TIME Train Intercultural Mediators for a Multicultural Europe

Self-study Course for Trainers of Intercultural Mediators

Module 2

Adult training methodology and techniques

Olympic Training & Consulting Ltd.

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Contents

1. Objective 4
2. The characteristics of adult learners 5
3. Principles and theories of adult learning 8
3.1. Adult learning theories 8
3.2. Adult learning principles 12
4. The role of the adult trainer 15
5. Methods and techniques in adult training 19
5.1. Methods and techniques 19
5.2. Choosing the appropriate technique 23
5.3. Communication in adult education 24
5.4. Group dynamics 25
5.5. Crisis management 27
6. Course design and delivery 29
7. Selected reading 34

1. Objective

This module is addressed at IM trainers who have not received so far specialized training on adult training methodology. The module presents the characteristics of the adult learner, principles of adult training and effective techniques for leading and managing the adult classroom. At the end of this module, the trainer should be able to:

1. Conduct needs assessment and embed these needs in the design and organization of learning activities

2. Organize training activities and choose the appropriate training techniques for their implementation

3. Create an engaging, interactive learning environment in the classroom

4. Choose and use the necessary educational material and equipment

5. Apply assessment techniques emphasizing on learning outcomes

6. Apply principles of group dynamics and crisis management

2. The characteristics of adult learners

The characteristics of the adult learners are linked with the definition of the term "adult". According to Rogers (1999) there is a link between maturity and learning (see table).

Maturity	Impact on learning
Personal development/ full development	Personal development and use of talents and interests
Prospect / mature judgments with respect to the others	Sense of perspective development
Autonomy / self-determination / decision making	Confidence development / responsibility
Rogers (1999)	

Adult learners usually adopt more than one role, which influences the available time and energy they can devote and invest as learners. At the same time the challenge for the trainer is the heterogeneity of the adult learner groups. In general, the characteristics of the adult learners are as follows:

- **They decide to participate in a learning process for specific reasons and because specific needs** arise. Possible incentives are the professional development, fulfillment of social roles, personal development, and prestige acquisition.

- They have a **broad and diverse range of experience, knowledge plurality and shaped perceptions in which they invest emotionally**. These experiences are different since they derive from a variety of adult life situations, businesses, sense of social responsibility, political roles, family relationships etc.

- They possess their own **preferred learning styles**. They prefer to learn in a certain way, depending on the characteristics of their personality, abilities and experiences. Some adults learn by studying alone, others being involved in organized learning activities etc.

- They have the **tendency to participate in learning activities in an active way**. They need to be treated as responsible people. They prefer to being asked about their opinion and they also prefer open dialogue and communication. Instead of standardized educational contents they require contents strictly adapted to their own learning objectives. Therefore they are facing the trainers as knowledgeable colleagues rather than as unquestioned experts.

- **They face obstacles in learning**. These obstacles may be related to poor organization of educational activities, they might arise from adult learners social obligations and duties or they might involve internal barriers stemming from the personality of individuals. The internal barriers can be divided into two categories, obstacles related to prior knowledge and values or barriers arising from psychological factors.

- **They develop defense mechanisms and resignation**. These situations possibly occur when internal barriers impede adult learners to share new insights and redefine previous knowledge, values and habits.

The above characteristics of adult learners and in particular obstacles, are a particularly important issue that requires increased capacity from the adult educator in order to address them, such as the ability to diagnose situations, communicating, assessing and searching for alternatives, as well as intuition and sensitivity.

The view of experienced adult educators Hiemstra & Sisco (1990) about adult learners:

Adult learners:

- *stop participating in education when they feel they are losing their time*
- *are interested in education as a side job; other issues occupy their time and interest*
- *come to education because of an emergency need or a motive*
- *do not always reveal the true reasons for participating in a training activity; they might be seeking for new friends, want to be members of a team or want to acquire knowledge*
- *want to feel comfortable*
- *want to create social relationships*
- *have very little time*
- *like to be treated as mature people*
- *appreciate the friendly concern on behalf of the trainer*
- *want confirmation that they can succeed in whatever they want to do or learn*
- *need reward and encouragement*
- *need satisfaction from reaching goals*
- *are motivated by an intensive need for learning*
- *are impatient trainees, are pressed by time, and rush to implement what they have learned and the skills they have acquired*
- *have rich experience to share with the group*
- *may be facing problems*
- *appreciate a clear and well-designed learning experience*
- *are fast in evaluating and assessing good teaching*

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Key-words

Maturity; adult learners; range of experience; incentives; control over learning; life margins; resistance to change; learning obstacles

Question for reflection

- ☞ Remember a case when you faced obstacles in learning: How did you feel? Try to explain the reasons for these feelings.

3. Principles and theories of adult learning

3.1. Adult learning theories

There is no single theory about learning that can be applied to all adults. Literature provides a variety of models, sets of assumptions, principles, theories, and explanations that make up the adult learning knowledge base. The most important theories are Andragogy, self-directed learning, and transformational learning.

did you know?

Adult learning theories provide insight about how adults learn. Their knowledge can help trainers to be more effective in their practice and respond to the needs of the learners.

