs.

After a brief introduction of the training topics of the course, the expected learning objectives and a short presentation of the trainer and the trainees, the trainer proceeded to the first topic according to the course program. A few minutes later, the trainer noticed that the group has been divided into various parts. The largest one included trainees looking at their mobile phones all the time and writing and reading messages. The second part included trainees talking quietly to each other. The third part included the rest of the trainees asking loudly what was going on in the first two groups. Several times after certain answers, the whole group started laughing which completely interrupted the teaching process.

The trainer stopped teaching several times in order to draw the attention of the trainees back to the topic, but without results. The conversations became even more distracting and the disorder increased.

The trainer tried to ask specific questions to those trainees who were most active with their personal phones and intended in this way to stop their distracting activities. The questions did not find an answer and even raised counter-questions from trainees who were less busy with their devices.

The situation became more serious as some of the trainees started asking whether the lesson could finish in order to go for a break.

### Steps of implementation

**Step 1:** Interrupt the cycle between hidden messaging by the trainees in the first part of the audience, curiosity what has been happening by the second part and loud questions and conversations by the trainees in the third part.

**Step 2:** Ask the trainees to imagine themselves in the shoes of the trainer for a minute – or equally in the shoes of other class members. Most adults could agree with the idea of 'treat others as you would be treated'.

**Step 3:** The trainer asks questions related to the topic that is being delivered (since it was a training for digital skills, the trainer asked what application is the most used one on the phones of the majority of the trainees). Without waiting for a complete answer from everyone, the trainer asked the next question - how many software applications the trainees had on their phones and what those applications could do. Concluding that almost all of the applications used were just for messaging and talking, the trainer asked whether the trainees knew other quite useful applications and gave an example about automatic translation to various languages using built-in cameras. (Expectedly, no one knew of such software.)

**Step 4:** The trainer shows how it works (The trainer asked the group whether someone realizes that using such a small part of the possibilities of the devices means giving money for something in excess. The trainer posed a dual question of what is worthy – whether to buy cheaper devices and use their features entirely or to buy modern devices and to learn how to use their extended functions.)

**Step 5:** The trainers attract the attention of the trainees to the topic that is being covered during the class.

### Expected outcomes

To pass the message that if trainees weren't happy with their trainer (e.g. chewing gums, or texting during the lesson, or arguing with other students), it is doubtful they would be ok to be treated in the same way

To attract the trainees' attention to the content that is being delivered

To develop skills that cultivate digital culture to browse safely on the internet information that facilitates the completion of everyday tasks. In addition to browsing skills, managing and storing useful content is of great importance

### Variations (specially for online activities)

The topics of the questions can differ, according to what is being discussed in the class

Various techniques from a positive discipline approach could be applied.

### Additional resources

<https://www.teachmajor.com/blog/six-exercises-to-manage-distraction/>

## Random wheel

### Training settings

**(individual/group, size of the group, language)**

This activity is useful for any target group, being particularly useful for groups who have weak discipline in class.

### Time / Materials / How many participants / online vs f2f

**Time:** 15-40 minutes (depending on the n. of participants and the depth of the questions)

**Materials:** Laptop, internet connection, projector (digital way)

Note: It is also possible to create your own wheel with different materials (e.g. paper, plastic, wood, etc.).

**How many participants:** 6 – 8 (in bigger groups, it can be extended to a maximum of 12-15 participants)

**Both online and f2f**

### Challenge concerned

Weak discipline in class

### Description of the situation

This energizing exercise is useful when the group must be refreshed or need to change its point of view, when the trainer wants to introduce a new topic, or even when the trainer wants to deepen the connection between participants.

It is important to highlight that this exercise works better when you have already initiated the safety environment in the group, where everybody feels comfortable and able to ask/share more personal information.

The “gaming” aspect of the exercise makes it interesting for the participants. It raises their attention through a colourful background, sounds and motions.

The activity can be used in directive or non-directive manner (the wheel is spun by the instructor or by the participant) and it can be used for flexible purposes, with different types of questions to extend or deepen a topic:

Tell us about you

What comes into your mind when...?

Continue the sentence

The trainer must collect questions related to the topic that he/she wants to deliver. It gives a large space of usage - depending on the questions or instructions we give on the wheel.

This is an ideal exercise both in a digital environment or in a classroom or even in hybrid courses (when some participants are joining on-line, meanwhile some of them are represented in person).



