



PRAGUE PROCESS
ПРАЖСКИЙ ПРОЦЕСС

HOW TO BE A GOOD TRAINER?

Strategies and hints for innovative and impactful training with a focus on human rights and migration education



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This Training Manual was produced within the Prague Process Training Academy, which aims to enhance capacity building and the implementation of advanced trainings on migration-related issues across the Prague Process states by supplying the competent migration authorities with the necessary tools for organising own trainings in-house. Migration practitioners can use this Manual as a practical guide on how to deliver knowledge to any target audience.

This Manual is a result of the rich training expertise of its author, Mr Gabor Gyulai, who has been engaged as a trainer within the Prague Process since 2014. His research and advocacy work have been mainly focusing on evidentiary and credibility assessment, country information, gender and intercultural issues in asylum cases, as well as nationality and statelessness. He has conducted research and published a number of studies and articles on these issues while also being a reputable international trainer with hundreds of training sessions conducted to asylum professionals on various continents.

FOREWORD

“ *Training is everything. The peach was once a bitter almond; cauliflower is nothing but cabbage with a college education.* ”

Mark Twain

Education and learning have changed massively in the last hundred years. Primary, secondary and – increasingly – university-level education have become more accessible than ever in human history. Knowledge transfer to new generations has grown more inclusive, less hierarchical and better supported by technology. The role of learning has also changed dramatically: in the 21st-century economy, based on knowledge, services and IT-literacy, life-long learning is more and more a universal requirement, rather than a hobby of a privileged few.

In the past decades, “training” has evolved to be a solid concept, distinct from the traditional notions of teaching and education, which were historically limited to schools and universities. As we will see later on, being a “trainer” is a different role than being a high school teacher or a university professor. This role also requires specific skills and preparedness. Yet, very often, trainers in charge of transmitting knowledge to professionals or improving the skills of their colleagues are not actually *trained* to be a trainer. Being a senior staff member, an experienced practitioner of a certain field, or a passionate reader of academic articles is not enough to be an effective trainer. The objective of this guide is to **help future or current trainers develop the necessary skills and techniques which are indispensable for successful training.**

While most of its content applies more generally, this manual focuses on training in the field of human rights and migration. Training in these fields represents a somewhat different challenge (and we will see later on how) than educational activities in other areas, such as business life, finances or service provision, for which a number of supporting materials are already available online.

This is not an academic publication; this guide is aimed at **busy professionals, who need immediate and hands-on support for their daily work in a simple, accessible and easily digestible format.** Therefore, academic references will be kept to the necessary minimum, and we will apply a practice-oriented focus with simple and informal language (understandable for non-native speakers as well).

The content of this manual is mainly based on the author’s decade-long practical experience of training and lecturing to over 3 000 professionals from over 80 countries across the world on issues related to forced migration and human rights, including the development of training programmes, training manuals and e-learning courses. In addition, the content reflects, when relevant, current scientific knowledge as drawn from research-based literature.

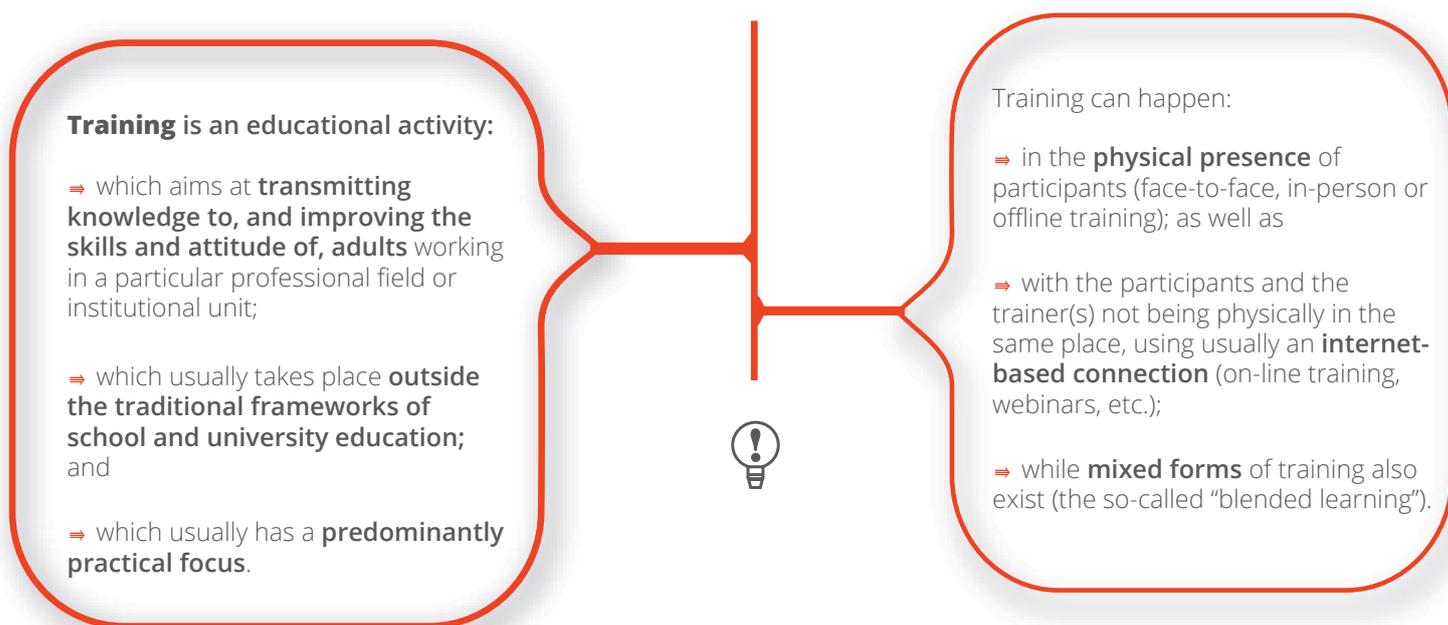
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I. INTRODUCTION: BEING A TRAINER

1.1. WHAT IS TRAINING? WHO IS A TRAINER?

According to the Oxford Dictionary, training is *"The action of teaching a person or animal a particular skill or type of behaviour"*.¹ If we look for a more specific meaning for our actual context, training could be defined as follows:



Trainer-led teaching elements can also be completed with **self-study**, where trainees carry out learning activities by themselves, without constant contact with the trainer. This can also be based on online methods (e-learning course) or offline resources (exercises in a training manual).

This guide **concentrates on offline training** based on direct contact between the trainer and the trainee.

Training significantly **differs from the traditional forms of school and university education**. For example:²

School/university education

Mainly **targeted** at children or young adults (<25), participants are usually of a similar age

Participants usually lack practical work experience

Theory has an important role: focal issues are often distant from students' everyday life

Training

Targeted at adults of any age, participants may have a diverse range of ages and life experiences

Participants usually have work experience, or even significant professional expertise

Theory only plays a role if it can be clearly translated into practical knowledge and skills; focal issues are usually directly linked to participants' everyday experience

1. <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/training>

2. These are ideal-typical examples ("how it usually happens"), in reality, both university education and training can take different forms.

School/university education

Takes place at educational institutions (primary school, high school, university), where the physical settings (e.g. seating arrangement) are unchangeable

Usually **bound by** several administrative requirements (mandatory exam and evaluation system, strict curriculum, etc.)

The teaching process is more spread out in time, more time (e.g. a semester or year) is available for the educator to complete the learning programme

Based on a more hierarchical relationship: students are obliged to participate in the teaching activities and must follow clear behavioural rules (and show respect) towards the teacher

Training

Usually **takes place** in more informal settings (hotel, training room, etc.), which encourages interactivity, dynamism, etc

Usually more flexible, not **bound by** administrative requirements (the trainer has more liberty to design the style and programme)

The teaching process is usually more concentrated in time, the trainer often has one or a few days of intense learning time to reach the learning objectives

Based on a less or completely non-hierarchical relationship: participants may not be obliged to attend the training, or even when administratively obliged, they have more liberty to refuse, "sneak out" or to challenge, criticise or contradict the trainer

All these differences shape the way in which a **trainer is different from, for instance, a university professor**. These special characteristics can define a **trainer's specific professional identity**.³

Professor

Expected to be an academic expert of her/his topic, expected to be able to answer all reasonable questions, often bases her/his teaching activity on own research and/or directly obtained academic or practical expertise

Feels comfortable (also) in a more hierarchical teacher-student setting

Strongest point: knowledge (of course complemented with good teaching skills)

Teaching is often her/his main (or only) job

Trainer

Not expected to be a top academic expert on the issue in focus and to present based on own scientific work, not expected to be able to answer each and every question, but...

Expected to have a sound knowledge of the issue, to have a significantly better knowledge of it than the trainees and to be able to properly answer most questions

Feels comfortable (also) in a less or non-hierarchical setting, able to obtain respect and attention merely based on her/his own performance as a trainer

Strongest point: teaching skills (of course supported by a good knowledge of the focus issue)

Teaching is often only a part of her/his job

3. Once again, these are no more than thought-inspiring lists of "how it often happens", in reality, some professors and trainers may have different approaches to these questions.

The difference between these roles can be, at times, very fluid, and several professional educators are able to easily switch between these roles, depending on who their audience or what the framework is (exactly as one can be perfectly able to write an academic article in an Oxford-based prestigious law journal on Monday and a practical training manual for social workers in plain English with several illustrations on Tuesday). Yet, it is crucial to understand this distinction, especially because **the misunderstanding of the trainer's role frequently discourages potential trainers from attempting this activity**. Let us repeat once again: you don't need to be the most well-known academic expert on a topic to become a good trainer, just as you don't need to know everything about a topic to be able to pass on the essentials of it to a non-professional audience. Everything will depend on the context. Obviously, to train a group of medical doctors on a ground-breaking new diagnostic method you will have to be someone who has practiced that method already and has a profound knowledge of all the challenges it may present. At the same time, to sensitise a group of asylum officers about how linguistic diversity and the inherent limits of interpreting can distort the credibility assessment in asylum procedures, you don't need to be a trained linguist with 20 years of academic research experience. It will be more significant that you have a wide range of diverse practical experience around this issue, that you speak a few languages yourself and know several impressive examples, and you are well prepared to summarise in a concise, digestible format what up-to-date research says about this challenge.

Furthermore, being a trainer in human rights, migration, social work or other humanitarian or rights-oriented fields also brings with it some specific features when compared to training in other settings, such as corporate business contexts, client services, information technology, medicine or other applied natural sciences. This type of training inherently includes a stronger focus on **attitude development**, rather than solely concentrating on knowledge and skills (we will discuss these three domains of learning later on).

From all this, you can already identify some of the **basic expectations one might have towards professional trainers**, such as:



⇒ A trainer should be able to gain and maintain the attention and the interest of her/his audience;

⇒ A trainer should be “credible”, i.e. she/he should demonstrate sound, up-to-date and diverse knowledge of the focal issue, even if this does not necessarily need to reach the level of in-depth academic expertise;

⇒ A trainer should be able to professionally apply a variety of adult education techniques, which reflect the characteristics of the typically diverse group of adult participants.

Most teaching skills can be significantly developed with learning and practice. However, there are some personal characteristics which are absolutely crucial for every trainer, and which are also possible to improve but – unfortunately – impossible to change radically (being rooted in bodily features or in deep layers of our personality). For example, a trainer must have:

⇒ A **relatively strong and “resistant”** voice and a clear way of speaking;

⇒ A good ability to **systemise and structure information**, as well as **distil the essential points** from larger amounts of information;

⇒ A balanced level of **healthy self-confidence and the capacity to stand in front of an audience** for several hours or days, without feeling significant distress.

Every future trainer is recommended to reflect on whether she/he fulfils these criteria, as without these, you will face significant (even if not insurmountable) difficulties. The good news is that all the rest can be learnt and improved!

1.2. WHAT MAKES TRAINING USEFUL?

We have seen that training is something different from being a university professor, an academic expert or a primary school teacher. But in the end, what makes training useful and effective? As a trainer, how do I know whether I did a good job? The answer will, of course, largely depend on the particular topic, target group and context. The following simple formula can help you in this endeavour:

Effective training = Innovative training + Impactful training

To be effective, training needs to be **INNOVATIVE**.

What does it mean? According to the Oxford Dictionary, *innovative* means “featuring new methods; advanced and original”⁴

Why is it necessary?

- ⇒ Because there is a myriad of possibilities to involve colourful, interactive techniques, visual support, and internet-based technology support in training, yet training is still painfully often limited to a handful of “frontal”, traditional lecturing methods (“everybody else is doing it that way, why should I try something different?”);
- ⇒ Because scientific research has proved⁵ that traditional voice-based lecturing is the least effective way of teaching;
- ⇒ Because we remember much better something different, extraordinary or original that stands out from its context than common, usual or repetitive things – if your training methods are perceived as new and original, most participants will retain much more of what you taught them;
- ⇒ Because we are all different, and being effective in training work requires finding our own personal and original style, which is not possible without trying various innovative methods, etc.