Andragogy

Andragogy is a humanitarian attempt to conceptualize adult education leading to specific methods and practices. Malcolm Knowles attempted to document differences between the ways adults and children learn, proposing the concept of andragogy as "the art and science of helping adults learn" in contrast with pedagogy as "the art and science of teaching children". The theory of Andragogy argues that learning is an interactive interpretation process which leads to the continuous transformation of experiences of adult learners. A person towards its course to maturity accumulates a significant number of experiences that gain meaning through the process of learning. Knowles presented a set of assumptions about adult learners:

a) Adults **need to know why** they want to learn something

b) They move **from dependency to increasing self - directedness** as they mature and can direct their own learning

c) They draw from their **reservoir of life experiences**

d) They are ready to learn when they assume **new social or life roles**

e) They are **problem - centered** and want to apply new learning immediately, and

f) They are **motivated to learn by internal**, rather than external, factors

These assumptions also suggest a set of training practices that adult educators should follow:

a) Create a cooperative learning atmosphere in the classroom

b) Assess the learners' specific needs and interests

c) Develop learning objectives based on learners' needs, interests, and skills

d) Design sequential activities to achieve the objectives, work collaboratively with the learners to select methods, materials, and resources

e) Evaluate the quality of the learning experience and make adjustments while assessing needs for further learning

Self-directed learning

In 1970's, Knowles and other educators such as Carl Rogers promoted the idea that education needed to move away from being teacher - centered towards learner-centeredness or facilitated learning. Under this approach education should adjust to the needs and wants of learners. Trainers need to move out of role of "the sage on the stage" to that of "the guide on the side" in which learning mostly becomes a collaborative affair between the trainer and student. Learners are encouraged to become more involved or self-directing in their learning. Self – directed learning can also be an informal process that takes place outside the classroom in which learners make decisions about content, methods, resources, and evaluation of their learning. One of the benefits of this process is that learning can be easily incorporated into daily routine and occur when it is convenient for the learners and according to their learning preferences. Not all learners prefer this kind of learning and many adults who engage in it also engage in more formal educational programs. The adult educator can enhance the traditional classroom instruction with a variety of techniques to encourage learners in having self-directed learning experiences.

Transformational learning

The study of transformational learning emerged with the work of Jack Mezirow. The concept of this theory derives from the premise that **the way in which we interpret reality is determined by the perception system we have**. This perception system is imposed by the **cultural context** and has been unconsciously internalized through the process of our socialization. This system often contains false and distorted values, beliefs and assumptions, in a way that our representation of reality leads to malfunctioning. Our perceptual system is so deeply etched in our personality that we have the tendency to accept almost exclusively experiences that can be easily adapted to it and reject those that differ. It is therefore necessary that we as adults fit in our life with actual conditions to develop the ability to critically reconsider our beliefs for ourselves, the roles we have undertaken, and our relationships with others.

Reflective thinking

The learning process can help in this transformation. According to Mezirow the means for this transformation is **reflection**. He defined reflection as the process of reviewing perceptions and values by means of which we understand reality and act. Straightforward reflection is the act of "intentional assessment" of one's actions, whereas critical reflection not only involves the nature and consequence of one's actions but also includes the related circumstances of their origin. He presented three types of

reflection and their role in transforming meaning schemes and perspectives: **content** reflection, **process** reflection, and **premise** reflection.

In this frame adult educators who are seeking to foster transformative learning within their classes may consider the following:

- Create a climate that supports transformative learning; employ activities that promote student autonomy, participation, and collaboration; help them to explore alternative perspectives and engage in problem-solving and critical reflection
- Focus on knowing students and the types of learning activities that most appeal to them
- Develop and use learning activities that explore and expose different points of view
- Encourage dialogue groups that help build relationships where tension and dissent can be explored safely
- Trainers can also work to prepare themselves to teach from a transformative perspective through critical self – exanimation as well as sensitivity towards others

TRY THIS!

Other but not less important theories of adult education are presented in the following table. Try to identify their main assumptions and their implications for the trainer

Theory	Source
Person-centered approach	Carl Rogers (1961, 1972)
Social Change	Paulo Freire (1977)
Theoretical model of Knox: individual's effort to meet life demands successfully	A.B Knox (1986)
The "Learning process" model	Peter Jarvis (1987)
Learning cycle	D. Kolb (1991)
Reflective practice theory	Donald Schon (1983)
Action Science	Cris Argyris & Donald Schon (1978)
Characteristics of Adults Learners (CAL) model	Cross (1981)
Three dimensions of learning	Knud Illeris (2002)

Most of the above theorists point out the importance of the exploitation of adult learners' experience. They proposed methodologies that require the active participation of adult learners in all stages of the learning process, perceiving the adult trainers mostly as motivators and coordinators rather than persons who just transfer knowledge and values.

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http://transformativelearning.org
http://eric.ed.gov
http://www.nova.edu/~aed/newhorizons.html
http://www.infed.org

Key-words

Self direction; internal changes; way of living; roles of adults

Questions for reflection

- What are the differences between adult and underage learners?
- What is the most suitable theory to be applied in your field?

3.2. *Adult learning principles*

Taking into account the characteristics of adult learners, basic principles have emerged concerning adult learning. The consideration of these principles leads to the formulation of basic preconditions for successful adult training.

In the graphic below key principles of adult learning and their implications for teaching design and delivery are presented:

Adults bring life experience and knowledge to the learning environment	• Recognition of adult learners' experience and expertise • Development of training content, associated with the situation that learners are facing • Encouraging learners to reflect upon and share their existing experience and knowledge • Creation of learning activities that reinforce the use of past experience and knowledge
Adults tend to prefer self-directed, autonomous learning	• Design training around participants' training needs and goals • Finding a way to involve participants • Provision of action-planning tools and templates to learners in order to help them to develop and focus their self-directed efforts and facilitate learning • Investigation of what participants want to learn. Adults learn best when specific learning objectives or goals are identified • Provision of opportunities for learners to direct their own learning
Adults have preferences for the way in which they learn.	• Acceptance that not all learners will respond to a given teaching method or technique • Providing customized learning approach according to learners need and developing the appropriate learning strategy • Use of a wide variety of methods corresponding to all learner preferences in training delivery • Make trainers aware of their own learning preferences
Adults learn best through collaboration and reciprocity - an environment where people learn with others while sharing what they already know	• Provision of a low-risk environment for learning, capitalizing the different levels of knowledge and skills within a learning group • Strengthening learner self-esteem through team-based learning, based on mutual trust and respect