### Steps of implementation

**Step 1:** Show the wheel

**Step 2:** Give a clear explanation about the “rules” (timeframe, who will be the next to speak, mention that it is okay to pass if he/she doesn't want to answer, etc.) and provide time for questions

**Step 3:** Make a trial round – e.g. the teacher/instructor/trainer can start it to serve as an example; or can ask for a volunteer

**Step 4:** Start playing – the trainer needs to facilitate (by encouraging or helping with instructions or questions, if somebody doesn't understand the question on the wheel, or by keeping time frame)

**Step 5:** Promote a moment for discussion / Feedbacks from participants

### Expected outcomes

More involved participants, who are able to connect with each other.

Shake-up the participants, encourage them to collaborate as one big group.

The atmosphere can be accepting and refreshed, it can be a good transition to another topic.

### Variations (specially for online activities)

Based on the number of questions, but the trainer can decide how many times she/he would like to use the wheel

If the number of participants is small, everybody can take a turn on the wheel, but if there are too many people, the trainer must control the time

In case of large groups (15+) the trainer can create dyads, triads

In online environments, the facilitator can ask participants to use their camera

Also in online environments, the facilitator can give authority which participant to turn the wheel

### Additional resources

For e.g.: [www.wordwall.net](http://www.wordwall.net)

**Images to be used to illustrate the Wheel:**



## Challenge. Difficulties to adapt content to low-skilled trainees

### Content adaptation

#### Training settings

(individual/group, size of the group, language)

It is particularly interesting to raise awareness of the importance of giving and getting feedback, so it is a good energizer, especially for vulnerable groups who do not show a greater engagement in the learning activities proposed in the classes/sessions.

#### Time / Materials / How many participants / online vs f2f

**Time:** 10 min to implement + 10 min discussion

**Participants:** as many as necessary.

**Material:**

Basket

Small balls (e.g. tennis)

#### Challenge concerned

Difficulties to adapt content to low-skilled trainees

#### Description of the situation

Gaining constant motivation and involvement from the trainees is maybe one of the biggest challenges to overcome. Low-skilled people could have some problems understanding the importance of attending a class or following a workshop activity, because the benefits are somewhat vague to them.

Very important advice for the trainer is to clarify with the students which are the benefits they can gain from the workshop/activity.



### Steps for implementation

**Step 1:** The facilitator asks participants to stand up and form a semi-circle.

**Step 2:** The facilitator asks for a volunteer. If there is no volunteer the trainer explains what can be expected to minimise the fear of the participants of the newly introduced task.

**Step 3:** The facilitator explains that the volunteer should try his/her best to put the ball inside the basket, without looking at it. The other participants are advised to not say a word or give any help to the volunteer.

**Step 4:** After several attempts, the volunteer may start getting impatient because he/she is not reaching the goal of putting the ball inside the basket. At this moment, the facilitator allows the other participants to give some help to the volunteer (e.g. give instructions what direction the volunteer should throw the ball; put the basket in a strategic position that facilitates the work of the volunteer).

**Step 5:** In the end, the facilitator should ask the volunteer for self-reflection and feedback "How did you feel about not having help and guidance from the other participants" (possible answers: angry, frustrated, disappointed)

**Step 6:** The facilitator should promote a group discussion to raise awareness of the importance of having and giving feedback to keep us focused on our goals (and, in this case, in being involved in the training/learning action).

### Expected outcomes

With this activity, it is expected to raise the awareness of the trainees of the importance of giving and receiving feedback to maintain good level of motivation.

### Variations

The activity can be implemented in smaller groups. In this way, it is important to be prepared to have a basket and a ball for each group.

The facilitator explains the activity and each group performs it at the same time (the facilitator follows the same steps for implementation).

In the end, the discussion should be delivered with all the participants as a whole group.

### Additional Resources

[https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_emp/---ifp\\_skills/documents/publication/wcms\\_534328.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---ifp_skills/documents/publication/wcms_534328.pdf)





## Challenge. Dealing with conflicts DISC Model



Dominance, influence, steadiness, conscientiousness

### Training settings (individual/group, size of the group, language)

All groups - ideally with reasonable competence  
in one of the languages in which the exercise can be provided

### Time / Materials / How many participants / online vs f2f

30 minutes  
DISC test question and answer sheet required  
No required number of participants  
Both online and F2F

### Challenge concerned

Conflict  
Behaviour of trainees

### Description of the situation

Conflictual or/and behavioural problems among participants regarding issues with similar or clashing personalities, which can be a serious issue and become very disruptive. A trainer may be presented with several dominant personalities which clash with each other, or cautious personalities who are drowned out by influential or dominant ones. This can lead to conflict and/or poor quality participation from different members.