How can we measure this? The following checklist may help answer the question “Was I really an innovative trainer?”:

- Did I modify the training programme and methods after considering the specific characteristics of the group, or did I just repeat my standard content (standard slides, etc.)?
- What percentage of the training consisted of lecturing supported with textual slides?
- What percentage of the training focused on skills development and attitude change (rather than knowledge transmission)?⁶
- During what percentage of the training were participants not sitting in their “standard” seat (where they first sat down in the morning)?
- How many types of intelligence (according to the multiple intelligences model⁷) did my training stimulate?
- What was the proportion of my voice being heard in the training room in relation to that of the participants and other sounds (film, music, etc.)?
- Did participants see something specifically stimulating during the training (pictures, films, illustrations, caricatures, etc.)?
- What did participants bring home from the training? Only their notes? Or something else, too?
- What percentage of the training showed the “human face”, “human impact” or the emotional, cultural, psychological side of the focal issue (rather than being limited to purely legal or factual features)?⁸

4. <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/innovative>

5. See in Chapter II.2

6. See Chapter III.2

7. See Chapter III.3

8. Of course, possibilities will largely depend on what the topic is

- What percentage of participants had the chance to say something in plenary?
- Did I use any unusual or surprising method or example? Did it work?
- Did I do anything that will make participants remember me as an outstanding trainer, “positively different than the average”?
- Did participants visibly feel good during the training session? Was there a good ambiance in the room? Etc.

In the end, the main indicator of a training’s success will be whether it has reached its intended **IMPACT**.

What does it mean? Being impactful in this context means that the training transmitted useful knowledge and skills to participants and managed to develop their attitude towards the focal issue, and this will result in positive change in their work practices.

Why is it necessary? Because training is not a l’art pour l’art exercise: a training may well be innovative and “fun” for participants, but if it does not have a real impact on their work, its usefulness remains questionable.

How can we measure this? Impact assessment will, of course, largely depend on the context (learning objectives, the “mandate” of the trainer, the group’s characteristics, etc.).

The following table can be useful in this process:



Practice and process change

LONGER-TERM IMPACT

- Is there any visible change (introduction of new methods, policy change, improvement of quality or working style, etc.) in the practice of participants? Are any of the key training messages visible in participants’ daily practices and “outputs” (e.g. in their judgments, legal briefs, etc.)?
- A follow-up interview with selected participants and/or their supervisor, 3-12 months after the training can provide helpful information on how they assess its impact.
- Do I receive spontaneous follow-up questions from participants months or years after the training?
- Did the training trigger a change in working structures and internal processes (e.g. the appointment of a focal point for a particular issue that was identified as crucial during the training, the introduction of a specific protocol, etc.)?
- Did the training contribute to identifying further training needs? Am I invited to do a follow-up training later, or are other types of follow-up trainings held within 1-3 years?
- Do those working with the target group (e.g. lawyers working with an authority, judges dealing with legal representatives, etc.) share any information about any impact, such as an improvement in quality?



Customer satisfaction

IMMEDIATE IMPACT

- Standard evaluation form and other forms of feedback to measure whether participants were pleased with the content, methodology, relevance, usefulness, etc.
- Did I receive many questions during and after the training that indicate that the learning process inspired participants to think and get engaged?
- An evaluation interview with a senior participant (unit manager, director, chief learning officer, etc.) can provide additional information.
- How did I, the trainer, feel after the training? Did I feel frustration, or was I pleased with the outcome?
- If participants received homework, how many of them completed it duly and by the deadline?

As for its commonly expected impact, **training in the field of human rights or migration education is somewhat different** from other fields. For instance:

- ⇒ Directly connected to human lives, these issues typically **offer a wide range of possibilities to apply interactive, colourful and personally engaging training methods**. Training on refugee law, gender equality or the prohibition of torture more easily allows (and requires) the use of case studies, personal testimonies, simulations, short films, etc. than training on a new quality management method in car production.
- ⇒ Training in these fields inevitably goes beyond the mere transmission of knowledge or skills. **Attitude change** is very often the ultimate objective.



SUMMARY OF MAIN POINTS:

1. Training is different from “classic” forms of education, mainly because it usually targets adults with already significant professional experience; it takes place in a more concentrated time-frame and a more flexible and less hierarchical context and it strongly focuses on practice, rather than theory.
2. A trainer differs from a high-school teacher and a university professor. Trainers need to have a sound knowledge of their topic, but do not need to be leading academic experts. Trainers need to be particularly strong in engaging teaching methodology, public speaking and concisely systemising information.
3. Effective training is both innovative (applies a variety of modern, creative methods) and impactful (perceived as satisfactory by participants and has a long-term impact on practices and processes within the target group).

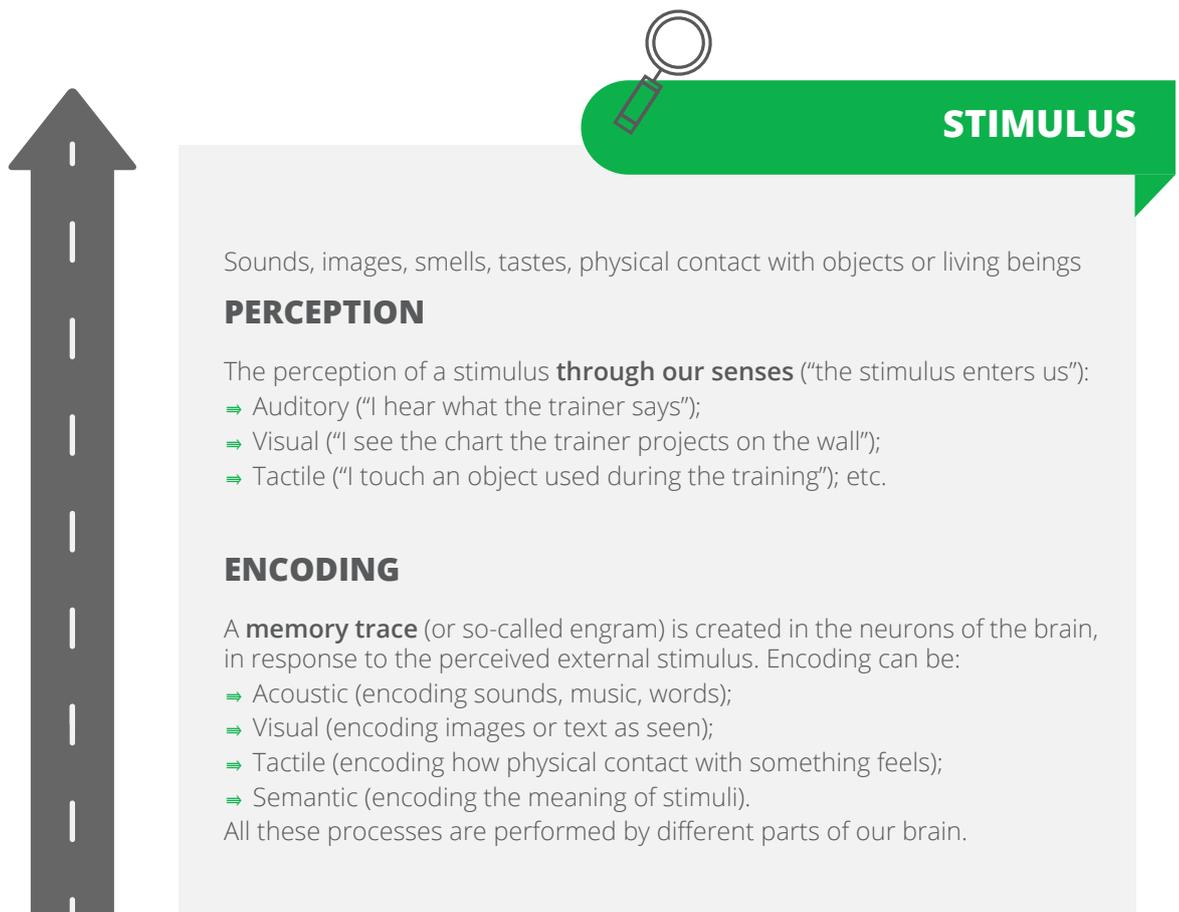
II. HOW DO WE LEARN?

After several decades of intense research, today we know a lot about how human memory works and how we learn. These scientific achievements should guide any trainer, teacher or education professional when choosing teaching methods and designing training programmes. A trainer, of course, does not need to be an expert in neuropsychology and cognitive science. At the same time, **it is indispensable to understand the key elements of the learning process**, as well as to be aware of **which methods work better than others**, in general or for specific purposes, based on scientific research. Hence the inclusion of this short introductory chapter.

It would fall beyond the scope of this publication to present a complex scientific literature review; we will **concentrate on a few crucial and practice-oriented points**, encouraging all readers to dig deeper, using the wide range of scientific literature available on the internet.⁹

2.1. WHAT IS LEARNING?

In order to “learn” something, a specific piece of information needs to travel through **a risky journey, from being a sensory stimulus until becoming “data” stored in our long-term memory**. The steps of this process are the following:



9. Two widely understandable, hands-on resources to understand the functioning of human memory:

- Gábor Gyulai (ed.) at al., *Credibility Assessment in Asylum Procedures – A Multidisciplinary Training Manual*, Hungarian Helsinki Committee, 2013 – Chapter V (written by clinical psychologist Jane Herlihy and psychiatrist Stuart Turner)
- A useful non-academic website summarising scientific knowledge about how memory works: www.human-memory.net



SHORT-TERM MEMORY

Often referred to as the brain's post-it note, it **keeps in a readily available state a limited amount of recently encoded information for a very short period**, while also processing the same information.

⇒ Classic research demonstrated that our working memory can usually keep 7+/-2 pieces of information (the so-called Miller's law);¹⁰ however, this memory span will also depend on the individual circumstances of the situation, and more recent research suggests somewhat larger diversity in this respect (and usually a bit less than Miller's magic number);

⇒ Research suggests that the time limit of our short-term memory is usually less than 30 seconds, but depending on the circumstances it can be a bit more, too (up to 1 minute, for instance).

CONSOLIDATION

The memory is **stabilised through synaptic consolidation**, i.e. a stabilised neuron-line (linked through synapses) preserves the encoded information. Literature and different models suggest different time-frames within which consolidation happens: ranging from 5-10 minutes, through a few hours, to one day.



LONG-TERM MEMORY

If the information is stored in our long-term memory, this means that it is **properly "learned"**. The functioning of long-term memory is still not perfectly understood. It seems to have a virtually infinite capacity and involves various areas of our brain.

STORING

Preserving the memory in the neuron system for a long period (months, years, decades, etc.). The virtually infinite capacity of the long-term memory does not translate into an ability to properly retain an infinite amount of information. The long-term memory is **notoriously unstable**, as neuron-lines storing memories weaken with time (memories get lost), or change due to the constant arrival of new memories (memories change and get overwritten by newer information).

Trainers usually have little impact on the storing phase (as the contact with trainees is limited to a shorter period of time, typically a few days). The good news is that we can have a significant impact on all the other phases of learning.

10. George A. Miller, *The Magical Number Seven, Plus or Minus Two: Some Limits on our Capacity for Processing Information*, in: *Psychological Review*, 63, pp. 81-97., Harvard University, 1956

2.2. HOW TO BOOST MEMORY IN THE LEARNING PROCESS?

Cognitive science research has identified numerous circumstances that can boost the effectiveness of all the previously demonstrated phases of the memory process. Here is a non-exhaustive list of some examples that can be usefully applied to improve training effectiveness, too:



PERCEPTION

Activation level

Attention largely influences our ability to perceive external stimuli. If we are sleepy, tired or exhausted (i.e. our activation level is low), our attention will fade, and we will perceive much less stimuli than we would do with a higher activation level (and if we fall asleep during the training, we will most probably not perceive anything at all...).

Motivation

Attention is also boosted by a higher level of motivation. If we believe that the learning process is **relevant, interesting and/or useful** for us, we will – consciously – **pay more attention** to what we hear, see or do during the training (this is often called “anchor learning” – the learning material is anchored to our everyday tasks and challenges). This translates into a better ability to perceive the myriad of stimuli brought along by a training session.

Emotional involvement

Emotions (which are processed by different parts of the brain than conscious learning) can also strengthen our attention, in a different (less conscious) manner than motivation. If a stimulus generates **surprise, shock, sympathy, joy, etc.** it is likely to **attract our attention** and thus to leave a **deeper footprint in our memory**. This means that any unusual stimulus during the learning process (surprising, unexpected images, unorthodox training methods, etc.), anything that “stands out” from the usual and common, is especially likely to be memorised.



ENCODING

Manageable cognitive load

Short-term memory has a very limited capacity. Overloading it with information will result in ineffective encoding. For effective encoding, **less is often more**.

Chunking

Research has shown that organising material into **shorter meaningful groups** (the so-called chunking) makes them more manageable and therefore easier to encode in the short-term memory. Memorising a 10-digit number (3271654933) is difficult. It becomes much easier, if we cut it into pieces, for instance like 32 71 654 933.



ENCODING

Meaningful association

It is also easier to encode information in our short-term memory if we can associate it with meaningful content. Learning nonsense words is certainly more difficult than memorising a short shopping list, in which all **elements have a logical meaning and importance**. Picking up on the previous example, memorising a 10-digit number becomes even easier, if – beyond chunking – we can associate it with actual meaning. In this case, realising that +32 71 654 933 is actually a) a phone number, from b) Belgium and concretely c) Charleroi, we may be able to convert the first four digits into meaningful, non-numeric information that is much easier to encode than random digits. Then, we will only have to memorise 6 digits, instead of 10.

Modality effect

Research has shown that using **a variety of modalities to transmit the same stimulus (or linked stimuli) results in more effective encoding**. Explaining a trend orally, and accompanying it by projecting a chart that demonstrates the trend, will make it easier for most trainees to encode the information as compared to if only one modality was used.



CONSOLIDATION

Sleeping

Sleeping significantly supports the consolidation process, as in this basically stimulus-free, low-activation state **our neuron system can much more effectively stabilise the neuron lines** that encode the recently acquired information. This applies to “deep sleeping” during the night, as well as to short naps, or – as some researchers suggest – even day-time relaxation. While regular power-naps are not yet parts of standard training methodology, we can usefully benefit from this factor at multiday trainings.