Adults are motivated to learn by a wide variety of factors such as personal aspirations, expectations, internal desire or interest, escape from a situation etc.	• Inquiring into the reasons why participants are interested in learning • Invite learners to identify the link between learning and the satisfaction of a personal need or a reduction in an external stress or threat • Make a connection between the learning content and each learner's long-term objectives (in work and life) • Ask participants to discuss the short- and long-term benefits of assimilating the program's content
Adults learners are goal-oriented, relevancy oriented and practical	• Ask learners to identify what they would like to learn • Establish clear learning objectives • Explain how training objectives relate to training activities • Engage learners in identifying the challenges they face and the value of learning to addressing these challenges. • Training must show relevance to job or other interests • Learning has to be applicable to adult work duties or other responsibilities • Focus on teaching practical skills/tools, methods • Give opportunities to apply the knowledge, to practice skills and methods to solve problems
Adult learners need to be respected	• Acknowledge the wealth of knowledge and experiences the participants bring to training • Treat participants as equals • Allow participants to voice their opinions freely
Adults prefer active learning	•The more actively engaged the learner is the more learning takes place •Different training methodologies and techniques have greater rates of retention
Adults want guidance	• Adults want information that will help them to improve their situation or that of their children • Adults do not want to be told what to do but they want to choose options based on their needs

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Key-words

Experience as resource of learning; motivation; guidance; learning environment; relevance of learning; different learning styles; active learning

Question for reflection

- ☞ Thinking about the above mentioned principles of adult learning, how do they influence the way you deliver teaching services to adults in general and intercultural mediators in particular?

4. The role of the adult trainer

Since the field of adult education is constantly expanding, the role of the adult educator is getting more complex and demanding. Several factors affect the role of the adult educator and training practices such as: a) the way that the adult educator considers the process of learning, the correlation between the educator, the learning object and learners, b) the organization's environment in which educational services are provided, c) the broader context of related policies and progress in the field of lifelong learning at European and international level.

Adult educators are asked to assume new roles and use new teaching methods. Their role changes to that of a "facilitator", using practices that meet and exploit the characteristics of adult learners. The traditional model of teacher-oriented training trying to impart knowledge has been proved inadequate and inappropriate. Knowles (1998) gives the adult educator the role of the "encourager/coach", who plans and coordinates the educational process building relationships, detecting and diagnosing needs, and actively involving learners. As to Mezirow (2007) adult educators play the role of a "catalyst" in the learning process. They need to pledge in favor of change, avoiding dogmatism, and promoting dialogue and participation of learners. Their work is not only to recognize the differences between their own goals and expectations from those of learners but also to provide critical thinking about their own and learners' assumptions in order to fulfil the process of learning and induce positive change (Tsimpoukli, 2008).

On the other side, engagement in the learning process is not the only concern about the adult learner; in adult education other adults and other factors are involved affecting the result of learning that should be detected. In this way the educator has to understand the phenomena related to the dynamics of the relationships that are developed in a group of learners, to communicate effectively in order to adapt his strategy; to contribute in creating an appropriate learning environment and lead the group to the desired result. Alongside the adult educator should know his own limits and realize the potential of his personal interventions. According to Marc & Garcia - Locqueneux (cited in: Kokkos, 1999) the adult educator has to accept to be challenged and to carefully listen to criticism. He has to accept his ignorance points and shortcomings as well as to learn from learners.

In order the adult educator to be able to cope with such a key role, except from having sufficient knowledge about his subject area he must also have a set of knowledge, skills and abilities concerning adult education.

Researchers who have been investigating the skills and qualifications adult educators should ideally possess, highlight the following main aspects:

1. Diagnose, capture and utilize learners' needs, claims and expectations according to their participation in a training activity.
2. Adjust the educational process in a way that respects the particular personality traits of learners; deploying previous knowledge and experiences; understanding the different learning styles and capabilities of a group of learners.
3. Being flexible in developing an educational process; designing effectively modules and training materials; combining, enriching and renewing used educational

techniques and instruments aiming at the active participation of learners; providing learning through participatory processes.

4. Communicate effectively with learners, forming a communicative context where explicit messages are exchanged, dialogue dominates, mutual respect grows, cooperativeness is being enhanced and frictions are prevented.
5. Organize, coordinate, and encourage the group of learners, leaving space for initiatives and self-motivation. Stimulating learners to contribute actively in all phases of the learning process.
6. Cooperate effectively with all persons involved in a training activity as well as the learning organization.
7. Have clear knowledge about the labor market; know the needs of the wider or local community and connect this knowledge with social inclusion or employment perspectives of trainees.
8. Have positive self-perception and self-awareness, knowing their skills, strengths, weaknesses and limits.
9. Evaluate and constantly develop themselves, assessing the quality and efficiency of their work, constantly adapting their methods.
10. Being in constant intellectual and scientific awareness; constantly upskilling; monitoring the progress of the field in a scientific and responsible way.
11. Being aware about the kind of training action in which they are involved as well as the participants expectations; adapting their strategies methods and techniques.
12. Help learners to understand the existence of other important dimensions and learning objectives (in addition to technical and professional) towards the direction of greater personal autonomy within the framework of social solidarity and transformation.

It is evident that an adult educator is not able to accumulate at the same time all these features to a full extent. However their acquisition could become a purpose for the adult educator. These characteristics can be viewed as targets of a universal educational process for the adult educator to be more professional and a multifaceted personality.

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did you know?