### Steps of implementation

- Preferably near the beginning of a training course, administer the questionnaire to participants
- There are some variations in the questionnaire, which include simplifying the lexicon, and using an online version of the test
- After they have answered the questions, ask them to use the results sheet to find out their personality type using their answers
- Compare results, and explain what each personality type means, and its implications. It's important that both the trainer and the trainees know about this, so the trainees themselves can be aware of their personalities, and perhaps even begin to adjust their behaviour accordingly.
- When organising activities, try to distribute the personalities in a logical way according to the activity
- Balance personalities in groups
- If certain tasks require different personalities, consider assigning them appropriately
- Use awareness of the participants' personalities to manage the classroom - for example, don't let dominant personalities be too vocal and drown out the more steady or conscientious ones.

### Expected outcomes

- A more balanced classroom
- Fewer conflicts - they are more likely to be prevented, because the personalities will be organised in a more balanced way
- More effective training, by distributing tasks well, and by avoiding disruption

### Variations (specially for online activities)

Can be done as a paper version or online version

### Additional resources

**Online version:** <https://www.crystalknows.com/disc-personality-test>

Paper-based:

**Questions:** [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1PqDVzITRjVJCKJmROfgn2Q9HF\\_\\_aWDU/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1PqDVzITRjVJCKJmROfgn2Q9HF__aWDU/view?usp=sharing)

**Answers:** <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1-nBxh0hZLx9Gx99b1GhuPF8-r5F-ka2R/view?usp=sharing>



# Magic wand

## Training settings

### (individual/group, size of the group, language)

Ideal to map group dynamics and prevent conflicts in the beginning. Also supports cooperation, verbal and nonverbal communication, trust and common goal setting.

## Time / Materials / How many participants / online vs f2f

**Time:** maximum 15 minutes, up to 60 minutes for discussion and feedback

**Materials/resources:** 2-2.5 m long PVC pipe / broomstick, or flipchart paper as a roll or similar

**How many participants:** Suggested for 6-15 participants, the result depends on the length of the tool / in larger groups you can divide the participants into smaller groups

**Online vs F2F:** Almost exclusively an F2F technique.

## Challenge concerned

It brings tensions to the surface at the beginning of the training; therefore the trainer minimises the need to manage acute conflicts later.

It happens rarely that the group completes the task on the first try, therefore the trainer should behave supportively; however still adhere to the framework of the game.

## Description of the situation

Recommended in the first part of a training session, after the introduction of the aim of the session and the participants, and/or after agreeing on common rules.

The trainer assesses the group dynamics, so he/she brings in this simple task, which is getting more complex by the group dynamics.

## Steps of implementation

1. Give clear instructions to the group:

“Your task is to lower the 'Magic Wand' from the height of the shortest person's chest to the ground, in such a way that everyone must hold the instrument from below with a single finger. If I see someone's finger is moving away from the tool I will start the exercise again. You have 15 minutes to complete the task.”

2. Provide time for clarifying questions before starting the game

3. The trainer asks the group to stand up and gives them the tool, showing them how to deal with it

4. Start the challenge

5. Giving the group enough “playtime”

6. End the challenge

7. Start group discussion and give feedback

## Expected outcomes

The solution requires participants to stop and think about their strategy as the group needs to come up with a different solution from their first try. They usually come to a good solution gradually, by trying different variations. During playtime their coordination, cooperation, trust towards each other is developing and they are more open to try out new suggestions.

The activity also gives the opportunity to the participants to play out hidden conflicts and discover their roles in the group.

For the group discussion good facilitation and interpersonal skills are required from the trainer.

## Variations (specially for online activities)

Coordination, openness to ideas, leadership, out-of-the-box thinking, problem solving, change management

## Additional resources

<https://www.bbva.com/en/group-dynamic-games-what-are-they-and-how-they-contribute-to-motivate-employees/>

## METHODS

### Good Education Image / Personal Relations

#### Applicability

This is a useful method to be applied with any group of participants. It is particularly appropriate for groups involving vulnerable people, who had a bad educational experience in the past.