Rehearsal-reactivation-repetition

The rehearsal of information is also important for encoding, and definitely crucial for the proper consolidation of the learned material. It is easy to remember the date of birthdays or national holidays, as they happen every year on the same day (every year we “rehearse” the memory). Remembering the date of a historical event learnt at school is much more difficult, as – in lack of periodic rehearsing – the memory may easily fade and disappear with time. Rehearsal **re-activates and strengthens the neuron line that preserves the memory**, repeating main messages significantly boosts the consolidation of learnt information in our long-term memory.

Besides these basic methods, a lot more advice can be found in scientific literature.¹¹

11. A good inspirational starting point can be: Arthur C. Graesser, *Improving learning*, in: Monitor on Psychology, 2011, Vol 42, No. 7

Finally, we need to clarify two common learning-related misconceptions:

⇒ **How much of the learning material of a training session we will retain in our long-term memory depends on numerous factors, no thumb rules exist in this respect.** As the meta-research of Will Thalheimer demonstrated¹² (based on the review of various experiments from the past), any theory that suggests that, as a general rule, we forget XX% of what we hear, YY% of what we see, etc. in a given amount of time is simply false. Everything will depend on who the learner is, what the information to be learned is like, what the learning environment is, what methods are used, etc. Therefore, don't trust some extremely simplifying models that are widely dispersed throughout the internet. What we do know is that due to the strong limits of our short-term memory and the sensitivity of the memorisation process (in which information can be lost at any point) **we actually retain a little proportion of what we hear/see/do** at a training or university class, and not even the most motivated students will remember everything, or not even the vast majority of the information.

⇒ **While we are all different as to our preferred and best-functioning learning methods, tactile and visual memory seem to perform better than auditory memory in all human beings.** The 2014 research of James Bigelow and Amy Poremba¹³ demonstrated that humans are generally weaker in retaining auditory information in their short-term memory than tactile or visual information – a phenomenon already described in primates. This seems to suggest (even though more research needs to be done) that, despite the wide-spread assumption, no such thing as “visual vs. auditory type” exists when it comes to learning – **we are all visual types.** The clear prevalence of tactile learning over other methods appears to confirm that **the most effective way of learning is by doing.** A simple example can easily demonstrate this: imagine that you are supposed to learn how to cook paella from a famous Valencian chef. You have three options: a) you sit at a table and he explains you the recipe, b) he projects photos of each step of the preparation process on your wall, or c) you go to the kitchen and prepare the paella together. It is difficult to imagine any person for whom the order of learning effectiveness would not be $c > b > a$. The inferiority of auditory learning is really bad news as this method dominates teaching around the world...

This chapter presented no more than the tip of the iceberg, namely a short, non-academic summary of a few key features of human memory and learning. With this knowledge, we are now prepared to look into some strategies to make our training activities effective, therefore innovative and impactful.

12. Will Thalheimer, *How Much Do People Forget?*, A Work-Learning Research Document, 2010

13. James Bigelow, Amy Poremba, *Achilles' Ear? Inferior Human Short-Term and Recognition Memory in the Auditory Modality*, PLoS ONE 9(2), 2014

**SUMMARY OF MAIN POINTS:**

1. Learning is a process of converting specific stimuli into information stored in our long-term memory. This involves the perception of a sensory stimulus, encoding the information transmitted by the stimulus in a memory trace kept by the neurons of the brain, and stabilise the memory through synaptic consolidation.
2. In the learning process, the effectiveness of perception can be boosted by stimulating attention, for example through maintaining a high activation level, increasing motivation or stimulating emotional involvement.
3. For enhancing the effectiveness of encoding, the cognitive load (amount of information) should be kept at a reasonably limited level, information should be organised in shorter meaningful units (chunking), the information should be meaningful (not random or nonsense) and various modalities should transmit the same stimulus (or linked stimuli).
4. Sleeping and rehearsal (periodic repetition) can support the effective consolidation of newly learnt information.
5. How much of the learning material of a training session we will retain in our long-term memory depends on numerous factors, no thumb rules exist in this respect. We only retain a little proportion of what we hear/see/do at a training or university class, mainly due to the strong limits of our short-term memory.
6. While we are all different as to our preferred and best-functioning learning methods, tactile and visual memory seem to perform better than auditory memory in all human beings. The most effective way of learning in most situations is by doing, while visual methods seem to work better than purely auditory ones.

III. TEN STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE TRAINING

This chapter offers a list of strategies that can help every trainer become an effective trainer. These ten strategies are based on the author's practical experience and are therefore not carved in stone. Each trainer has to develop her/his own strategy, but these suggestions will undoubtedly be useful in this process.

3.1. HAVE CLEAR LEARNING OBJECTIVES

As with every professional activity, training **requires defining clear objectives to be effective**. A very common mistake among trainers is missing out on this exercise, making it impossible to assess whether or not training has been useful, and easily leading to a confusing or overburdened training plan. Identifying the learning objectives usually involves asking yourself the following two questions:

1. What change would I like to stimulate in the work practices of the target group?



2. To accomplish such change, what do I need to teach them?

Here are some **golden rules** to help you with this process:

ASK THEM

In concrete

Try to find out whether the target group (or the inviting organisation) has any particular learning objectives in mind, e.g. through interviewing a senior officer or training focal point, analysing the practices (and any related criticism) of the organisation or unit in question.

Why?

Because otherwise it can happen that your very well-developed learning objectives do not align with the target group's expectations.

BE SPECIFIC (but not too much)

In concrete

Your learning objectives should be somewhere between “making this world a better place” and “a more correct application of the visa waived entry criterion in determining the responsible EU Member State in Dublin procedures as set forth by Article 14 of the recast EU Regulation No. 604/2013”.

Why?

Because when the learning objectives are too broad, they are impossible to fulfil and will not support you to properly design the programme.

Because when the learning objectives are too specific, they are usually not inspiring enough and do not focus enough on the attitude element.

BE REALISTIC

In concrete

You should not aim for too much. Think of what can reasonably fit into the given timeframe. Be aware that successful trainers generate inspiring discussions, which takes time. Also, keep in mind that – as we saw in the previous chapter – we retain only a smaller proportion of “what we are taught”. Therefore, instead of exhausting participants with a large amount of information aiming at dozens of learning objectives, concentrating on a few clear essential objectives can result in much more being actually learnt.

Why?

Because otherwise you will not be able to keep time limits, and discussions may intrude much far into coffee breaks, or you will even have to skip some parts of the overburdened programme due to a lack of time.

Because participants may feel flooded with so much diverse information and may feel that they did not learn anything at the same time.

Because you will feel extremely frustrated not being able to complete your agenda.

LINK THEM TO THE AGENDA

In concrete

It is useful not only to identify learning objectives in general, but also to link concrete objectives to specific parts of the training programme. This will make your training concept much more professional.

Why?

Because otherwise learning objectives may be (or at least sound) too broad and too difficult to assess.

TELL THEM

In concrete

Inform the participants about the main learning objectives in brief and right in the beginning. When an objective is “fulfilled” (you have completed the related session), remind the participants about this fact (“*now we have finally all understood the difference between... as we discussed in the beginning*”). Summarise once again the completed learning objectives at the end of the training.

Why?

Because this generates “learning satisfaction” in the group and motivates them to follow the training programme, while it also helps them leave the training with positive inspiration.

Because this can help identify gaps (which parts of the objectives could not be fully achieved), and new learning needs which may emerge from the given training setting. All this will help design follow-up training activities.

3.2. THINK IN KSA

A traditional and commonly used classification distinguishes **three general learning domains, namely knowledge, skills and attitude** (the KSA-model).¹⁴ The following table summarises the main characteristics of these three types of learning (or the three elements of any competence), using as examples some of the key knowledge, skills and attitudes that you as a trainer will generally need in order to effectively carry out your job:



<p>KNOWLEDGE</p>	<p>Cognitive abilities <i>"I know it"</i></p>	<p>Remembering, structuring, understanding, evaluating information and data; awareness</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⊕ Be an expert or be well-prepared on your topic (law, jurisprudence, multidisciplinary framework, etc.); ⊕ Know how adults learn; ⊕ Know the expectations of the group; ⊕ Know various training methods, etc.
<p>SKILLS</p>	<p>Psycho-motor abilities <i>"I know how to do it"</i></p>	<p>Expertise or practiced ability in the manual manipulation of things and in verbal interactions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⊕ Know how to use a computer, the internet, a projector, etc.; ⊕ Have legible handwriting on a whiteboard or a flip-chart; ⊕ Be able to speak loudly, clearly and self-confidently; ⊕ Manage time and communication flows properly; ⊕ Be able to deal with intercultural barriers in practice, etc.
<p>ATTITUDE</p>	<p>Affective abilities <i>"I know why to do it"</i></p>	<p>Learned capacity to act consistently in a given situation; psychological, mind-set</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⊕ Preserve your motivation and be aware of your mission as a trainer; ⊕ Have an engaging style and be able to motivate your public; ⊕ Be credible and self-confident as an expert and/or trainer; ⊕ Give the impression of an interesting person with a good sense of humour, etc.

As you can see, **all these abilities are indispensable**. You can be the greatest expert on your topic and know all the jurisprudence by heart, but you will never be a successful trainer if you are not able to speak clearly, use a computer or have the courage to stand and speak in front of several people. Also, you may be the most motivated and engaging trainer, but your training may fail if you are not sufficiently prepared on the topic, or if you always significantly run out of time.

The same applies to **any learning process**. School and university education, as well as professional training in the field of human rights, migration, asylum (or law in general) often concentrates on knowledge, while skills and attitude-development do not always receive the attention they deserve. To be a successful trainer, you are **recommended to concentrate equally on each of the three domains** when designing a training programme. Here is a non-exhaustive list of teaching objectives related to the three areas of learning at a workshop, focusing – as an example – on the gender-related aspects of asylum:

14. This model is based on the work of Benjamin Bloom (an American educational psychologist) in the 1950s. Even if a number of different models have been elaborated in recent decades (many of them on the basis of KSA), KSA has been selected for the purposes of this manual for its simplicity and wide acceptance.



KNOWLEDGE

- ⊕ Understand the concept of gender and gender equality, as well as the difference between sex and gender;
- ⊕ Know the obligations under EU law, domestic law, as well as international recommendations/soft law that should shape relevant policies and practice;
- ⊕ Know the relevant international and domestic jurisprudence;
- ⊕ Know what gender-based persecution is and what the relevant specific considerations are;
- ⊕ Know how gender may shape memory, language, demeanour, etc.



SKILLS

- ⊕ Learn to recognise the gender element and learn to use the concept of gender in practical cases;
- ⊕ Learn to use gender-neutral and/or gender-sensitive terminology when necessary;
- ⊕ Learn to conduct an asylum interview and work with an interpreter in a gender-sensitive manner, etc.



ATTITUDE

- ⊕ Get to know your own assumptions and stereotypes related to gender and learn to minimise their negative impact on your work;
- ⊕ Understand the importance of this issue and the key role gender-related abilities have in being an asylum professional; etc.

The learning domain **does not always determine the style of teaching**. Transmitting knowledge can happen in any form, from lectures through case studies, home assignments, games and role play. Developing skills usually require practical exercises, while attitude development often happens through creative activities that involve human stories or links with the trainees' own life, for instance. Nevertheless, there is always a great variety of applicable methods.

The timing of a training activity can also determine its particular KSA focus. For example, doing a practical case study after the knowledge-focused session will primarily contribute to skills development – participants learn how to apply what they have learned to a “real” case in practice. Doing a similar exercise before transmitting the knowledge basis will have its main impact on attitude: it will increase participants' interest in the topic and their motivation to learn, and it will confront them with their own relevant experiences (or the lack thereof), expectations and stereotypes in a potentially challenging manner.

In any case, it is useful to **compose your list of learning objectives specifying the KSA focus of each objective**. This will help you see right at the beginning whether or not there is an exaggerated focus on knowledge compared to the other two domains (a common mistake when designing training programmes).

Such detailed concepts can be **particularly useful, when we need to demonstrate the usefulness of the training** to senior decision-makers, etc., since – while not significantly longer than a simple training agenda – this tells much more about what is going to happen and why that is relevant for the target group.

3.3. STIMULATE ALL TYPES OF INTELLIGENCES

We all have different ways to learn. Probably the best way to understand these differences and the diversity of learning methods is using the **theory of multiple intelligences**. This theory – developed in 1983 by Dr. Howard Gardner, professor of education at Harvard University – suggests that “intelligence” is far more than what is traditionally measured by IQ testing. Instead, Professor Gardner proposed seven¹⁵ different types of intelligence to describe **a broader range of human potential** in children and adults. **We are all stronger on certain types of intelligence, and weaker on others.** Jobs or tasks also differ as to the specific types of intelligence they require. All types of intelligence correspond to learning methods that are preferred by and work better for those who are strong in the particular type of intelligence.