Mocker and Noble (cited in: Jarvis, 2004, p. 255-256) present the following 24 skills that adult educators should have:

1. *Communicate effectively with learners*
2. *Develop effective working relationships with them*
3. *Strengthen their positive moods*
4. *Create a climate that encourages learner's participation*
5. *Create mutual respect foundations*
6. *Adjust learning style to learner's abilities*
7. *Adapt teaching to the characteristics of each one member of a group of learners*
8. *Understand the difference between children's education and adult education*
9. *Organize teaching conditions that gain the confidence of learners*
10. *Reinforce the learner's interest in educational activities*
11. *Adapt training to learners' changing needs*
12. *Configure venues so as to create a comfortable learning environment*
13. *Recognize the development potential of learners*
14. *Adapt learning at learner's level*
15. *Summarize the key points of each course*
16. *Participate in self-evaluation procedures about the effectiveness of their work*
17. *Give learners constant feedback on their progress*
18. *Focus on areas that are crucial for learners*
19. *Coordinate and supervise educational activities*
20. *Apply adult learner's principles*
21. *Show actively their disposal for innovation and experimentation, reaching out objects in new ways*
22. *Motivate learners to study in their own independent way*
23. *Utilize knowledge and educational materials that other trainers have created*
24. *Link the learning process with learners' experiences*

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http://www.stephenbrookfield.com/Dr._Stephen_D._Brookfield/Home.html

Key-words

Facilitator; catalyst; encouragement; coaching; helper; professional development; organizer; coordinator

Question for reflection

- ☞ How do you visualize the successful adult educator in the field of intercultural mediation?

5. Methods and techniques in adult training

5.1. Methods and techniques

Adult education requires the use of different teaching methods and techniques. Methods can be classified in three general categories: a) **methods of presentation** (fast and comprehensive provision of information - difficulty to bring into action critical thinking of learners and relevance of teaching objects with other content or knowledge - danger for passive learners), b) **instruction methods** (the trainer organizes learning providing activity guided towards achieving a set of prescribed objectives – cultivation of reflection and critical thinking), c) **discovery methods** (helping learners to follow a process of intellectual and mental exploration – security – practical training – transfer of learning – not promoting communication and social relations).

> did you know?
>
> *A method is a broader concept than a technique and refers to a set of principles that define the concept of access to knowledge as well as technical specifications of training provision. A technique is a practical educational tool, the means by which the educational method is applied. In practice a training method is implemented by using various techniques.*
> *(Noye & Piveteau, 1999).*

Some of these categories of methods undoubtedly promote the active participation of learners which is one of the basic goals of adult education. Some of these are: a) **participatory** methods developing interaction between instructors and learners, b) **heuristic** methods by which the trainees elaborate tasks and discover knowledge, c) **interrogative** methods helping learners to discover what the instructors want to teach d) **active** methods combining action with consideration and e) **exploration** and **application** methods. The use of these methods depends on the nature of the teaching content, the teaching situation and the group of learners. Their combination can prove effective because it stimulates the motivation of adult learners avoiding monotony. Training techniques supporting the implementation of these methods, are according to the literature:

Enriched presentation

Although this technique has received international criticism as to its adequacy in adult education, it is widely used. Despite its disadvantages today it is one of the basic instructional techniques because if used following basic requirements it can have numerous positive effects. So instead of removing it completely the trainer should know in which cases it is considered the most appropriate technique and especially how it can be improved through its combination with other more active techniques. Some of the basic requirements on behalf of the trainer for an effective presentation are:

> did you know?
>
> *Noye & Piveteau (1999) propose the following learning techniques: Presentation, demonstration, object handling, experimentation, discussion, evaluation, practice, reading, programmed training, training through pc, simulation, case study, exercises, text writing, preparation of presentation, research, self-observation, reciprocal advices, construction working tools, projects.*

- Excellent preparation and knowledge of the subject on behalf of the trainer

- Presentation objectives to be announced at the beginning and be related to the learners' needs
- Starting pleasantly surprising students in a way that attracts their attention
- Brevity
- Clearly speaking with definite messages, using carefully non-verbal communication and the technique of diaphragmatic breathing
- Use of humor and a lot of examples
- Use of supportive audiovisual material
- Observe and actively analyze nonverbal communication of learners (if they are interested, if they are watching etc.)
- Showing confidence and interest in the subject
- Avoiding jargon and having suitable appearance according to the group of trainees
- Maintaining eye contact with the group of trainees
- Asking feedback from trainees

In order to ensure an effective presentation some techniques that enhance the active participation of learners are also important to be exploited, such as: a) the assignment of the role of active listener to trainees, b) guided note-taking, c) occasional challenges (presentation interruption and asking learners for examples or answers to questions), d) collaborative learning (providing different data to participants and asking their collaboration), e) clarification exercises.

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Cases in which the use of presentation is more suitable (Eitington, 1996):

- *The trainer feels the need to present his/her personal view*
- *It is an easier and faster knowledge transfer technique*
- *In a participatory training program the occasional use of a presentation (short and comprehensive) can enhance teaching style and prevent boredom*
- *The need for learners to ask questions can be fully and quickly covered*
- *The demonstration of a tool or a device may require some presentation in order to identify and explain the main elements*
- *When the subject to be studied is changing very often and adding new elements can only be treated with vertical data transfer*

Questions & answers - discussion

Questions/answers and discussion are two closely related training techniques aiming at facilitating learning through the development of dialogue between trainer and trainees or between learners. Their difference is that the questions / answers do not address an issue as thoroughly as a discussion which is used for the systematic consideration of a subject. In a discussion the trainer should have a prearranged series of questions while questions / answers are implemented with a relative improvisation. They can be used in combination with other techniques commonly used with presentation. **Discussions are useful at the initial approach of an issue pushing learners to reflect on it and consider various aspects**. Questions should be addressed to all, be open, push to substantiated reasoning, avoiding pseudo-questions. Some advantages and disadvantages are listed below:

Advantages	Disadvantages
Self-motivation, development of participatory and communicative climate between learners, critical thinking development, detailed approach understanding the issue and learners needs More about discussion Promoting cooperation capacity among trainees	Time-consuming process, possible interventions out off topic, not ensuring participation of all, not based on action More about discussion Presupposing knowledge of trainees on the subject