#### Challenge concerned and theoretical background

Good education image / Personal relations

#### General principles

Our emotional development is related to our past experiences, which can influence the way we act and/or react in the present, and this is applied in several fields of our lives. This also includes the educational field, which means that our past experiences at school may influence our attitudes in adult education. This is notably challenging for adults who had a less positive primary education experience.

It is important to keep in mind that an adult has already lived through several experiences, so it is normal to feel more comfortable with some subjects, a greater difficulty in understanding others, and a greater interest in topics and/or activities related to their daily lives. In their individual learning process, adults are influenced by the following: i) a need to understand how to apply theoretical knowledge in practice. The truth is that when the subjects covered resemble situations previously experienced by the trainees, it will arouse their interest and attention to the class/session; ii) their values and preconceptions that determine the way they establish relationships with other people; iii) their own educational experience. Having a less positive educational experience in the past can influence the way trainees act and react in the present, both with the trainer/facilitator, and in the relationships with other participants. It is important to consider the fears and rejections of participants, to better attend to their needs and promote a good education image.

Below we provide some general principles related to this topic:

Consider the needs and interests of the trainees, so that they feel more understood

Raise awareness of the benefits of performing a training action

Last, but not least, make them understand that despite all have different backgrounds, some more challenging than others, but all are on the same page in what concerns establishing a positive learning environment and good relationships among participants

Accept all the trainees, showing empathy and respect

It is also important to consider sitting everybody at the same level, which means that trainees and the facilitator can be seated in a circle.



### Expected outcomes

It is expected that participants will feel that their needs and concerns (especially those related to the educational field) are better understood by everyone and will feel more comfortable in the learning environment.

In this way, some potential expected outcomes are:

- Raise awareness regarding the past experiences of participants and how this can influence the attitudes and perceptions that we have in the present regarding educational activities
- Better insight that all of us have different feelings, emotions, and perceptions, but it is important to create a positive learning environment and give a second chance to the educational field.
- Feel and demonstrate empathy with all participants on all aspects that they would want to share with the group
- Trainees should feel that they are in a space where they are understood. In this way, their image of Education will be positively influenced.
- Promotion of a good environment to discuss and share ideas/perceptions/experiences between participants and/or the trainer.

### Related best practices

- Film Making
- Trusting Game
- Individual Learning Plan
- Random wheel

### Additional resources

#### References:

Beck, C. (2015). O papel da experiência em sala de aula. Andragogia Brasil.

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Available on:

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## Safe(r) learning environment

### Applicability

Beginning of a training and ongoing

### Challenge concerned and theoretical background

Learning always includes failure, but low-skilled adults are more likely to have less sense of achievement

### General principals

**A protected learning environment in which everyone:** feels accepted; is allowed to make mistakes without being devalued; and is invited to try out tasks that one may not solve perfectly in their first attempt, is the basis for learning success.

The focus fall on the mutual trust between trainer, trainees and between the trainees themselves.

**Three aspects are crucial here:** the trainer's attitude, the relationship between trainer and trainees, and how mistakes are managed.

**The trainer's attitude is crucial in many aspects:** How are mistakes handled?  
Are they presented as failures or as a natural part of learning?  
Are only correct results praised or also the effort and endeavour to improve?

**It is also important how the trainer views the trainees:**  
Are trainees perceived as people in their entirety  
or just as "work material to be used to achieve specific goals?"

A trainer who is open about his or her own mistakes and shortcomings is a good role model. Even if trainers sometimes fear a loss of authority, dealing openly with mistakes improves one's own working atmosphere and thus reduces one's own levels and perception of stress, because mistakes are part of human nature.

#### **What distinguishes a protected learning environment:**

- Respectful and appreciative interaction between trainer and trainees as well as among trainees.
- Holistic perception of the trainees with their circumstances and experiences
- Positive management of mistakes
- Benevolent treatment and support for individual learning projects



**A safe learning environment can be created by considering:**

- Predictable and reliable environment (transparency and communication)
- Respect, both between trainer and trainees and among trainees
- Focus on individual improvement and learning progress
- Benevolent interaction, absence of punishment and embarrassment
- Feedback culture with constructive feedback
- Sensitive approach to discrimination and disadvantage

**Digital Sphere**

The digital sphere in particular is not a comfort zone for everyone. Therefore, in e-learning, when using a new application or tool, a short introduction should be given in order for everyone to find their way around it. This should also be checked with queries.