TYPE OF INTELLIGENCE	USUALLY STRONG IN...	TYPICAL PROFESSIONS	PREFERRED LEARNING METHODS
Linguistic intelligence ("word smart")	auditory skills, explaining and understanding ideas using language, story-telling, poetry, writing instructions, etc.	journalist, lawyer, teacher, translator, editor, poet	reading, listening, giving a presentation, pleading (e.g. moot court), reporting back to plenary after group work, etc.
Logical-mathematical intelligence ("number smart")	analysing problems, detecting patterns and trends, calculations, detecting link between cause and effect, structuring information, abstraction, etc.	engineer, banker, accountant, statistician, scientist, information technology	experiments, logic games, puzzles, using computer or other electronic devices, drawing up mind-maps or logical schemes, etc.
Spatial intelligence ("picture smart")	creating and using visual images, pictorial imagination, linking images with feelings, orientation in space and using maps, etc.	sailor, photographer, graphic or interior designer, architect, cartographer	drawing, using pictures and charts, designing structural models, arranging objects in space, using multimedia and mind-maps, etc.
Bodily-kinaesthetic intelligence ("body smart")	eye and body coordination, using demeanour to express feelings, manual skills, sports, dance, etc.	athlete, dancer, sign-language interpreter, nurse, surgeon	touching, modelling, role play, using equipment and objects, constructing, moving while studying, etc.
Musical intelligence ("music smart")	music and rhythm, linking sounds with feelings, recognising audio patterns, using foreign languages, etc.	musician, composer, acoustic engineer, interpreter, DJ	listening, using audio tools and multimedia, using music to enhance the learning process, etc.

15. Note that since the creation of this model additional types of intelligences have been added to the original list, but for the sake of simplicity here we stick to the original list of seven.

TYPE OF INTELLIGENCE	USUALLY STRONG IN...	TYPICAL PROFESSIONS	PREFERRED LEARNING METHODS
Interpersonal intelligence ("people smart")	relating to others, interpreting communication and behaviour, understanding interpersonal relations and group dynamics, leading groups, convincing others, etc.	public relations, advertising, human resources, mediator, trainer, politician, psychologist	learning through interaction, group activities, games, interactive case studies, role play, etc.
Intrapersonal intelligence ("self-smart")	self-knowledge, self-assessment, understanding one's role and limits, spirituality, creativity, ability to change, etc.	artist, scientist, actor, philosopher, novelist, poet	independent learning, self-study, individual assignments or research

Traditional education models, as well as IQ testing, **mainly concentrate on linguistic and logical-mathematical intelligence**, while other forms have long been treated as secondary in formal education. Also, experience shows that teaching methods related to **linguistic intelligence usually dominate training courses and seminars** for those working in the field human rights or migration, or even law in general (meaning that teaching is mainly based on words, textual information, slides and frontal lecturing).

Keep in mind that regardless of the composition of the group of trainees, **all groups are mixed as to which types of intelligence participants are stronger in**, and – consequently – which learning methods work effectively for them. This means that when designing a training programme and selecting methods, it is always recommended to **aim for a variety of diverse methods**, thus corresponding to all potential learning preferences in the room. For example, when designing a workshop, seminar or course, it can be useful to have at least one of each of the following methods:



METHOD

Pictures or photos to demonstrate key ideas

Short video film to introduce a problematic or to present a case study

Solving a case study or filling in a quiz alone

Solving a case study or filling in a quiz in group

Role play or simulation to demonstrate a problem or to solve a case study

Exercise (can be both for ice-breaking or for "content") where participants have to get up from their seats and move around the room (for example to express their opinion by standing up or sitting or by moving closer to one or another corner of the room)

...WHICH WILL WORK WELL FOR THOSE "STRONG" ON...

Spatial intelligence

Spatial, linguistic and musical intelligence

Intrapersonal intelligence

Interpersonal intelligence

Interpersonal and bodily-kinaesthetic intelligence

Bodily-kinaesthetic intelligence



METHOD

...WHICH WILL WORK WELL FOR THOSE "STRONG" ON...

Drawing a mind-map or structuring information in a visual scheme

A group has to put elements of a key definition or conclusion (written on separate papers) in order on a longer table or line of chairs, with each participant receiving one piece of paper

Using noise or music during a case study (e.g. to increase tension or to demonstrate a certain mood or situation)

Asking participants to relate their own life experiences to the topic discussed (*"Have you ever lived a cultural shock while travelling abroad?"*)

Using statistics and charts to demonstrate a phenomenon and ask participants to identify the relevant patterns

Using maps to demonstrate a phenomenon

Group homework (e.g. participants have to visit a certain place between two training sessions and do something there in group)

Game in which participants will have to explain a term or concept by only using non-verbal signs (without talking)

Logical-mathematical and spatial intelligence

Spatial, linguistic, interpersonal and bodily-kinaesthetic intelligence

Musical intelligence

Intrapersonal intelligence

Logical-mathematical and musical intelligence

Spatial intelligence

Interpersonal intelligence

Bodily-kinaesthetic and intrapersonal intelligence

This way you can make sure that **all participants will find activities that fit their preferred learning methods**. Alternating methods focusing on different types of intelligence are also crucial to **fight boredom and loss of energy** during a long training day. There are a large number of useful resources on multiple intelligences freely available on the internet in various languages.

3.4. CREATE A SAFE AND PLEASANT SPACE

Even if difficult or depressing issues come up when learning about human rights, the general experience of training must be a pleasant and inspiring one. Participation in interactive exercises, discussions, debates, role plays, etc. requires that **all trainees feel safe in the training room and are motivated to participate, without fear of any negative consequence**.

The first key for reaching a safe and pleasant training environment is to **set the rules right in the beginning**, including rules of **communication, behaviour and confidentiality**. A lot will depend on the group composition and the framework, but here are some frequently useful model sentences:

- ⇒ “You all have a lot of relevant experience in this room. Feel free to intervene whenever you have anything important to say, for instance examples from your own practice.”
- ⇒ “If we, the trainers, say something that is not clear, or if you disagree with something, please do stop us and make your question or comment. All questions and comments are valid and welcome.”
- ⇒ “I will make a lot of questions; however, there are no right or wrong answers. Just feel free to express your opinion.”
- ⇒ “We will talk about some challenging topics and we may have quite different opinions. Let’s agree that we will keep an open mind, respect different opinions and refrain from judgmental remarks.”
- ⇒ “... is not the mother tongue for all of us, so please make sure you don’t speak too fast and don’t use abbreviations that others may not understand.”
- ⇒ “We have interpreters, so please make sure you don’t speak too fast and that you always use the microphone, otherwise the interpreters will not hear you and won’t be able to translate what you say.”
- ⇒ “Everybody is a private individual here, during these ... days of training you do not represent any organisation or authority, you only represent yourself and your personal opinion.”
- ⇒ “What you say in this room should remain in this room. Feel free to sincerely tell your opinion and no one will report it in public or will use it against you later on.”
- ⇒ “We will take some photos during the event for the project documentation. If you feel uncomfortable with your picture being taken, please let me know in the coffee break and we’ll make sure your request will be respected.”
- ⇒ “We will be very happy if you post comments and photos about this event on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram. However, it is strictly forbidden to post comments made by other participants on social media.”

It is always useful to ask a **formal commitment to such rules by the group**, at least by asking “*Do we all agree with these principles?*” At a longer training programme, e.g. more than one-week course or when trainees meet at certain intervals during a longer period of time, it is recommended to ask participants to set and formally adopt the rules themselves in the form of team work. In any case, setting these benchmarks right in the beginning will create a “safety net around the training” and will decrease potential fears and uncertainties.

The second key for reaching a safe and pleasant training environment is **a good icebreaker or let’s-get-to-know-each-other exercise**. Many participants may feel tense in the beginning for various reasons: because they don’t know anyone else; because they are afraid that they are not prepared enough on the topic and so many colleagues are here to observe; because they have had bad experiences from previous trainings; because they would have had so many other things to do instead of being here. An effective learning environment requires a relaxed and positive atmosphere and a good icebreaker can do a lot to help participants get over their initial tension or discomfort.

The **typical tour de table** often used for introducing participants to each other (we go around the table and everybody tells who she/he is and where she/he comes from) is **not an icebreaker**, and can actually freeze the ambiance even more. This introduction typically remains very formal and closes participants into their official role and comfort zone, instead of contributing to creating an open mind-set, indispensable for effective training (think about the S and the A of the previously presented KSA model). Moreover, most participants lose attention after the fourth-fifth similar introduction, and by the end, hardly anyone’s name/role will be actually remembered by the majority.

But what to do instead? Once again, everything depends of the size and the composition of the group and the time available. The following **two golden rules of a good icebreaker** can always be helpful:

Make participants stand up and leave the place where they are sitting



This will:

- ⊕ Immediately raise their pulse and blood pressure and increase their activity level;
- ⊕ Get participants out of their physical comfort zone, making them mingle with participants they don't yet know and leave their "strategically occupied position" (sitting in the corner together with their immediate colleagues);
- ⊕ Create an atmosphere of informality and equality among participants;
- ⊕ Inspire participants' attention, due to the unusualness of the situation.

Use topics from participants' private life rather than (only) their work



This will:

- ⊕ Allow participants to show themselves as individual and interesting human beings, rather than just "workers";
- ⊕ Help participants identify common interests and hobbies with other participants, thus creating sympathy links beyond usual boundaries (e.g. between people who never work together or who may even work at units/entities with different missions – e.g. authority and NGO);
- ⊕ Immediately loosen up and de-stress the ambiance in the room.

You will be surprised to see how many people have exciting and extraordinary hobbies – each group seems to have participants whose hobby is to write books for children, who practice themselves in Japanese cooking, who dance flamenco, train others in parachuting or whose dream is to live on a farm and produce organic vegetables. It is very important, though, that questions or games focusing on private life **should never be intrusive or too direct**. Asking about hobbies, spare time activities, best/most interesting experiences or great plans to achieve is usually safe (regardless of the cultural context), while questions about family and the deeper layers of private life should be avoided.

The internet offers **a myriad of ideas for ice-breakers** and all beginner trainers are recommended to make their **selection of personal favourites**, pointing out the group size for which it works, the technical conditions and the approximate time required. Within the massive variety of ice-breakers, the example below may be particularly useful for its high versatility, especially with larger groups and short time:

“Group composition exercise”

Ask participants to come to the middle or front of the room, where there is enough space (3-4 times more than the size of the group standing). Identify one object (a plant, a table, etc.) or a co-trainer standing in one end of the room as the YES/AGREE point, and another one at the other end of the room as the NO/DISAGREE point. Read out statements which cover participants' important characteristics, related both to work and private experiences (*I am a lawyer. I studied social sciences. I mainly work on statelessness. I am an academic. I've been working with asylum for more than ten years. Spanish is my mother tongue. This is my first time in Paris. I love Italian food, etc.*). You can also include some questions which test participants' prior knowledge about and attitude towards topics of the training. (*Most migrants in the world are refugees. The migrant population has been increasing in the past fifty years. Most refugees are women. Changes in an asylum-seeker's account indicate lack of credibility, etc.*). After each statement, participants shall show whether the statement is true or false in their case (whether they are academics, whether it is their first time in Paris), or whether they agree or disagree with the statement (whether they indeed believe that most refugees are women), by standing next to the YES/AGREE or the NO/DISAGREE point. Of course, any intermediary position is possible too (rather yes but not fully, hesitant, etc.). This exercise is great ice-breaker for a number of reasons:

1. It helps both you and the group immediately understand the group's composition (educational background, work experience, institutional affiliations, etc.), as well as some key assumptions, expectations, stereotypes, etc. with regard to the topic of the training;
2. It allows participants to identify themselves along various lines, yet without exposing themselves too much individually;
3. It stimulates the bodily-kinaesthetic intelligence (expressing something by moving and using body postures – see earlier) and make participants move outside their physical comfort zone;
4. It works very well under **time pressure**: this exercise can be completed in 10-15 minutes and provides a lot of information about the group, even when there is no time for an individual introduction of participants;
5. If more time is available, it can well introduce a more individually focused let's-get-to-know-each-other exercise.

Clarifying the rules and breaking the ice in the beginning are crucial in all training contexts. Yet, there may be **additional challenges** that can endanger a safe and pleasant environment, in which all participants feel free to intervene. Here are some examples:



CHALLENGE	TROUBLE-SHOOTING
<p>“The culture of silence”</p> <p>We have diverging readiness to talk in front of a group or to share their feelings/opinions. This is, in great part, culturally determined (with of course significant individual differences). It is also influenced by the educational traditions of the given society. Cultural contexts which do not appreciate talkativeness, predominantly collectivist cultures, and memories from a strict, conservative and hierarchical education system are all likely to discourage people from actively intervening during a training, and you may face persistent silence whenever you expect interaction from participants.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⊕ Be prepared for this challenge, know your group (cultural and institutional background); ⊕ Improve your intercultural communication skills, learn about different communication styles and how to adapt your questions and exercises;¹⁶ ⊕ Dedicate extra time to setting the rules in the beginning,¹⁷ emphasise that there is no right or wrong answer. If relevant, explain explicitly and with some sense of humour, that this will be very different from participants’ “traumatic” memories from a rigid school system, etc. ⊕ Give a chance to participants to express their views in a way different from public talking, for example through movements (see the “group composition exercise” above), in writing (e.g. write answers on post-it papers and put them on the wall), etc.; ⊕ Have less discussion in plenary and more in small groups, many participants will feel more comfortable to talk like this; etc.
<p>“The boss is here”</p> <p>Fear of intervening sometimes derives from the presence of senior members of staff, in front of whom other participants are afraid to talk (as they are afraid to say something incorrect or divergent from the “official line”). This is usually an issue in highly hierarchical organisations (especially state authorities), while much less common within civil society, or in strongly autonomous professions (judges, attorneys, psychologists, etc.).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⊕ Be prepared for this challenge, know your group (institutional background), identify as soon as possible those senior staff members whose presence may intimidate others; ⊕ Strongly emphasise in the beginning, and then repeatedly, that there is no right or wrong answer, and no one will be held responsible for what they say in the training room; ask the most senior staff member to explicitly confirm this message in her/his introduction, etc. ⊕ Have less discussion in plenary and more in small groups or pairs, in which participants will feel much more comfortable to talk; try to pair up the senior staff member(s) with others who do not seem “intimidate” by their presence, etc.
<p>“Courtroom syndrome”</p> <p>The division of participants into different stable “fractions” who continuously debate with each other is a great risk to a safe and pleasant learning environment. This may happen if they come from different units/departments or competing organisations which have a tense relationship, or if they represent different actors of the same system (e.g. asylum authority, refugee-assisting NGO and judges). In such cases it is common that participants belonging to the same “fraction” sit together.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⊕ Identify this risk as soon as possible, becoming aware by the middle of the training it may be too late; ⊕ Have specifically designated places for participants, forcing them to mix between the “fractions” and avoiding thus a courtroom-like feeling; ⊕ When working in smaller groups, make sure that all groups are mixed; ⊕ Participants should swap roles in exercises or role plays (e.g. state officer should play the human rights advocate, the attorney should play the judge, etc.); ⊕ If you can identify one or two persons who make particularly provocative or conflictive statements, you may wish to have a small talk with them in the coffee break, reminding them very diplomatically that this is not a “battlefield” and the success of the training requires some self-control in this respect.