Brainstorming

Using this technique the trainer provides a central idea or an issue to the learners calling them to express their ideas freely and spontaneously. **It is a highly participatory technique, promoting the involvement of learners in the learning process, helping the development of intimacy, cooperation, and contributing to the improvement of the learning climate.** Among its advantages are also: the exploitation of the experience and creativity of learners, the development of free expression, critical thinking and cooperation, as well as the examination of issues from new perspectives leading to the transformation of certain stereotypical beliefs. Disadvantages of this technique are that some learners may not participate and the whole activity can be turned to become a show of imagination rather than a creative expression. Applying this technique the trainer asks the trainees to suggest individually as many ideas as they can to a posed question; encouraging them to express themselves rapidly, spontaneously, one after the other in the form of storm. The familiarity of trainees with the learning subject is not an important issue. Brainstorming is mostly used at the beginning of an issue approach. In order to be effective some technical specifications should be met such as:

- No criticism should take place during the presentation of ideas
- The trainer must ensure that trainees feel comfortable
- The trainer should be careful so that brain storming is not extended beyond purpose
- The trainer should ask trainees to make comments on the submitted aspects
- Faithfully notes the ideas on the board without indicating anything
- Examine the written words and try to divide them into categories
- Utilize questions - answers or discussion to lead the team to comment on what follows
- Make a synthesis of the results at the end

Working in groups

In this technique learners are divided into subgroups (3-5 persons) in order to do some exercise or discuss a topic. Each subgroup announces to the plenary its findings and the trainer coordinates a discussion among subgroups. The implementation of this technique concludes with the trainer's synthesis, comments and connection with training objectives. This technique is the most mature way to develop self-awareness, critical thinking and an effective approach to an object. Within a group a learner changes behaviors and response

modes, forms common perceptions, ideas and beliefs, evaluates, judges, and criticizes in the same manner. This technique can be flexibly applied to every content and adult education activity. **Among its advantages is the development of essential communication between learners, freedom of expression, reduction of failure feelings, development of reciprocity and mutual help.** However this technique may not be effective if the trainer wants to coordinate everything, does not trust the capabilities of trainees, or does not allow taking initiatives.

Case studies

In the frame of this technique trainees receive the description of a problem which is either real or hypothetical and are invited to study it in depth and propose solutions to the problems described. Very often a lot of different solutions are proposed, presented and discussed in plenary identifying positive and negative aspects. If the case refers to a real problem at the end the applied solution is presented and discussed. The difference of working in groups consists in the fact that a case study is a synthetic exercise which requires more time to be completed. It must not be applied at the beginning of a learning subject but mostly when the learning subject has been investigated and learners have acquired some knowledge on it. Among the **advantages** of case studies are the following: they reinforce the critical and analytical ability of learners; specialized rather than general knowledge is developed if the case reflects real situations contributing to transformation of trainees attitudes; they promote communication and collaboration between groups of learners; they save teaching time. The **disadvantages** of the technique are that it is difficult to be associated with the experiences of all learners as well as it is difficult to have conclusions when solutions are not quantitative. For its effective implementation the trainer should have a significant educational and professional experience. For case studies to be successful:

- The scenario should be realistic, preferably real and serve educational goals
- Information or data must be clear, sufficient, comprehensive and in logical order
- The case should be complex requiring extensive study and effort
- Unnecessary data or data that might create confusion should be avoided
- The scenario should raise debates or disagreements when it is being analyzed at the plenary
- Enough time for study and discussion should be provided

Role playing

In the frame of this technique trainees act roles associated with their professional or social environment so that through this experience to understand deeper the situation and their reactions on it. It is applied when the resolution of a problem or conflict requires specific skills, communication and behaviors. Role playing provides learners with the opportunity to **act and experience real situations in a protected learning environment in which testing, mistakes and practice are permitted.** Through feedback from trainees and the trainer it is possible for learners to improve and develop desired behaviors.

Among the **advantages** of role playing are: the development of skills in negotiation and communication, expression of feelings, cooperation development, attitudes changing. However, its implementation depends on the mood and creativity of learners, and knowledge of group dynamics on behalf of the trainer.

Role playing is implemented in the following stages: a) scenario creation from the instructor, b) preparation of the trainee group, c) selection of "actors", d) preparation of "actors", e) preparation of observers, f) role playing g) derolling, h) discussion and comments in plenary. In order to be successful:

- The scenario, rules and instructions should be clear and accurate
- The group must have been already formed
- The situation or context of the play should be close to learners' interests
- Participants should be encouraged to react spontaneously
- Trainers should encourage and guide players and observers
- Role playing flow should not be interrupted by players or observers
- It should be applied when trainees are not tired

Relevant to the role playing technique is **simulation**. Its difference is that students do not enter into a play, do not act a role. They participate in an imaginary and if possible realistic performance trying to think as real people affected by the situation (e.g. to express their opinions as if they were business executives, diplomats etc.). Otherwise this technique follows the same rules as role playing.

Interviewing specialists

This technique involves the transfer of experience from specialists to trainees, collecting information according to trainees' needs. Its implementation is divided into three stages: preparation, implementation and finally interpretation and composition. In this way: a) trainees actively participate in forming the content of education and the acquisition of specific knowledge, b) they cover directly their individual or group training needs, c) their self-directed learning skills grow, d) they develop analytical and critical thinking e) they develop active listening and observation skills.

5.2. Choosing the appropriate technique

The effectiveness of the implementation of training techniques depends on several and varying factors. For this reason the trainer should be aware of the appropriate technique for each situation and implement it according to its specifications. Furthermore he should combine and alternate techniques depending on the dynamics of learners. The selection criteria should be:

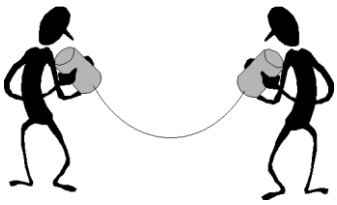
a) The purpose of training
b) The learning context
c) Preferred learning methods and characteristics of learners
d) Trainers' skills

e) The learning climate
f) The available time
g) Resources

Select a topic within your field of expertise from the TIME IM training course and then review the techniques proposed in the Training Methodology.
a) What do you know about each one of these techniques? How is it applied?
b) How would you apply the above mentioned criteria for your final selection of techniques?