**Expected outcomes**

- a positive learning environment
- Confidence to apply what is learned
- positive attitude towards mistakes
- Trying, experimenting and actively applying what is learned

**Related best practices**

- > self-set rules (also include rules for dealing with errors)
- > feedback culture
- > group dynamics

**Additional resources**

<https://www.edutopia.org/blog/20-tips-create-safe-learning-environment-rebecca-alber>



## Visualisation and use of apps/media

### Applicability

Groups and Individuals, 10-15 participants, German and English

### Challenge concerned and theoretical background

**Challenge 1.** Difficult communication with trainees

**Challenge 5.** Low level of digital skills

**Challenge 8.** Difficulties to adapt content to low-skilled trainees

Trying to teach a class/group of digitally low-skilled participants may let the trainer encounter communication problems, which can be challenging and in turn give space for implementing innovative methodology.

For example, written assignments can nowadays usually be uploaded to a shared platform or downloaded from it to be corrected. Some groups are advanced enough to use Google Drive and work on a shared document.

However, several months ago that was not the case. Many students had technical disadvantages (missing hardware and software at the same time) so that trainers had to find different approaches. By adapting the method of delivering content, some of these challenges were addressed.

Additionally, every participant enters a course with a different skill level. This has been identified within the organisation. It is important not to discourage or shame the individual who has difficulties to keep up with the course, but to encourage them to look for additional training, or to work in a more focused way with that individual specifically.

Provide adequate resources for the participants such as appropriate exercises and possibilities to talk to the trainers.

### Description of the situation

Possessing insufficient digital skills may have adverse effects nowadays, in terms of communication barriers and exclusion.

It is therefore crucial to assess the level of the participants and take time when explaining how to use digital platforms, apps and media.

Ensure that participants understand the tasks and if not, allow for explanations. Provide a safe space for cultural diversity for the trainer as well as for the class.

### General principles

**Step 1.** Allow for an open and flexible methodology, as participants might have different levels of language and digital skills.

**Step 2.** Suggest options and extra exercises to improve skill levels, to be complimented on a voluntary level.

**Step 3.** Conduct exercises to learn about the different cultural backgrounds of the groups. This can be done through visualisation and the use of digital programmes. (An assignment would be photographed, and a photo shared between a trainer and the participant via the chosen digital channel of communication).

**Step 4.** A sense of belonging to a group and learning something new is very important and despite time consuming methodologies, it is worth taking some time and going the extra mile, as it benefits the trainer as well as the participant.

### Expected outcomes

- more willingness to try new technologies
- a better understanding of how to use platforms & apps
- improved communication with the trainer

### Related best practices

Content adaptation

### Additional resources

<https://videomaker.simpleshow.com/visualization-improve-speed-understanding/>



# Theatre of the Oppressed

## Applicability

Collaborative method that can be exploited in all learning levels and types of education.

## Challenge concerned & Theoretical Background

Difficulties in communication.

The Theatre of the Oppressed (TO) was developed by Brazilian theatre director Augusto Boal during the 1950's and 1960's. In an effort to transform the theatre from the "monologue" setting of traditional performance into a "dialogue" between audience and stage, Boal experimented with many kinds of interactive theatre. His explorations assumed that dialogue is the common, healthy dynamics between all humans, that all human beings desire and are capable of conversing, and that when a dialogue becomes a monologue, oppression ensues. Theatre then becomes an extraordinary tool for transforming monologue into dialogue. The main aim is centred on meeting the needs of all people for **interaction, dialogue, critical thinking, action, and enjoyment**.

## Description of the situation

It is a very common case, that in groups of low-skilled adults (e.g. migrants) there are people who barely speak English or any other international language apart from their mother tongue. Such people may generally face difficulties in communication. In such cases the trainer should attempt to provide other ways in order to engage all learners and make them feel equal and comfortable. Forum Theatre and specifically Theatre of the Oppressed works from rehearsal improvisation to create a scene of a specific oppression.

## General Principles

The General Principles for the implementation of this method are described below:

### Step 1: Preparation (5 minutes)

Define the team, number of people, the roles, the topic, the background, actors, number of scenes, materials, the story, the role of the audience, the scope, duration

### Step 2: Implementation (20 minutes)

Presentation of the story, verbal or non-verbal communication methods to be used, the role of facilitator, the STOP scenes by the audience and suggestions on what could be done better. Using the Greek terms "protagonist" and "antagonist," Forum Theatre seeks to present a person (the protagonist) who is trying to deal with an oppression and failing because of the resistance of one or more obstacles (the antagonists).