There are of course many other **simple practical ways** to create a pleasant atmosphere in the training room, for instance:

- ⊕ Ensure a pleasant temperature and enough fresh air (make sure you know how to use the remote control of the air conditioner, how to open windows, etc.);
- ⊕ Have natural light if possible (remember that modern projectors no longer require darkness in the room!);
- ⊕ Have some larger plants in the room, if possible;
- ⊕ Put on some soft music during the coffee breaks, etc.

16. A useful tool for this: Gábor Gyulai (ed.) at al., *Credibility Assessment in Asylum Procedures – A Multidisciplinary Training Manual*, Hungarian Helsinki Committee, 2013, Chapter VII (written by cultural anthropologist Éva TESSZA Udvarhelyi)

17. ee earlier in this chapter

3.5. BOOST MOTIVATION

Do you remember those classes at university where you regularly lost concentration after a few minutes (and occasionally fell asleep)? When you had to read the same article five times in the library and still could not remember a word of it? And those classes where time was flying fast and you could easily concentrate for hours, even after a long night out with your friends? Much of these differences have something to do with the **level of motivation** you had to learn. Learning is a process that requires time, energy and concentration. Participating in a learning process means that we give up other activities to dedicate our time to this particular activity (e.g. attending a training course instead of doing my daily job at my desk, completing a self-study module instead of relaxing in the garden on a summer weekend, etc.). Having the right level of motivation to learn is therefore key for the success of the learning process. It will **boost trainees' attention and effectiveness in retaining the information** transmitted during the training.

In this context, two factors compose and can enhance someone's motivation to learn: **a) interest in/curiosity about the content and b) awareness about the "material benefits" of the learning process.** Here are some examples:

INTEREST & CURIOSITY



- ⇒ I have always found this topic very exciting. This was my favourite subject at school/university.
- ⇒ I know nothing about this topic, but I have always been very curious about it.
- ⇒ I have knowledge about this issue, but I know that recently there have been important scientific/legal developments in this field, and I am eager to learn about them.
- ⇒ It is so refreshing to learn about this topic, it opens up new perspectives/approaches for my daily work, I can finally see things from a different angle.

MATERIAL BENEFITS



- ⇒ I absolutely need this knowledge for my daily work.
- ⇒ What I learn here will make me more effective/faster/better performing at my daily work.
- ⇒ With this knowledge, I will become more self-assured/less hesitant when taking decisions at my work.
- ⇒ What I learn here will help me avoid mistakes at my daily work.
- ⇒ The knowledge and skills acquired at this training will help me advance in my career and it will open new job opportunities or promotions.

Your ability to build upon either of these two factors will largely vary from case to case. For example, most probably not many people will show a high level of genuine curiosity towards the application of the hierarchic criteria for determining the responsibility of an EU Member State in a Dublin procedure (which for many may appear a “drier”, technical issue), while those actually working with these cases will easily understand the high and immediate material benefits such training could offer them. In this case, positive motivation will, in most cases, be determined by the second factor. The situation may be the opposite with training programmes focusing on “colourful” inter- or multidisciplinary issues, which many participants may have a lot of genuine curiosity about, but efforts need to be made to demonstrate their actual link with, for example, asylum professionals’ daily work and the concrete benefits such learning may offer.

Training participants typically have quite **diverging levels of motivation**, and here are some practical hints on how to boost motivation:

- ⇒ Ask participants to **put their expectations on post-its** and put them on the wall, right in the beginning. The simplest way to show how much “material benefits” participants actually expect from the training.
- ⇒ Start with a short **intro quiz**, before anything else. This could include multiple choice questions and some short open questions, too. Each question should be related to a core topic or message of the training (see next point on structure). The more provocative they are the better (try to play on common misconceptions, presumptions or prejudices you expect to exist in the group, etc.). Don’t give the answers, but ask participants to have their filled-out questionnaires at hand during the entire training. You will then give the correct answers one by one, always when discussing the relevant topic. As most of us have an inevitable curiosity about knowing whether or not our answers at a test are correct, this method will boost motivation during the whole event. In addition, with properly chosen questions, by the end it will a) **confront participants** with the fact that some of their prior **knowledge/presumptions were incorrect**, as well as it will b) provide a good handout with an **overview of some of the training’s core messages**.
- ⇒ Simply **explain in the introduction the material benefits** the training can offer (*“If you pay attention, you will learn some new techniques which will make your job easier by a) this, b) this and c) that”*). Even better, if you can ask a senior participant (director, head of unit, etc.) to do the same.
- ⇒ If relevant, promise right in the beginning to share something **unknown and surprising**. This can be ground-breaking scientific advancements, radical change in jurisprudence shading new light on a legal issue, innovative new ways of approaching “old” questions, etc.
- ⇒ Whenever culturally adequate, you can use **competition** as a motivation-boosting tool. This can be particularly useful with an unmotivated or even sceptical group, as well as with younger (student) audience. Resolving a set of exercises in a group competition format, and offering something (even symbolic, like a chocolate bar) to the “winners” will boost the active participation of those who would otherwise just be sitting with their thoughts elsewhere.
- ⇒ Many groups feature **one or two particularly negative or sceptical participants** (who may question your expertise or the importance of the topic, who may think they already know everything, who are displeased with their fact that they have to leave their busy desk for so much time, etc.). If you identify this on time, it is very important to pay special attention to them, as their negative attitude can affect others as well. A good way to **co-opt such participants** is offering them **special tasks** (they should be your “helpers” in an exercise, lead a group discussion, act in a role play, etc.) and allowing them to show to the group their **specific expertise** on certain issues. This type of positive exposure can be helpful, yet there is no guarantee for success...

3.6. THINK IN STRUCTURE

As we saw earlier, **properly structured information is more likely to be retained in our memory than randomly presented information**. Therefore, giving a clear and logical structure to the learning material and making this structure known to trainees is an absolute key for a successful training.

Our first task in this respect is to **divide the learning material into three categories**:

CORE MESSAGES

- ⇒ The key messages that all trainees should retain in their long-term memory, aware of how much we unfortunately forget from every lecture or training;
- ⇒ Their number should be kept at a reasonable level: e.g. maximum 2-4 key messages for a 90-minute session;¹⁸
- ⇒ These messages should be repeated several times, the trainer should regularly return to them and it is recommended to explicitly summarise them after relevant sessions;
- ⇒ These messages should be visually presented to participants (on closing slides, flipchart papers on the wall, one-page hand-outs, etc.).

STANDART LEARNING MATERIAL

- ⇒ The complete stock of information through which we would like to reach knowledge transfer, skills development and attitude change;
- ⇒ These issues are discussed at the training session;
- ⇒ Realistically, participants will only retain a part of this body of information (the most motivated ones a significant part of it, the less motivated ones only a smaller proportion)

ADDITIONAL LEARNING MATERIAL

- ⇒ The issues that are not discussed at the training session;
- ⇒ The trainer only makes reference to these additional questions and refers to reading materials or other resources where participants can have more information;
- ⇒ This material is mainly intended for specifically motivated participants, or those with particular interest in specific topics.

18. An example: For a 90-minute training session on what "membership in a particular social group" means in the asylum context, here are the model core messages: 1) A particular social group is determined either by social perception (what society perceives as a group) or a "protected characteristic" which all "members" have. 2) A protected characteristic can be innate, not innate but unchangeable or something so fundamental to a person's identity that it cannot be expected to change. 3) The group does not have to be an actual community; members are not expected to know each other. 4) Gender, sexual-emotional orientation, gender identity, profession and social status are widely understood as characteristics forming a particular social group in the asylum context. If all trainees clearly remember these four messages we did a good job.

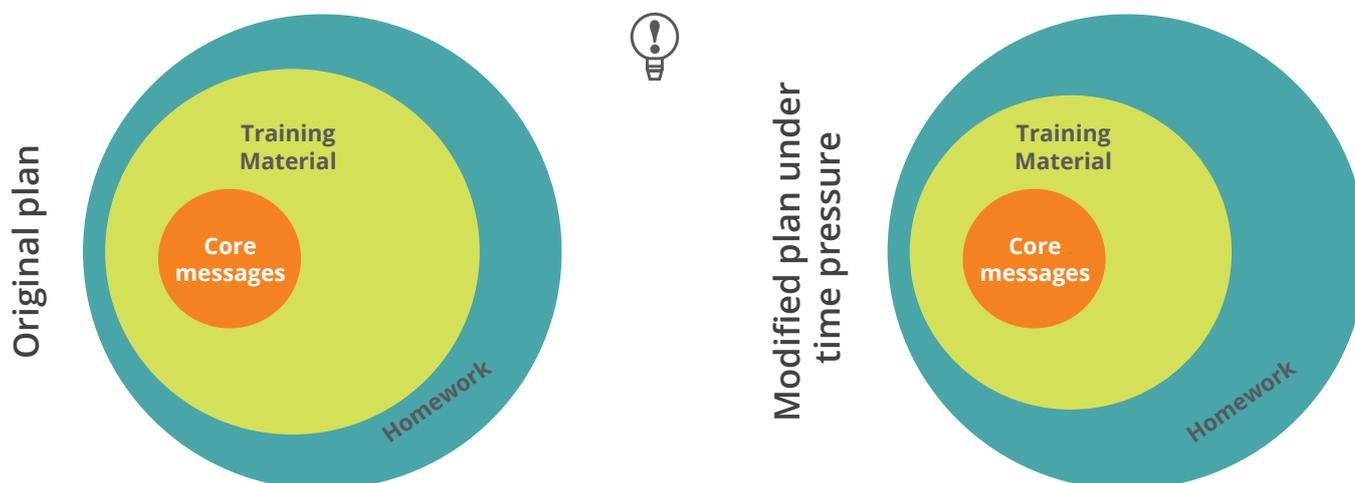
Such division will help you **concentrate on what is really important**, instead of getting lost in details. It will also help you find a clear structure for the training programme, as well as address **unexpected time pressure**. Having less time than originally planned is a very frequent challenge for trainers. The reasons can be various: there is much more interaction and debate, lunch is served extremely slowly, you are requested to add – in the last moment – a formal introductory session by “someone important”, you have to leave the training room earlier for technical reasons, etc. All these will result in **significant time loss**. The common but **wrong reactions** to this challenge are the following:

1. **“Panic running”**: In order to preserve the content, the trainer switches to higher gear. She/he talks faster, clicks through various slides without really discussing them, cuts the discussion and reduces interactivity. You may get to your last slide by the end of the training, but the price is stress, an impression of unprofessionalism and ineffective teaching. With this method, you are very likely to lose core messages, in lack of time to properly repeat and emphasise them.
2. **Cutting out full content units**: Sticking to the original pace of learning and basically not addressing the delays, the trainer simply cuts out the last content unit(s). This means the loss of important key messages.



Instead of these, it is recommended to address unexpected time loss with calm, **consciously redesigning the material in the coffee or lunch break**. This would mean:

- ⊕ **Identifying the core messages** which shall by no means be left out, and for the proper transmission and repetition of enough time should be made available;
- ⊕ Identifying the parts of the originally planned standard material which can be **a) simply left out, b) moved to the additional learning material category**, and thus given as homework, instead of being discussed at the training;
- ⊕ Making the necessary **changes in your visual support**, if relevant, e.g. deleting slides (to avoid the disturbing and unprofessional impression of clicking through several slides without discussing them).