5.3. Communication in adult education

Undoubtedly, communication is the core characteristic of any relationship or transaction in which we engage in daily life. Our personal or social success depends to a great extent on the quality of our communication transactions, while many problems of our everyday life are the outcome of dysfunctional or ineffective communication relationships. Therefore the successful implementation of any learning process, which above all is a face to face communication between trainer and learner, depends on the quality of communication.



What is communication? It is a simple process of message transmission between a transmitter and a receiver accompanied by feedback from the receiver to the transmitter. Communication has two aspects or levels: a) **content** (measurable, visible and objective evidence of what is said, where, when) and b) **the relation** between the transmitter and the receiver. These two aspects / levels are inseparable and simultaneously influence the perception of each other's communication.

Why do we communicate? Each one of us trying to communicate has a specific pushing need; communication meets our internal needs for physical and social survival. Through communication we want to feel safe, to perceive value, to be related, to give information, to express ourselves, to seek for recognition.

What is the quality of communication? Communication is not always running smoothly as it can be affected by various obstacles or noises while encoding or transmitting the message. Obstacles mostly stem from the fact that people who communicate have different scopes, perceptions or values which are a functional and integral part of our personality and by means of which we understand reality.

Are we able to communicate effectively? Although communication has many aspects, at the same time it is the measure by which two people count their value or each other's value; it refers to the range of ways in which information is circulated (given, received, interpreted and used). And yes, it can be learned!

Effective communication requires specific skills. It requires sharpness and clarity of messages; active exchange of messages, familiarization with body language, removing

obstacles, recognizing the uniqueness of diversity. While communicating with others it is important to know that the language used reflects perceptions and images about the world that are different from ours. Therefore we should try to understand the others, to see with their eyes, to wear their shoes for a while. This requires taking some distance from our own beliefs system but of course it does not mean that we move away from it or lose our values, opinions and beliefs. At the same time, a healthy self-esteem and assertiveness contribute significantly to efficient communication.

Read the following text and try to find in which stages of communication obstacles appeared. Then list these obstacles.

Mr. K. is an adult educator in a vocational training program. At the second meeting of the program he announces to the participants the subject of the projects that they should deliver as well as the delivery dates, considering that this announcement contributes to easier time management on behalf of the trainees and to better organization of the courses. Trainees respond claiming that Mr. K does not understand them, their available time is limited, the subject of the project is difficult, they have not yet been adjusted to the program, etc. There is a lot of frustration and participants are speaking altogether, a lot of noise… Mr. K is bothered by their behavior and begins teaching saying that no more time can be allocated for this hopeless debate. During the break learners negatively comment on Mr. K's behavior.

5.4. Group dynamics

A group is more than people gathering. The existence of a group requires a common identity (a goal), but even this is not enough by itself. Interaction is necessary between the group members allowing the development of common attitudes and emotions, having a minimum set of agreed values or principles. Groups can be heterogeneous (different ethnicity, gender, age, job, etc.) or homogeneous (sharing common features). Groups are not static, they are dynamic; they grow and evolve.

In the field of adult education most groups operate mainly as small primary teams (face-to-face, with a bond between them based on mutual acceptance of roles) which meet regularly sharing common tasks. Each team member receives influences from others and builds itself in many ways. In adult education, place (educational context), aims and results (achievement of learning objectives), duration (default), trainer and trainees (selection criteria) are important factors in shaping group processes and dynamics. Group dynamic depends on communication between learners, the degree of group cohesion, rules of behavior that the group adopts, and the relationship between the group and its environment. Group processes refer to actions that cause change in the group, to its operation, reactions and behaviors that a group tries to achieve.

How do individuals form a group?
What are the phases of a group life?

Experts state that groups evolve according to the following stages:

Forming: participants try to understand their role, find points of contact, and define their mission. Communication is difficult, worry and anxiety are at a high level, and there is fear of rejection. Some members are trying to impose personal standards of group organization.

Storming: characterized by disagreements, conflicts and confrontations. Each member is struggling to find its place within the group, while most try to maintain their individuality. In this phase, sub-groups are created; often some trainees leave or the group is dissolved.

Norming: group members realize the need of group cohesion, they agree on role distribution, rules, hierarchy, decision-making, and the way of group operation. Communication is smooth and a code is formulated. There is friendliness, cooperation, trust. The group concentrates on its work and performs in accordance with its possibilities.

Performing: characterized by cohesion, harmony and unity, logic prevails. The group is in steady state and can move rapidly to meet its goals and accomplish its work.

Adjourning: the group has achieved its purpose, has completed its work, either dissolved or transformed into a new group to achieve a new goal.

The first three phases are crucial for the evolution of the group. Particularly critical is the group's transition from the second to the third stage. Trainers should take an active role especially in these first two stages and be able to recognize them. It is important that the trainer: a) helps learners to freely express their expectations and objectives, b) sets boundaries and rules, c) answers questions and conciliates their concerns, d) enhances active participation of all learners in exchanging views and information.

At the stage of conflict the trainer should a) help learners to understand the source of their stress, b) explain how and why certain behaviors cause conflicts in the group associated with anxiety and point the need of trainees to control the group, c) directly face the expressed challenges working as coordinator of conflicts between group members.

Most training groups stay at the first stage. Rarely do they develop to the second stage and then they are usually dissolved. This fact affects both the trainer's work and the learning process. Therefore the trainer needs to identify the phase of the group's life and help the group proceed to the next steps in order to function effectively.

did you know?

It is not necessary for every group to go through all the stages and end up in the final.

Take a few minutes to study the following example. Did the group manage to pass all the stages? If not at what stage did it stop?