### Step 3: Discussion (10-15 minutes)

Brainstorming, lessons learnt

### Step 4: Evaluation (10 minutes)

What went well? What could be done differently?

## Expected outcomes

- Create a more familiar learning environment for the learners
- Bridge any type of barriers that may exist
- Make the learners feel comfortable with their body and expressions

## Related best practices

Language barriers among the group

## Additional resources

<http://www.wwcd.org/action/Boal.html>





# Film Making

## Applicability

Groups that need to enhance their teamwork skills in a multicultural environment

## Challenge concerned and theoretical background

Differences among the group (e.g. cultural)

Working in a multicultural group is almost always a challenge. There might be cases in which people originate from conflicting countries. Others can have different religion and contrasting perceptions in general. The key messages that can derive from this method are inclusion and cultural awareness, making use of research-based approaches, being aware of each other's culture, addressing bias and prejudices in a constructive way.

## Description of the situation

Using film-making techniques can help the group on the one hand by making them work as a team in a sector that requires out-of-the-box thinking and a lot of creativity that will gradually lift the stereotypes, and on the other hand, they will produce a piece of which they will be proud and will also acquire new skills (team building, active listening, body language etc.)

## General Principles

The General Principles of this method can be described below:

### Step 1: Preparation (10-15 minutes)

Define the team, number of people, the roles, the topic, number of scenes, materials, the story, the scope, duration

### Step 2: Implementation (60 minutes)

Filming of each scene separately, editing of the files, creation of subtitles (if needed), receiving feedback from the assigned people, making the relevant corrections, exporting the video

### Step 3: Discussion (15-20 minutes)

Brainstorming, lessons learnt

### Step 4: Evaluation (15 minutes)

What went well? What could be done differently?

## Expected outcomes

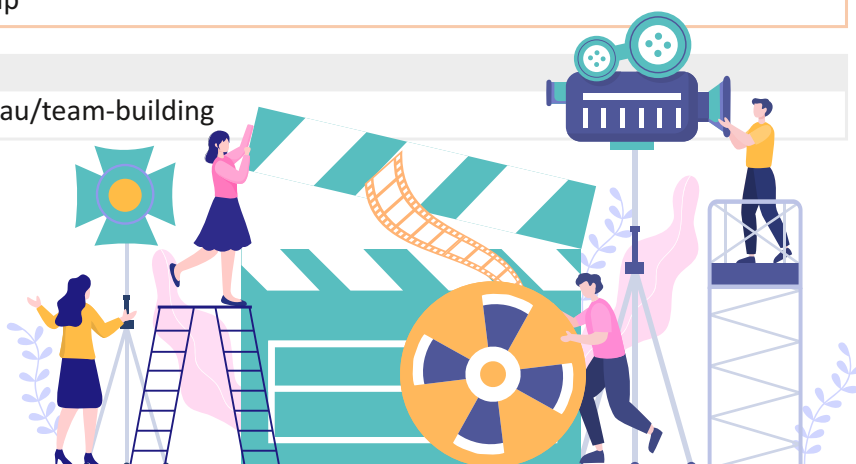
- Create the feeling of team through a creative activity
- Bridge any type of differences that may exist
- Enhance several soft skills of the learners (e.g. active listening, time management, team work etc.)

## Related best practices

Cultural differences among the group

## Additional resources

<https://www.corporateimpact.com.au/team-building>



# Adapting training content through linking theory with practice

## Applicability

Training groups involving inactive and unemployed young people.

## Challenge concerned and theoretical background

Difficulties in adapting the training content to low-skilled trainees and linking theory with practice. When working with low qualified learners, the trainer should cut any unnecessary theoretical background from the training content. The trainer should stress on the essential parts and enrich the training with simulations and real-life case studies that facilitate knowledge transfer. Incorporation of on-the-job training sessions could potentially be applied, which will equip learners with specific skills which they will be able to apply to their own everyday workflows.

Among the various characteristics and needs of low-qualified people as trainees, one of the most consistent traits is that these people seem careless about abstract theories when they do not see practical effects and direct results. Being able to see the immediate tangible benefits from their training is what draws them to learning. Thus, the subsequent training had to stimulate them to perform tasks faster and better, or to do things that they were not able to do before.