A bit less overall content, relatively more homework and significantly less standard training material, and exactly the same amount (and time for) core messages. Some ways of how to address this from a communication point of view:

⇒ *“As we had such a fruitful and rich debate on the inclusion elements of the refugee definition, we will have less time than originally planned to discuss the exclusion clauses. I will of course take you through the main principles, but I will also ask you to read the most relevant judgments of the EU Court of Justice when you are back to your office. I will send the relevant links to our mailing list right after the training.”*

⇒ *“Unfortunately we have to leave the room half-an-hour earlier than originally planned. In this last part I wanted to discuss with you the powerful concept of ‘cultural dimensions’, elaborated by Geert Hofstede. As we will not have time for this, I would like to ask you to read on the way home the sub-chapter about this in our training manual between page 72 and 78, and answer, for yourself, these three questions I have put on the white board.”*



Besides allowing trainers to better focus their energies, a proper structure will also **stimulate the learning process**. Trainees should leave the room with a feeling that they learned something, that they understood something that had previously been unclear, that they became motivated to do something. This is very difficult without a clear and reasonable structure in the learning material that is well understood by participants. A common mistake is to build a purely linear training process, which starts in medias res (without a proper discussion of what we are going to do) and in which different topics simply follow each other. Here is some good advice on how to ensure a training structure that enhances learning:

⊕ **Your core messages should determine the structure** (see below). Each session/unit/module should be organised around well-defined core messages, and the title of the session/unit/module should reflect or refer to the core message;

⊕ The structure of the training should be **well-explained to participants**. The agenda (sent or distributed before the training) should already explain what the main topics and learning objectives are. At the beginning of the training (and/or larger units thereof), enough time should be allocated to explain what we are going to do and what participants can reasonably expect by the end of the day/unit;

⊕ Each session/unit/module should be **properly closed, by recapitulating the relevant core messages**;

⊕ **Your visual support should strengthen the understanding of the training structure**. It is useful to have standardised “table of contents” slides, which appear at the beginning/end of each larger unit and shows where we are in the training programme. Alternatively, the main topics/questions/learning objectives can be written on a board or a flipchart paper, allowing you to point at it at any time, indicating where we are in the programme. Mind-maps, board-game or menu-style illustrations and other creative ways can also enhance the feeling of structure;

⊕ Instead of a purely linear structure, it is rather recommended to **“zoom in and out”**, for example this way for a 90-minute training session:



Introduction	Attitude-focused and motivation-boosting introduction to the issue: why is it important, challenging, why do we need to learn about it, what are the learning expectations, etc.
Overall picture	Introduction to the topic: most important knowledge-focused messages and dilemmas, historical/conceptual introduction, etc. – then introducing the 3 most important sub-topics
Zooming in 1	Focus on the first sub-topic (one core message + standard learning material)
Zooming out 1	Summary of core content for first sub-topic and linking it back to the “big picture”
Zooming in 2	Focus on the second sub-topic (one core message + standard learning material)
Zooming out 2	Summary of core content for second sub-topic and linking it back to the “big picture”
Zooming in 3	Focus on the third sub-topic (one core message + standard learning material)
Zooming out 3	Summary of core content for third sub-topic and linking it back to the “big picture”
Overall picture	Summary of core messages + reference to additional learning materials and homework

The Prezi software¹⁹ has been particularly developed to visually support this learning approach. In a less visually innovative and dynamic way, it is still possible to follow this approach with Power Point.

⊕ **Take time to think, with an open mind, what the best learning structure is**. Maybe it is the other way around than what others do. Changing the order to something slightly unusual can, if properly done, enhance learning by introducing an element of novelty and boosting interest. In Europe, we unquestionably eat soup as a first course, but it is just the other way around in various East Asian cuisines...

⊕ **An intro quiz** (see in previous section) combines boosting motivation and constantly confronting participants with the learning structure. Ideally, each question refers to the core message of one session/unit/module.

3.7. MAKE THEM LEARN BY DOING

As we saw earlier, **the most effective way to learn is by “doing”**. This means that instead of merely observing and perceiving the trainee **actively participates** in the process and **receives duties** with a certain level of responsibility, by being obliged to take decisions, resolve dilemmas, write documents, manipulate objects, use her/his body or voice to express something, etc. Unfortunately, this method is still too often underrepresented in training programmes or it does not go beyond resolving text-based case studies.

Here are some **golden rules** to make learning-by-doing exercises effective:

- ⊕ Once again, **think in multiple intelligences**. Try to stimulate as many types of intelligence as possible, and try to think beyond text-based exercises. Involve pictures, colours, short videos, puzzles, maps, music, moving around the training room (or the courtyard), moving objects or furniture, etc.;
- ⊕ Most such activities are conducted in group. It is recommended to **vary groups** during the training, so that participants have the chance to work with different people (and not always the same participants, especially avoiding that they only work together with their usual colleagues);
- ⊕ **Be realistic with your expectations**: don't expect a group to perform a full theatre play if they only have 20 minutes to prepare and if they come from a cultural context in which people feel extremely stressed if they are exposed in this manner before a large public; or don't hand out 3-page-long descriptions of case studies at a one-day workshop, it is simply too long for the purpose, etc.;
- ⊕ Leave **enough time**, as such activities often tend to take longer than originally expected;
- ⊕ Always **tailor activities to the group**: what works well with French judges may not work with Jordanian humanitarian workers, even if the topic is the same. Take special care in identifying and **eliminating any potentially problematic aspect**, which may be culturally or politically inadequate, hurt specific sensitivities or may not be understood by your group. Also, make sure the case study is **relevant for your particular public**: using a particular refugee story can work very well in various contexts, but there may be countries, for example, where it is so far from any daily experience of the local asylum professionals that they may have a hard time to relate with it in any way, and this will significantly decrease the learning impact;



- ⊕ **Use but not abuse emotions**: learning-by-doing activities generate a variety of emotions, which **boost attention and personal involvement** and create an experience which **stands out** of the emotionally (more) neutral knowledge-focused, lecture-like elements of a training programme. As we saw earlier, these factors enhance learning – an emotionally involving activity usually leaves a deeper and more enduring footprint in our memory. It is therefore useful if a learning-by-doing activity can conclude with something very surprising or unusual, if it can generate a feeling of empathy, sympathy, accomplishment, intellectual satisfaction, responsibility, etc. A bit of stress, or – if adequate for the topic and the cultural context – some humour or irony can also have a similar impact. However, this flavour enhancer should be dosed carefully. If a case study or role play session is overwhelmingly focused on the explicit exposure of horrific human rights violations (such as torture or mutilation), the impact generated in many participants will be a traumatic shock, leading to dissociation and self-defence, rather than empathy and a positive emotional engagement. If an activity generates too much stress, participants may feel uncomfortable and switch to a self-defence mode, thus disengaging from the learning activity

Case studies are all-time favourites when looking for methods of learning by doing. Case studies usually demonstrate abstract, theoretical, legal, etc. issues through the **lenses of a concrete story**. This is tremendously useful, since:

- ⊕ It effectively adduces a strong **skills and/or attitude**²⁰ element to a knowledge-focused discussion;
- ⊕ Enhances learning by demonstrating the **material benefit** of acquiring the new knowledge in question (“Now I can resolve concrete dilemmas which I could not before”);
- ⊕ Enhances learning by showing the **human face** of an otherwise abstract issue, generating emotions.

20. See more on this below

There are endless possibilities to use case studies; here are some simple **golden rules** to make them effective:

- ⊕ If it is a human story (which it usually is), it should have a **human name**. Case studies – and their main messages – are better remembered if we can link them to a catchy name. Names should be realistic (if our protagonist is an Afghan woman, her name should obviously not be María José), neither too specific (e.g. unpronounceable names are difficult to remember), nor too general (easy to forget). If you can add a **picture** to the name, even better;
- ⊕ Have **simple, easy-to-read case descriptions**. A case study description on two full pages, written with complex language, long sentences and 9-point letter size will keep participants busy only with reading for 20 minutes and they will retain little content even after careful reading;
- ⊕ Case studies are more powerful if told **in first person** or put **in a real-life format** (e.g. a letter written by a detainee to a lawyer, a court judgment, etc.);
- ⊕ **Framework case studies** are extremely useful. You can start with giving a part of the story, and a few hours later, adding new elements to it (clarify unclear details, tell the continuation of the story, etc.), opening new questions, and you can close the training by giving some final details or a “solution”. Thus, the case study accompanies the training process and provides a practice-focused framework to it;
- ⊕ On the other hand, **very short case studies** can also be useful. For example, if you would like to explain 5 main issues/dilemmas/points about a legal concept/definition, you can do that through 5 short case studies (each of them of a few sentences only). Such short descriptions are enough to read out loud (not indispensable to distribute), and you can ask just one very concrete question (true or false, is he a refugee or not, is this a form of discrimination or not, etc.). In this way, participants will be able to link all of them to a real-life story and will be excited to know whether their quick judgment is correct or not;
- ⊕ Using **real cases** of course can be very powerful, especially to challenge negative attitudes, disbelief, etc. But of course, made-up cases can also work very well, if they are still related to reality and demonstrate real-life challenges;
- ⊕ Give **concrete tasks** to participants. While a general introductory round with an open question (“So what do you think about *Alireza’s story?*”; “At first sight, does this seem a correct set of arguments?”) can be useful for having an open-minded debate, usually with an attitude focus, or for testing how effectively we managed to transmit knowledge before the case study. But at some point, participants have to receive concrete questions and tasks (“Identify the mistakes in this asylum interview transcript”, “What legal arguments would you use to challenge this court decision?”, “Find all 5 examples of gender-based discrimination in the story of *Anabela*”). These will help to focus the discussion on your core messages (see earlier);
- ⊕ A usual dilemma is **whether or not to give a clear solution** for case study. In most legally focused case studies, resolving the dilemmas by the end can be useful and much expected by participants. This, of course, enhances knowledge and skill-focused learning. If the case study is based on an **actual court case**, it is supremely powerful giving a final push to our core message by revealing how the Grand Chamber of the European Court of Human Rights decided on this real case. It is also absolutely legitimate to **leave certain questions open, concluding that we don’t have enough information** (“This element will have to be clarified at the next court hearing, merely based on the information we have, we can’t properly decide the case”). This technique is beneficial for demonstrating the complexity of human rights issues, preventing an overwhelmingly simplifying approach. Furthermore, in some cases (especially when non-legal questions are in focus) we may do the best thing by simply refusing to give a clear solution, emphasising that various legitimate approaches may exist, and the actual discussion process is more important than a “yes or no” type of outcome.

Good-old case studies are far from being the only way to make trainees learn by doing. The list of such activities is infinite; here are some **useful examples**, moving from traditional techniques to more innovative ideas. All of these can be applied without any specific technological infrastructure:



Source analysis	Instead of explaining what is in a text (international convention, law, guidance, court decision, etc.) hand out the text to participants and ask them to answer some specific questions (ideally linked to core training messages). For example: instead of explaining how nationality laws can be discriminatory, distribute excerpts from discriminatory nationality laws and ask participants to find examples of discriminatory rules in them. Thus, the understanding of this problematic phenomenon will be much less abstract and memorisation will be helped by the feeling of success (<i>"I managed to find them all!"</i>).
Definition puzzle	Instead of projecting or merely explaining an important (e.g. legal) definition, print it out in a large format, cut into pieces in a way that each piece of paper has only a few words on it (well visible to the bare eye (minimum 40-point letter size). Distribute the papers to participants in a random order. Ask them to come to the middle of the room and put the words in the correct order, to make up the definition. This exercise stimulates spatial and bodily intelligence as well (instead of focusing merely on the linguistic one), and through direct and active involvement and a feeling of success it enhances the memorisation of a key definition.
Construction exercises	Not only definitions can be constructed. You can ask participants to build up a process (e.g. the standard steps of an asylum procedure) in the proper order from pieces of paper which have words or pictures on them. You can also ask them to build something from objects (e.g. how the ideal place should look like where a lawyer or a social worker receives traumatised clients).
What would you do	Participants can also become the protagonists of an imaginary case. Asking trainees to imagine what they would do in a certain situation can be particularly impactful on attitude (enhancing interest, empathy, etc.). <i>"Which would be the three objects you would put in your bag if you had one minute to escape from home as a persecuted political opponent?"</i> Such questions may seem a commonplace, but in reality, they are extremely useful in creating an open-minded learning environment, as they usually give rise to involving and deeply human discussions, which show that human rights issues can concern us all (it is not only "their" problem).
Role play	An advanced form of a case study when participants perform the story and thus can influence its outcome. You can ask participants to imitate a court hearing, a discussion with a victim, a police interrogation, etc. – all of them are tremendously useful to turn theoretic knowledge into practical skills and to enhance learning by increased emotional involvement and a feeling of success (you will be surprised to see how much hidden theatre talent exists in any training group). Our actors and actresses need to receive clear instructions beforehand, and you should be ready to intervene if something goes wrong. From an attitude development point of view, it is particularly useful to ask people to perform roles that are different from their usual ones (the border guard becomes the asylum-seeker, the judge becomes the attorney, etc.).
Explain to children	Being able to explain something to children (be it about physics or human rights) means that we really understood the essential messages, far beyond technical jargon and complex particularities. An especially inspiring and "fun" exercise is to ask participants to explain a certain legal concept (discrimination, statelessness, right to an effective remedy, etc.) to children of a certain age. The format can vary, from writing a short fairy tale to simple drawings, etc. Other participants (or you as the trainer) can play the role of the child and ask "childish" questions during the explanation.
Pantomime	Ask participants to explain a concept or term with pantomime. This exercise will offer a feeling of success for participants who are strong on bodily-kinaesthetic intelligence (but may not be the masters of words or numbers). Particularly inspiring in the format of a team competition.
Radio show	Yet another way to show the practical and human side of abstract legal or other issues. Ask participants to imitate a 5-minute discussion about a chosen topic in a popular morning show on the radio. They should of course observe all expectations regarding the content of such programmes: messages should be simple, catchy, showing real human stories that listeners can identify with. You, as the trainer, can act as the host of the show, or you can ask participants to perform this task, too.
"Objet trouvé"	A method focusing on creative imagination and spatial intelligence. Ask participants to demonstrate a concept, phenomenon, legal dilemma, term, etc. through a symbolic object. This is mainly applicable in longer training programmes, as a form of homework (<i>"For tomorrow, bring an object that symbolises the right to human dignity for you, and explain to the group why"</i>). The images of the most interesting/creative/surprising chosen objects will leave strong footprints in participants' memory, thus enhancing the memorisation of some of your core messages.