In a training group of twenty newly recruited staff of a ministry, aiming at providing better services, the adult educator asked learners to split into pairs, to know each other and then at six-folds. The trainees followed his instructions, although with some resentment. Having met in pairs and six-folds, the trainer asked them to refer to their expectations from the program. A lot of them began to react saying that they do not understand the reasons why they should take part in this activity. The trainer, however, insisted on not discussing their worries and fears. After about ten minutes, one of the learners got up very angry, accusing the trainer that the used activity is inappropriate, meaningless and rather serves other purposes. Many participants reacted similarly. The trainer, feeling anger because the learners questioned his intentions, entered into confrontation with them for the rest of time. The next day he decided to follow the traditional way of teaching, shaped the classroom respectively and presented his presentation with slides, failing to provide considerable time for questions.

THINK!

Groups can be very helpful in learning but in some circumstances can also prevent it. It is up to the trainer to keep the balance in order to build on team strengths and minimize or eliminate disadvantages. He should rebalance them and ensure effective operation.

5.5. Crisis management

A lot of adult trainers have faced disruptions in the learning process which have pushed both theirs and the participants' limits. These incidents can threaten the sense of control over the learning process and generate fear to the trainer of looking weak to the group of learners. Coupling these feelings with the possibility of taking the disruption personally, a recipe for disaster just emerged.

Do's and don'ts in crisis management in the classroom

TRY THIS!

Do:

- *Show the learners that you're willing to hear his or her side*
- *Guess the motive for the misbehavior, and acknowledge it without agreeing to the learner's choice of a solution*
- *Deflect attempts to argue*
- *Use humor*

Don't:

- *Criticize, lecture, scold, blame*
- *Argue*
- *Say or imply "no excuses"*
- *Take immediate action*
- *Embarrass or attack the learners' dignity*
- *Demand*

It is important for the trainer to divide his response in two phases: **first to ensure immediate stabilization** and **second to intervene in order to resolve the issue**. Often trainers try to solve an unstable situation, only to escalate to the point where no intervention will work. To be stable, both the trainer and learners need to be relatively anger free, calm and willing to listen to the other's point of view. Calming down requires time for everyone to depersonalize the incident. Often, learners will rethink what they did

when given time to reflect. Common sense tells trainers to intervene as fast as possible, that waiting is against them. Waiting is not usually a good idea and an immediate intervention always works best. But most people make things worse when temperature is hot and emotions are high. It is far better to stabilize things before jumping immediately into an intervention. It is better to lower the temperature first.

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Key-words

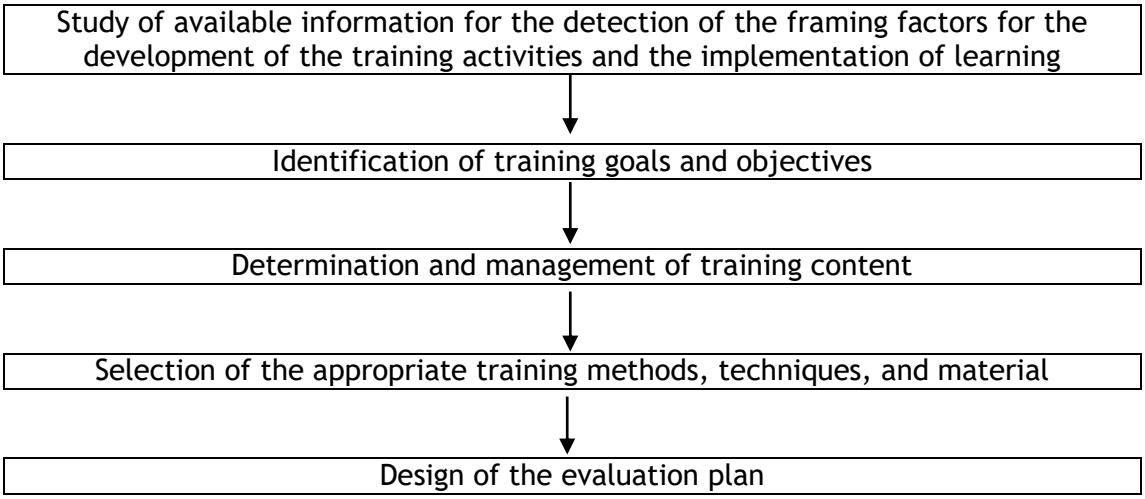
Methods; techniques; active participation; combination of techniques; technique selection; group dynamics; communication; understanding; acceptance; interaction; roles; group evolution; crisis management

Questions for reflection

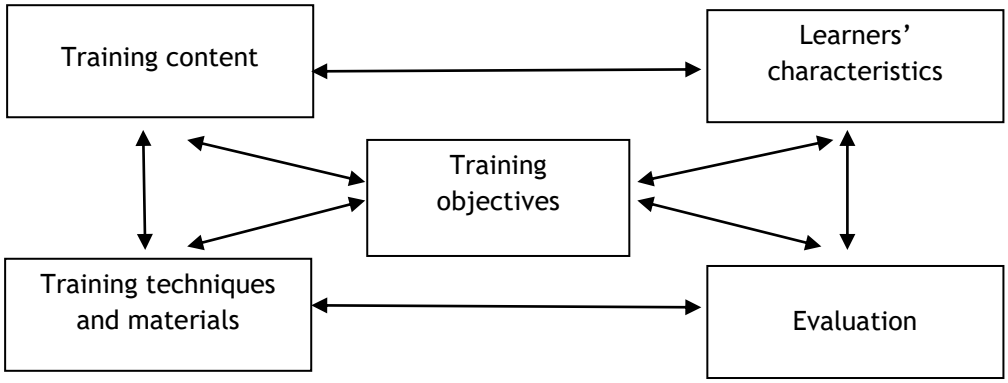
- Think about the above mentioned training techniques. How can you apply them while training intercultural mediators?
- Visit and observe for one hour an adult educational activity. Think carefully which communication principles are being applied negatively or positively.
- Think about an example of a group of adult learners that has reached all five stages. Why did this happen?