Adapting the learning content is about changing the educational environment which provides trainees with equal opportunities to access learning and curricula. Adaptation brings to them significant benefits and support for achieving real improvement and reporting measurable results in the learning process.

It should be noted that adaptation does not always require a significant change, reduction or lowering of an established learning standard for learning content.

## Description of the situation

Initially, the learners do not realize that the training is useful for them, and they complain about the fact that the learning material is somewhat vague and incomprehensible. The trainer shared examples from various job interviews by placing the trainees consecutively in the roles of employer and employee in order to make them involved in the situation. In this way the trainer managed to identify what was the reason for these ambiguities about the training content – low motivation in fact or too complicated content for the group.

## General Principles

After the interview exercise it became clear that the training content included many terms and notions which were unknown to the trainees. Many words sounded unfamiliar to the majority of the group. Next step is to define what type of technique will be the most efficient and appropriate.

**You can consider the following one:**

### - Socratic Teaching

The so-called Socratic method applies questioning into the teaching and learning process. The Socratic method is a different style of education than a lecture because it relies on dialogue or Dialectic between teacher and student. This approach involves a conversation in which a student is asked to question their assumptions. It is a forum for open-ended inquiry, one in which both student and teacher can use probing questions to develop a deeper understanding of the topic.

The trainer directs a logical sequence of questions to the learners, so that they are enabled to respond and to express the knowledge that they possess but have difficulty putting it to practice.

## Expected outcomes

The adaptation of the training content according to the possibilities for perception of the trainees creates necessary preconditions for achieving learning goals in an attractive and practice-oriented way.

### Such adaptation allows:

- Placing trainees at the centre of the learning process;
- Strong promotion of their activity, commitment and practical employment;
- Encouraging creative, even risky and non-traditional thinking, and analysis+5 - search for solutions and conclusions;
- Connection with available knowledge and accumulated previous experience and application of what has been learned in practice;
- Combining individual and collective activity and sharing experience between the participants themselves and between them and the trainer;
- Seeking constant feedback on the results and moods achieved;
- Vital self-assessment, mutual assessment, and teacher evaluation

## Related best practices

Content adaptation

## Additional resources

Pictures, farming tools, short videos

# Using mediation in conflicts

## Applicability

The method is suitable for implementation within groups where trainees have divergent backgrounds, and they are not familiar with each other before the course.

## Challenge concerned and theoretical background

Arising conflicts in class

Conflict in the classroom between trainees can arise from minor disagreements about the expectations of the results of the course, the workload during its implementation, success, behaviour, attitude towards each other, clothing, appearance, etc. Often conflicts between learners become obvious during a lesson. Usually, these conflicts are resolved by the parties during the process of conversation, but often the help of the trainer is required, as disagreements can become particularly acute in class.

## Description of the situation

At certain times, the disapproval of the group of young people became so obvious that it could be categorised as nonverbal aggression.

During the following lessons, the trainer carefully monitored the behaviour of both parties in order to determine if there was a strong side which could be identified as an attacker and a side to be identified as attacked or a defending one.

Despite the thorough attention of the trainer on these parties, the tension between them increased during the next training week. Such care by the trainer with their behaviour and tensions were not taken into account by the parties and the dispute entered a phase with an expression of direct verbal aggression.

The conflict situation did not show clearly attacked and attacking party and both sides became too aggressive against each other.

## General principles

### The process of finding a solution goes through the following stages:

First, the mediators listen to the backstory of the conflict, encouraging the parties to talk as much as possible in order to clarify all the details. They may ask questions such as: And then what happened? What did you do? What did the others do? When exactly did the controversy break out? What did you say to yourself? How did you feel? At this stage, the mediators are trying to find an answer to the central question: What happened?

Second, mediators try to identify the interests and needs of the conflict. That is why their questions are of a different nature. They may sound like this: Why did you say that? Why did you do that? Why do you think the others were offended? Why did this quarrel worsen your relationship? If in the first stage we tried to find an answer to the question: What happened? Now we are trying to find the answer to the question: Why did it happen?

Third, the parties, together with the mediators, are trying to find a solution to the conflict. Therefore, communication between them follows the following line: What do you think can be done? Are you ready to keep your word? If we agree on certain things, will you abide by them?