Be aware of the **importance of timing**, as this has an **impact on the learning domain** you target. Most trainers use learning-by-doing activities after a knowledge-focused session (lecture followed by case study). This is a useful method to show how apply the recently obtained knowledge in practice, transforming them into skills. Equally useful – yet seldom used – is to place such activities *before* a knowledge-focused session. This way, participants carry out tasks and resolve dilemmas using their existing, usually incomplete knowledge on the subject. Such an activity will confront them with their knowledge gaps, (correct or incorrect) assumptions and stereotypes. During and/or after the knowledge-focused session, it is important to refer back to the initial learning-by-doing activity, giving feed-back on whether certain approaches/solutions were correct, questionable, incorrect, etc. For example: before explaining how to interpret the refugee definition (as in international law), give a few case studies to participants, asking them to decide based on their existing knowledge and/or their gut-feelings. The “spontaneous” debate will no doubt raise most issues that you will later cover in your presentation, in a way that it multiplies participants’ motivation to learn. It will also provide you with precious information regarding the expectations and assumptions existing in the group.

3.8. USE INNOVATIVE VISUAL SUPPORT

“ *The soul never thinks without a picture.* ”
Aristotle

As we saw earlier, visual information is usually better retained in our memory than auditory information. No surprise why most trainers prefer to have some sort of “visual support” for their training. Traditional teaching methods have been, for centuries, dominated by oral communication (lectures), which only stimulates one or two types of intelligence in the multiple intelligence model. Using today’s technological achievements it is usually easy to complete this main channel of transmitting information with visual support. A computer and a projector are nowadays part of the standard equipment of most training facilities and handling them does not require any specific skill. Hence the apparently unbreakable popularity of Power Point and textual slides.

The “tyranny” of textual PowerPoint slides

The vast majority of university educators, trainers and conference speakers use Power Point and textual slides all over the world. Projecting textual slides during presentations and lectures have become a sort of **indispensable element of professionalism**. Experience shows that trainers and lecturers seldom dare to use alternatives or to leave out slides totally. At the same time, **the utility of using standard textual slides is – as a minimum – questionable**, for a number of reasons:

- ⊕ With a lot of textual information projected on slides, **trainees’ attention must be constantly divided** between two sources of information. If the content provided by the two sources (the trainer’s speech and the slides) is different – which is somewhat inevitable – most participants will not be able to properly follow both channels of information in parallel, which leads to frustration and a feeling of losing important details.
- ⊕ Purely textual slides **stimulate exactly the same type of intelligence as the trainer’s talk**, namely linguistic intelligence. This means that this method does not have a significant added value from the multiple intelligences point of view and does not really diversify the channels through which information is transmitted.
- ⊕ Presenting all information on textual slides provides trainees with the content in a standardised form, saving them from the effort of immediately digesting, filtering and summarising the information in their own way, with their own words. This may **decrease participants’ personal involvement** in the learning process, meaning less room for critical thinking and creativity, as well as a lower level of emotional engagement. All these factors are reported in research as contributing to effective learning, and are particularly crucial for developing skills and attitude (beyond pure knowledge transfer).
- ⊕ With older projectors, using textual slides requires a **darker training room** (often excluding natural light coming from outside). This contributes a lower activation level and performance, and can be particularly dangerous following the lunch break. Also, you as a trainer may remain in the shadows and participants may face difficulties in seeing you.

But why do then most trainers and teachers use textual slides?

First, because “this is what everybody does”. It is true that it requires some creativity and courage to do something unusual as a trainer, but at the same time – based on the author’s long-standing experience – it is always highly appreciated. **Second**, because it is often thought that any alternative would be much more time-consuming to prepare. This is not true – finding a few good

pictures, selecting some keywords, writing up a hand-out document or check-list, or using Prezi does not require more time than typing in several textual slides. **Finally**, textual slides often seem inevitable when there is no standard written resource material (a training handbook, academic literature, etc.) that would provide trainees or students with the necessary complex background information, where they can look for additional details and clarify unclear points. While this is obviously an important consideration, it still does not make textual slides indispensable. With the same energy and time invested, you can write up a few-page textual summary (a check-list, a “key issues & debates” document, etc.) that can be distributed to participants before, during or after the session (depending on the preferred pedagogical impact), and still use your projector for something else.

Practice shows that not only textual Power Point slides are unreasonably overused, but **often they are used incorrectly as to their form and content**. Here are **5 golden rules** – based on what psychology and educational science knows about learning today – to overcome this situation. It is important for all trainers to **find their own style**: some of you may feel comfortable to introduce an element of humour in your teaching (something that can significantly enhance learning, if used properly), while others may consider this alien from their personality and skills. Some of you may be strong on finding useful visual illustrations, others may be better in drawing up charts. In any case, the following 5 rules will help you use slides (and other forms of visual support) to enhance the effectiveness of your teaching.

CREDIBILITY ASSESSMENT IN ASYLUM CASES BASED ON SEXUAL ORIENTATION OR GENDER IDENTITY		
CHECKLIST		
FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES	BEING LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANS OR INTERSEX IS...	NOT A DISEASE
		NOT A CHOICE
		NOT A LIFESTYLE
		CURRENT IDENTITY
		A HUMAN RIGHT
PRACTICES PROHIBITED UNDER EU LAW	NO ASSESSMENT BASED ON STEREOTYPES	
	NO QUESTIONING ON SEXUAL PRACTICES	
	NO ADMISSION OF EVIDENCE SHOWING SEXUAL ACTIVITIES	
	NO "TESTS" (MEDICAL, PSYCHIATRIC, PSYCHOLOGICAL, TEMPLATE)	
	NO REJECTION OF CREDIBILITY JUST BECAUSE OF LATE DISCLOSURE	
STANDARDS FOR PROPER CREDIBILITY ASSESSMENT	THE DSSH MODEL – HELPS YOU EXPLORE THE APPLICANT'S PAINFUL "JOURNEY"	DIFFERENCE
		STIGMA
		SHAME
		HARM
		TRUST, SECURITY, CONFIDENTIALITY
	CREATE A SAFE SPACE	TIME
		AWARENESS OF THE POSSIBILITY OF PROTECTION
	FIND THE RIGHT WORDS	INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE
		CHOOSING THE RIGHT INTERPRETER
	FOCUS ON MATERIAL FACTS	THE DSSH MODEL CAN SHOW YOU WHICH ELEMENTS ARE MATERIAL
USE CREDIBILITY INDICATORS WITH GREAT CAUTION	AWARE OF ALL LIMITATIONS AND DIFFICULTIES TYPICAL FOR GENDER-RELATED CASES	
	AWARE OF THE IMPACT OF STIGMA AND SHAME ON THE ABILITY TO TALK	
	AWARE OF THE DIFFICULTY OF SELF-IDENTIFICATION IN CERTAIN CASES	
	AWARE OF THE LIMITS OF COUNTRY INFORMATION	
BE AWARE OF AND WORK ON YOUR OWN STEREOTYPES AND LIMITS		



First rule: slides should only be used when they have a real added value

Believe or not, slides are **not indispensable!** Interesting and effective training sessions can be held by using **alternative modes of visual support**. Alternatives include:

⊕ **Hand-out documents:** Check-lists, one-pagers, tables and charts can be useful to have at hand during the sessions, and even more useful to take home after the training. Such hand-outs can be particularly valuable for case studies, jurisprudence citations, written testimonies longer than a few sentences and content summaries at the end of each module or session. All this is easier to read from a paper than from a screen. Distributing check-lists and/or one-page summaries (here is an example from the CREDO project) can be especially effective, as participants can **keep them handy** (e.g. stick them on the wall in their office, etc.) and regularly consult them in their daily work – which they would hardly do with slides or longer, written documents.

⊕ **Flipchart, white/black/green board:** These traditional methods may seem out of fashion, but they can be useful for a number of different training activities. Their great advantage is that they are **not static** – text written on a board or flipchart can easily reflect new ideas coming up during the discussion, as well as it strengthens participants’ feeling of being actively involved in the learning process, rather than just passively watching and listening. Flipcharts can be easily **combined with post-its** used for interactive exercises (e.g. for grouping or classifying ideas coming from participants) and already used papers can be stuck to the wall to keep them visible for participants during the rest of the session. **Smartboards** (already available in some training facilities) offer of course numerous additional possibilities. The main risks of these methods are linked to visibility: not all trainers are able to write in a way that is readable from the last row, while **colour markers are notorious for not functioning properly** when they are most needed (make sure you try them before the training). Be aware of the time needed to write on a board or a flipchart.

⊕ **Alternative software:** A number of freely available alternatives to Power Point exist and allow trainers to colour up their sessions with visual information, using the same technical devices they would use for textual Power Point slides. A particularly popular alternative is **Prezi**, the main advantage of which is that it allows for more **dynamic, non-linear structuring of visual information**. By simply browsing the internet for “alternatives to Power Point” you will find various useful hints.

⊕ **Short films, audio-visual materials:** Personal testimonies, short reports or interviews, excerpts from documentaries, etc. can be extremely powerful, as they **stimulate a number of different types of intelligence** (spatial, linguistic, musical, etc.) at the same time, and they can be emotionally much more engaging than most other forms information-transfer. Nowadays, an infinite variety of short films and animations are freely available on the internet in various languages, while several international organisations, NGOs, research centres and media actors specifically produce educational materials on various issues related to asylum, migration and human rights. Watching and discussing a short film can be an effective alternative to lecturing. It also allows the trainer to have a **short rest**, which is especially important during longer training courses. It is always recommended to have **off-line versions** of audio-visual materials, as internet connection, even if available in the training facility, may be failing or slow any time. Carefully checking sound systems before the training is also a must in these cases.

⊕ Also, don't be afraid of **not using any visual support**, if appropriate. Certain types of activities – such as ice-breakers, warm-up sessions, feed-back sessions, interactive exercises, brain-storming, introductory discussions, etc. – do not necessarily require slides or any alternative thereof. The great (and often forgotten) advantage is that you will have the full visual **attention of participants**.

Despite the gradually more frequent use of alternatives, Power Point slides are still popular and can be useful in a number of settings. It is nonetheless important to respect the...



Second rule: slides are for trainees, not for trainers

When preparing your presentation, always keep in mind that slides are **not your visual support, but the illustration of your training** aimed at enhancing participants' attention and the effectiveness of the knowledge-transfer. You may glance at the lap top or computer screen to see where you stand in your presentation and what trainees see, but **don't read from slides**, unless – exceptionally – you explicitly quote text from there (e.g. a short citation from a judgment). Continuously looking at your screen makes you lose the eye contact with your public and gives the impression that you are not sufficiently prepared on the content. Even worse is reading from the slide projected on the wall or white board, as it inevitably involves turning your back to your audience. If you need textual notes for your presentations, you are advised to print or write them on paper, for example.



Third rule: slides should be focused and limited

Slides are there to **strengthen your message, not to provide a full transcription** of what you say. If you want to provide more information in writing, use hand-outs (see above). Remember, that *you* are the protagonist of the learning process, and **you should be in the centre of visual attention**, not the screen. If you put everything on the screen, your added value as a trainer will be limited ("why should I pay attention to the trainer if I can read everything?").

Slides should reflect the essential of what you want to say, for example:

- ⊕ The topic you are talking about (thus the slide helps trainees know where we are in the training programme);
- ⊕ The main content points, meaning **a few (maximum 4-5) keywords** or very short statements;
- ⊕ The **question or dilemma** you want to discuss with the group; or
- ⊕ A visual, statistical, geographic, etc. **illustration** of your main point.

Very short (e.g. introductory) case studies can also be presented on slides; provided that they can be presented with little information (longer case studies are recommended to be distributed on hand-out documents).

In any case, unless you quote (a short text!) from for example a judgment, **avoid full sentences** and use keywords and expressions.

Also, **the number of slides should be realistic** in light of the length of the training: e.g. for a 90-minute session don't prepare 70 textual slides, as you will clearly not be able to go through the half of them.



Fourth rule: slides should be structured

A **clear and easy-to-follow structure** can significantly enhance the learning process in all aspects, and a well-structured visual support can contribute to this. Presenting in an introduction the main issues that are going to be discussed will help participants have realistic expectations regarding the training content. Regularly referring back to this structure – e.g. **showing the "table of**

contents” slides whenever jumping from one topic to another, highlighting the upcoming topic – shows participants where they stand in the learning process, as well as it gives an idea what can still be expected. Showing the same slide at the end of the session or the seminar will strengthen participants’ impression that they learned a lot.

Individual slides should also be structured, which means using **numbered and bullet-pointed lists**, instead of plain text, and leaving enough space between key messages. It is crucial to present information in a **logical order**, but this does not necessarily mean from up to down and from left to right. Key messages can be presented as **steps of a stairway, levels of a pyramid, concentric circles or elements of a mind-map or flow-chart**.



Fifth rule: slides should be interesting and attractive

In order to have a real added value and to keep participants’ attention at a high level, slides should be **visually interesting and attractive**. Plain (e.g. black and white purely textual) slides are seldom capable of stimulating various types of intelligence or of inciting an emotional response, seriously limiting their impact on learning. Instead of re-writing your speech on your slides, a good alternative is to use **pictures, photos, illustrations, charts, diagrams, infographics, caricatures and maps** as much as possible. Using these visual elements has a number of advantages:

- ⊕ They can **stimulate various types** of intelligence. While words mainly focus on linguistic intelligence, these visual support materials work effectively with those strong on spatial and logical-mathematical intelligence.
- ⊕ Pictures usually have a **stronger emotional impact** than text, thus contributing to an effective learning process, especially to attitude development. Scientific literature proves that images are much better remembered than textual information.
- ⊕ **Humour** can also be an effective support to learning, caricatures are very often well-remembered. Pay attention though, as humour can be really inappropriate in various contexts, and jokes, caricatures, etc. should never be disrespectful.
- ⊕ Being regularly exposed to plain, boring textual slides, the majority of trainees around the world seem to **highly appreciate such alternatives**, resulting in high approval rates.
- ⊕ These elements can be very **well combined with text** (e.g. pictures combined with keywords, charts summarised with a title, etc.).