6. Course design and delivery

The design of an adult education program is an ongoing rather than a static process. Its implementation requires creativity, specialization, important decisions, in-depth study, drastic revisions, and feedback from those involved. The planning process, whether concerning a module or an entire training program, consists of some basic steps as follows.



These steps are closely linked and significantly affecting each other as shown in the following figure:



What an adult trainer should remember is not so much the sequence of the above steps, but the flexibility needed. This means that no matter how detailed the design of a course or module has been, the success of implementation will be judged by whether the trainer is able to adjust what has been already designed for the smoother achievement of learning goals and in order to better meet the individual needs of learners.

Study of available information

At the beginning of the development of a training course this stage involves:

1. The study of the existing situation, the detection of the basic problems and the detection of the target group
2. The identification and analysis of the important data, social – economic situation, professional characteristics, culture of the target group
3. Investigation and assessment of the training needs
4. Assessment of the available resources (material, venues, trainees, staff etc.) for training implementation

At the phase of the development of training modules, the available information on the main characteristics of learners, goals and objectives of education are considered in order to identify the determinants that shape the framework of the development and implementation of the training. This information should answer the following questions:

⇒ **Who is the trainee,** basic characteristics, sex, age, qualifications, professional experience, awareness of gaps and needs
⇒ **Why** is the whole training implemented (what is the main purpose of the training program part of which is the training module)
⇒ **What** is the content of the training program part of which is the training module
⇒ **Where** training is implemented
⇒ **When** is training offered
⇒ **What is** available for the implementation of the training (resources, material etc.)

Training goals and objectives

Training goals are **broad, general statements of what one hopes to accomplish** as a result of training. They derive from the study of the existing situation, the detection and analysis of the important data, and the assessment of the training needs. They are the general declaration of the intention of the training program.

On the other hand, training objectives concern the **specific results pursued by training**. The objectives must meet the educational needs of the program and correspond to the real potential of learners. The objectives are the framework according to which trainers determine and arrange the detailed content of training, select appropriate educational techniques, necessary training materials, and evaluation methods. The training objectives are classified according to the major trends and international literature in several levels such as **knowledge, skills, competences and attitudes**.

- Level of knowledge: assimilation of information through learning (understanding, analytical skills, synthesis, evaluation)
- Skills level: what the learner is capable of doing after training - the ability to apply knowledge and use know-how to complete tasks and solve problems
- Competence level: the proven ability to use knowledge, skills and personal, social and/or methodological abilities, in work or study situations and in professional and personal development
- Attitudes level: what values and general

did you know? The objectives of a learning pathway, a VET program or elements of a qualification are expressed as **learning outcomes** in terms of knowledge, skills and competences to be acquired and mastered at a given reference level *(Copenhagen progress technical working group credit transfer, 2004, chapter 2.3.1.i)*

predispositions are developed that will affect the preferences and behavior towards persons, things or situations

A comprehensive formulation of learning objectives consists of the **intended outcome** plus the **display condition** plus the **success criteria**.

Go through the learning outcomes of a module or topic of the TIME IM course relevant to your field of expertise. What are the implications for the course design on your behalf?

Determination and management of training content

This stage includes:
- Determination of course and module content
- Splitting modules into topics
- Allocation of time to modules within the course and topics within the modules

Module content organization standards are:
- Correspondence to training goals and objectives
- Meeting learners training needs and basic characteristics
- Specific, detailed and clear formulation /wording
- Consistency and completeness as to the selection, classification and organization of the topics' content

Selection of training methods, techniques, and material

The selection of training methods and techniques is the outcome of a concerted estimation of:
- The type of training objectives and learning outcomes
- Training content
- Learners' basic characteristics, their homogeneity or difference
- Available time
- Possibilities of implementation and available infrastructure
- The trainer's ability and familiarity

The most common types of training material are: handouts, video-projectors, computers, training manuals, audio-visual material such as films and tapes, PowerPoint presentations, flash cards, pictures, drawings, diagrams, objects, flipcharts, stickers, etc.

Training material can de useful when used properly. In order to yield the desired results the following requirements should be met:

- Material must support the training objectives and chosen educational techniques
- It should be used sparingly
- It should be used in a flexible and alternative way creating variety and interest in the learning process
- It should be often used by trainees themselves in accordance with their learning characteristics

- It should fit in the characteristics of the place where training is implemented
- It should fit in the phases of the group's life

A useful way for capturing training techniques and materials per module is the use of the table below.

Course / Module / Topic	Duration	Training techniques	Training materials

Evaluation plan

The assessment of learner's performance aims at the valid and reliable estimation of the degree of knowledge, skills and competences acquired through participation in the training activity. Besides assessment, the evaluation process includes also the performance of the trainer as well as other factors such as adequacy of training materials, effectiveness of educational techniques, etc. Techniques and data collection instruments for the evaluation should meet the formulated training objectives and content as well as the basic characteristics and capabilities of trainees. Common evaluation tools include questionnaires, success and performance tests, questions to trainees, recordings, discussions, and observation.

Identify the key features of the assessment methodology proposed for the implementation of the TIME IM course. Then make a comparison with the assessment and evaluation methodology of the training provider. What are the implications for you? Would you propose any changes?

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Key-words:

Training needs assessment; planning; learning objectives; knowledge; skills; attitudes; competences; modules; training content determination; selection of training techniques; training materials evaluation; evaluation tools

Questions for reflection

- Describe a successful and an unsuccessful use of training material from your experience: what went wrong?
- What do you think that are the important data for the development of a module entitled "Basic principles of communication" addressed at unemployed persons whose main aim is the integration in the labor market?
- Recall a training program in which you participated as a trainee. Try to think what the training objectives were. Capture one or two of them. To what level did they belong?
- Do you believe that the module design is of major importance for a training program? Why?
- Think of some benefits of the training evaluation process a) for the training provider, b) for the trainer, c) for the trainees.
- Select a module of your choice and develop its training objectives. Then identify the content of topics giving them the appropriate time weight. Afterwards specify the appropriate training techniques and materials.

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