Fourth, with the help of mediators, the parties reach an agreement. It may be in writing, setting out the commitments that each party has made, or it may be oral, such as an "honest word" or a "gentleman's agreement".

As a result of this sequence in the presented example, the roots of the dispute were identified. These were about bad body smell on one hand and believing that one of the parties had bigger experience from the past in the construction sector thus having the right to judge the opposite side and to insist on a kind of regular bathing before the lessons.

## Expected outcomes

Resolving conflicts creatively leads to the following outcomes:

- Clearly identified conflicts during the training.
- Not confusing conflicts caused by lack of discipline with conflicts caused by destructive behaviour.
- Focus on the facts, not the people.
- After identifying a conflict, the trainer is thinking not about its immediate solution, but about its causes.
- Whenever talking about conflict, expression should be in terms of mutual interest.

## Related best practices

DISC Model  
Magic wand

## Additional resources

Using separate rooms for conversations

## Clustering techniques for raising the motivation of the trainees

### Applicability

Groups of trainees with significantly different levels of knowledge, life experience, passed educational stages.

### Challenge concerned and theoretical background

Cluster grouping is a formalized process for guaranteeing differentiation for our most capable learners. Such grouping could look different in each teacher's classroom. Typically, a clustered trainee is ready to move at a more rapid pace once they have the base knowledge of the concept being taught. Trainers may use different instructional strategies to meet the needs of these trainees within their homeroom. Clustering could be a small group of learners who already have mastered a concept accepting a more challenging problem to solve collectively, with a learning partner, or alone. Cluster grouping is not increasing the quantity of the work produced or changing the grade level of the curriculum being explored. As a strategy, clustering can be used to facilitate sharing of information, to seek out links, connections or patterns between various facts and statements through discussion and analysis and consensus-seeking. Trainees are instructed to assemble, group or categorize similar information into various clusters, thus promoting active learning.

### Description of the situation

Example interactive activities that promote the use of clustering to facilitate learning:

- 1) Four corners:** This is an activity that can be used to demonstrate the use of clusters in learning. Label the four corners of your classroom with titles of the main topic. In the centre, place a box that has sheets with facts or statements written on them. Students are given a minute to take a sheet and read through the information. After everyone has taken a sheet, they are given 30 seconds to stand in the corner connected to their statement. Once everyone is in their respective corner, instruct a student from each corner, to gather the sheets and read out the statements.
- 2) Tag:** In this stage, information sheets are handed out. The clusters are written on the board. Students are given two to three minutes to tag others and gather into their respective clusters. Then they are asked to find out the pattern among the facts (hierarchy, linear) and stand accordingly.
- 3) Sticky notes:** Students are instructed to re-arrange the notes into their right clusters. They can also be given an extra set of sticky notes to write down the information to form sub-clusters and draw out the connections.
- 4) Cluster quiz:** Create a quiz format, which includes rounds like "multiple choice (identifying the cluster to which the information belongs), rapid round (naming or framing a cluster), written round (forming maximum number of clusters using the list of information)."
- 5) Card cluster:** Create a deck of information cards. This is an individual game played in small groups of four students. Each group is given a deck and from the deck, they take three cards each. The aim of the game is to form as many clusters before the cards in the deck run out.



### General Principles

Motivation plays a pivotal role in the process of learning.

Both motivation and learning go side by side. Motivation is essential for effective learning, and it is a force that modifies or directs behaviour; while learning is actually a modification of behaviour which is permanent in nature and is caused by various factors. Motivation is the combination of the forces that can arouse, direct, and continue certain types of behaviour. It is the phenomenon involved in a person's goal-oriented behaviour.

### Expected outcomes

- Understanding motivation gives us many valuable insights into human nature. It explains why we set goals, strive for achievement and power, why we have desires for psychological intimacy and biological sex, why we experience emotions like fear, anger, and compassion.
- Learning about motivation is valuable because it helps us understand where motivation comes from, why it changes, what increases and decreases it, what aspects of it can and cannot be changed, and helps us answer the question of why some types of motivation are more beneficial than others.
- Motivation reflects something unique about each one of us and allows us to gain valuable outcomes like improved performance, enhanced well-being, personal growth, or a sense of purpose. Motivation is a pathway to change our way of thinking, feeling, and behaving.

### Related best practices

Film Making  
Trusting Game  
Individual learning plan

### Additional resources

<https://epale.ec.europa.eu/bg/blog/how-motivate-adults-learn>

