**The Role of the Trainer**

The trainer helps to facilitate learning as opposed to teaching. The role of the trainer is to create the desire to learn, stimulate interest, remove obstacles to learning i.e. things that will make the experience of learning unpleasant or uncomfortable. The trainer sets the objectives, manages logistics, the materials and the group dynamics to achieve those objectives.

**The Learning Environment**

Thinking about logistics is an important part of having a learning environment at an optimum level. It’s not always possible to choose the environment in which training is delivered but there are certain actions the trainer can use to control the environment.

These may seem very obvious but adverse conditions will impact the effectiveness of the learning and can undermine much hard work that has gone into developing great content which is compromised by a poor environment. Ineffective learning experiences taint learners’ perceptions for next time so investing time in creating the right environment for learning is essential.

**Logistical factors to consider**

* Frequent breaks with refreshments and ideally access to fresh air if the session is an all-day session
* Ban eating and drinking in the training room
* Opening windows to control a room that is too warm – temperature control is really important for learners’ comfort.
* Seating arranged to fit with the group dynamic and types of interaction in the session – group make up and seating plans are helpful for managing group interaction particularly where you may have learners with different abilities, knowledge and motivations.
* Sufficient space for the learning interventions and activities planned
* Learners are not seated facing distractions such as looking out of windows (windowless rooms for training are however unpleasant learning environments).
* Minimising distractions and external noise.
* Ensuring all the learners have visibility of the trainer and material at all times. Think carefully about where you stand as well as how you stand.
* Travel arrangements will have an impact of a learner’s readiness to engage if they have travelled far or have difficult journeys this effects mindset and attention levels
* Its more personal and enhances your effectiveness at handling the group dynamics if you can address learners by their names especially when working with smaller groups – use place cards or ensure learners introduce themselves. Top tip is to create a table plan for your reference of who is seated where with relevant names.

**Materials**

The trainer should know the materials well in advance of the session and understand the needs of their audience of learners. Preparation is key to an effective learning experience for the learners.

The material should be:

* Logical and relevant
* At a level appropriate for the audience and arranged to accommodate different learning styles
* Visual aids should be used whenever possible. These should be professionally presented, no spelling mistakes and with not too much content.
* Visual aids do not necessarily mean power point slides. Visual aids cover use of flip charts interactive white board, films, handouts and best practice exemplar
* If using power point the trainer should not read from slides but use these as prompts to keep the structure and flow of the session on track. Reading also indicates a lack of familiarity with the subject matter and undermines your credibility as a trainer
* Visual aids should be used at the right time in the session and not used for the sake of it.
* A variety of materials and techniques for engaging learners should be built into the session. All content should be relevant to the achievement of the learning objectives
* Problems with individual learners should be anticipated – think about visually impaired or learners with hearing conditions or learning difficulties e.g. dyslexia
* Learners should not be given too much information at one time – as we are often pressured for time there is a tendency to cram as much into a session as possible and this has the potential to undermine the objectives for the session – less is often more.

**The characteristics of the Trainer**

The trainer needs to be a credible expert for the learners and the most effective trainers have the following characteristics.

* Enthusiastic and confident but operate with clear professional boundaries – there needs to a professional distance between yourself and learners.
* Interesting speaker – able to adapt style and tone to meet the needs of different learnings cohorts. Speaks with sincerity and integrity on the subject matter and is able to use relevant examples from their experience to bring the learning to life.
* Use humour is appropriate
* Adjusts language, keeps it simple and concise and relevant for the audience
* Passionate and committed to the subject
* Offers constructive and targeted feedback, supports the reasoning process to help learners build understanding, gives timely and relevant praise
* Sense of fairness and inclusivity - manages the distribution and level of engagement from all learners
* Excellent observer and emotionally intelligent. Interprets nonverbal cues from the learners and responds by adjusting pace and style accordingly
* Intuitively responds to relevant learning opportunities that arise in the room – be an active listener with strong powers of observation.