Always consider **intercultural differences** – some pictures or symbols have different meanings in different cultural contexts.

Feel free to use your own pictures, while getting pictures, maps and charts from public sources on the **internet** has also become an easy option in recent years. Be aware of any potential copyright limitations, though (if you only use internet-based pictures as illustration on your slides for exclusively educative, non-commercial purposes, and you don't include them in any publication, there should – in principle – be no problem).

Visual attractiveness is not less important when using text either. Instead of the traditional black text on white background, try to use alternatives. Here are some practical hints:

- ⊕ The text should be **readable from the last row** as well. Use standard, easy-to-read fonts and large letters.
- ⊕ Use a **consistent style**, e.g. don't use more than two fonts and/or letter sizes (e.g. one for titles, one for text).
- ⊕ Use **colours**, but don't exaggerate, i.e. don't use too many or too harsh colours (unless it has a specific purpose), and don't use a different set of colours on each slide.
- ⊕ Be aware that **some colours may have a meaning** in themselves (e.g. red = prohibition, exclamation, wrong answer, heat, etc.; green = right, correct, go ahead, peace, etc.). The use of colours should be consistent with the message.
- ⊕ **Italics** are often difficult to read for some, try to avoid them.
- ⊕ Don't overuse **capital letters**, such text may appear as shouting in a written form.

Finally, as practical demonstration, here are some diverse examples of slides on language-related difficulties in asylum procedures:

An unfortunately very typical slide. Too much text, too much information on one slide and no structure whatsoever. Visually boring, with no challenge to any type of intelligence beyond the linguistic one. This slide has no added value; it may actually decrease the effectiveness of the learning process, diverting participants' attention from the trainer and the discussion, and causing frustration ("I could not read it all, I've surely missed some important details").



LANGUAGE-RELATED DIFFICULTIES IN ASYLUM INTERVIEWS

- Linguistic diversity is extremely complex. Languages cannot be considered as monolithic constructions.
- There are different languages that are mutually intelligible, while some languages have dialects that are not intelligible.
- The qualification as language, language variety, dialect, etc. depends more on political will and traditions than on objective linguistic indicators.
- Intelligibility is very often asymmetric "in favour of" the language variety considered as standard, used in mass media and/or given higher socio-cultural value.
- A number of individual and contextual circumstances determine an asylum-seeker's ability to properly understand and speak a specific language variety. These include education, gender and living environment.
- When choosing the right language and interpreter for the asylum interview all these factors must be duly considered, otherwise there is a high risk of language-related distortions in the communication and credibility assessment process.

This slide looks visually more interesting at first sight (at least there are different colours and fonts), but visual elements are used inconsistently. Why linguistic diversity and language vs. dialect is underlined, while other main issues aren't? The "advice" in the last bullet-point looks like yelling at trainees, plus it is not visually logical to use a different left margin here. The slide is visually unpleasant (for instance it uses three fonts and letter sizes) and still presents too much information. At least, there is less text, and full sentences have mostly been replaced with shorter forms.



LANGUAGE-RELATED DIFFICULTIES IN ASYLUM INTERVIEWS

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Another very typical example. This slide is stronger on structure, but it still has too much text and too much information. The use of full sentences is unnecessary. Visually it's equally boring as the previous one, plus letters are definitely too small to be properly seen in larger training rooms. This slide has no real added value either.



LANGUAGE-RELATED DIFFICULTIES IN ASYLUM INTERVIEWS

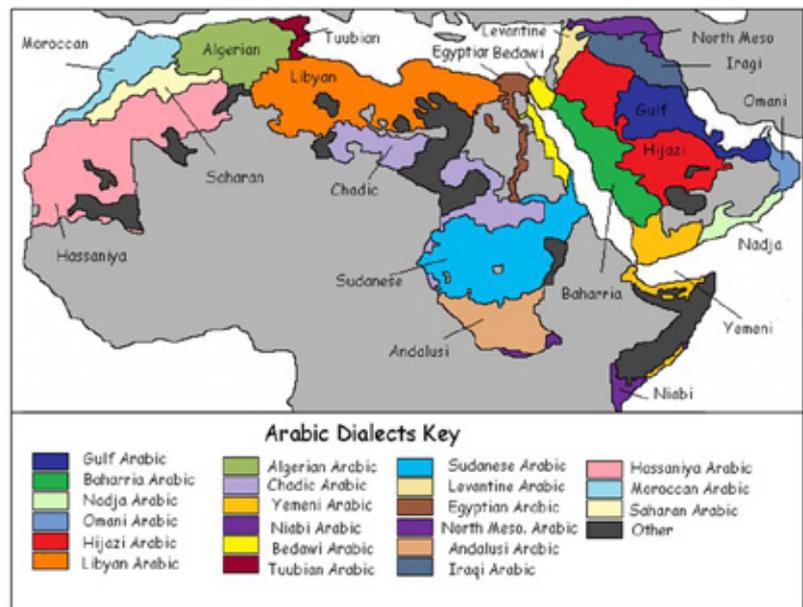
- Linguistic diversity – Languages ≠ monolithic constructions
- There are different languages that are mutually intelligible, while some languages have dialects that are not intelligible
- Language vs. dialect: depends more on politics than on objective linguistic indicators
- Asymmetric intelligibility: in favour of the standard language variety considered "standard"
- Education, gender, living environment, etc. may determine ability to understand and speak a specific language variety
 - **Consider these factors to avoid the risk of language-related distortions in the communication and credibility assessment process!**



LANGUAGE-RELATED DIFFICULTIES IN ASYLUM INTERVIEWS

1. Linguistic diversity
2. Mutual intelligibility – Language vs. dialect
3. Asymmetric intelligibility
4. Individual circumstances determining language skills
5. Risks & solutions

This slide finally has the right maximum amount of textual information. It provides trainees with the “menu”, i.e. showing what is going to be discussed during the given session. Using a numbered list instead of plain text or bullet-points strengthens the feeling that “we are learning something concrete”, as well as they help memorisation (“the five main topics we discussed were...”). Nevertheless, the slide is still boring and visually poor, which limits its added value. Why not to present each of the five topics on a different slide, each of the titles accompanied by a picture or a map?



Instead of transmitting a plain message of limited impact (“We are now talking about linguistic diversity” or “Linguistic diversity is important in asylum interviews”) this slide presents a concrete example of linguistic diversity, stimulating various types of intelligence. This slide may incite a stronger emotional impact, e.g. through a shock (“Wow, I didn’t know Arabic language is so diverse!”), and different colours are more interesting for the eye. Also, this visual example will allow many participants to immediately connect their personal experiences with the topic discussed (“Of course, now I remember when my Iraqi client did not understand a word of the Moroccan interpreter”), which multiplies the learning impact on all KSA areas. Finding such as a map actually takes less time than writing a textual slide on linguistic diversity...

3.9. REPEAT, REPEAT, REPEAT

As we saw earlier, repetition is key for any effective learning or memorisation process. It is therefore important to **return to and repeat core messages several times** during the training. Here are some useful techniques of how to do this, without causing boredom:

- ⊕ As a warm-up, **start every session with a 5-minute looking back** to the main messages of the previous one. *“Can I can ask a few volunteers to tell what the most relevant/useful/interesting/surprising/challenging information was for them in our previous session?”*;
- ⊕ Start the afternoon or the second, third, etc. day with a **15/20-minute recapitulation session**. You can ask all participants to put down the most relevant/useful/interesting/surprising/challenging information for them until that moment on a post-it paper, with large capital letters, in maximum 5 words. Then they should all put their papers on a specific part of the wall or a flipchart paper. When they are all done, you stand around the papers and together identify the main trends (usually several papers include similar messages), arrange similar messages in one package close to each other, and discuss, if there is anything surprising or unusual. This is also a good interactive wake-up exercise after lunch. In addition, as messages may remain on the wall during the entire training, participants will repeatedly look at them.
- ⊕ Alternatively, you can do something similar as **part of the final evaluation/closing session**, too, allowing a bit more time (30 minutes for example), to a more in-depth discussion about why certain participants chose particular messages.
- ⊕ It can be useful to close each session with a **summary slide** (or a few of them), pointing out the core messages and conclusions. You can avoid boredom and a “primary school feeling” by using illustrations and keywords instead of didactical sentences.
- ⊕ Distributing **one-page summaries or check-lists** will also make participants repeat core messages when reading them on the way home, when showing them to their colleagues or when hanging them on the wall.
- ⊕ Whenever you can, **refer back en passant to already discussed key conclusions** when you speak. For instance, instead of “Based on what we discussed about human memory...” you can say “We already saw that human memory is very unstable and typically retains few particular details. Based on this...”.

“ *Repetitio est mater studiorum.* ”
Ancient Latin phrase and
modern educational commonplace

3.10. GIVE SOMETHING FOR TAKE-AWAY

“ *If something cannot fit on one page
it does not really exist.* ”
Anonymous training expert

Learning activities combining on-line activities and face-to-face seminars which stretch out to longer periods (weeks or months) are very effective and, in consequence, increasingly popular. But even within the constraints of a one-off, face-to-face training activity (the focus topic of this short guide), it is useful to **give something that participants can take away with them**. The aims of this are manifold:

- ⊕ To **repeat and remind** them of core messages, even after the training (see previous point);
- ⊕ To **inspire reflection** about unclosed issues, dilemmas the training raised, etc.;
- ⊕ To **cover issues that could not be discussed** during the training (e.g. because of time pressure – see earlier);
- ⊕ To provide particularly motivated trainees with **further details on specific issues** (which would have been too much information for the rest of the group);
- ⊕ And to establish a **bridge between the training and participants’ daily work life** (which will show them that the knowledge and skills acquired are useful for their daily work).

Technically speaking, this can happen either **during the closing session** of the training (usually on paper), or **shortly after the training** in an electronic format (e-mail, social media, etc.). Once again, the list of possibilities is infinite. Here are some simple, but useful methods:



One-pager

A one-page summary of core messages, organised in a visually clear and attractive structure, such as a check-list (see an example in Chapter III.8), a mind map, a flow-chart, a colourful table, etc. Many people like keeping such one-pagers on their desk or wall, as instant guidance for frequently encountered challenges. This multiplies the learning impact as it re-exposes the trainee to core training messages on a daily basis. Don't forget that a two- or three-pager cannot fulfil this same task.

Homework

If possible, give an assignment to participants that they are requested to complete after the training.

⇒ This can be a formal exercise that is checked by you, their supervisor, etc. "On your way home, please read the case study I am handing out together with the evaluation forms, and send me by e-mail your responses to the two questions at the end, using everything we learned in these last two days."

⇒ If such a formal exercise is not possible, informal open-ended questions/assignments can also be useful. "Could I ask you to dedicate 15 minutes to think about how all the international jurisprudence we discussed today could be used in your national context? If any of you have a few minutes to drop me an e-mail with her ideas, I would be very happy to read them."

If you want to know more...

Send participants a few articles, judgments or publications in which those particularly interested can find additional information on certain topics. If a source (e.g. an international court judgment) came up frequently in the discussion, make sure you send the relevant link to the participants after the training.

It is particularly useful to send a link to a short video after the training, (a short film on Youtube, a TED-talk,²¹ etc.) that well illustrates the training content or reflects on questions that were raised during the training (but could not be completely discussed or answered).

Photos

Send around a few photos taken during the training. While these may not be directly linked to the content (unless they depict learning-by-doing activities), they will evoke – hopefully positive – memories about the training process and thus will support memorisation.



SUMMARY OF MAIN POINTS – 10 STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE TRAINING:

1. Have clear, specific and realistic learning objectives, which also reflect on participants' expectations. Identify what changes you would like to stimulate in the work practices of the target group and what you need to teach them to this end.
2. Effective training programmes should equally cover all three traditional learning domains: knowledge, skills and attitude. Make sure that activities aimed at skills development and attitude change are also part of the agenda, besides the usually overwhelming knowledge-focused sessions.
3. Stimulate as many types of intelligence as possible. Go beyond traditional "verbal" teaching: let participants use their spatial, musical, logical-mathematical, bodily-kinaesthetic, inter- and intrapersonal intelligence, too.
4. Create a safe and pleasant learning environment. Set communication, behaviour and confidentiality rules right in the beginning. Create a good ambiance by using effective ice-breakers that make participants move and allow them to present themselves as private individuals, not only as holders of a particular job or position.
5. Boost the participants' motivation to learn, by stimulating their interest and curiosity, as well as by making them aware of the concrete benefits the training programme brings to them.
6. Think in a clear and logical structure when designing the training activity and make sure this structure is well understood by participants. Divide the learning material into three parts: core messages; standard and additional learning material. Under time pressure, make sure that the core messages remain intact, even if the standard learning material has to be reduced.
7. Include several learning-by-doing activities, including methods going beyond text-based case studies. These assignments boost motivation, activity level and emotional involvement.
8. Use innovative visual support. Change your long and boring textual slides to something more interesting and effective. Keep in mind that slides are for trainees, they are neither your manual, nor the transcript of your speech. If slides are used, they should be limited as to their content, well-structured and visually attractive. Use illustrations, pictures, charts, etc. instead of plain text. Don't be afraid to get rid of slides completely.
9. Repeat core messages several times during the training programme. Inspire participants through creative methods to summarise the key content themselves at the beginning or the end of larger training modules.
10. Give something for take-away that will remind participants of core messages even after the training, inspire reflection or help participants use the acquired knowledge in their daily work. Visually attractive one-page summaries and checklists are particularly useful for this purpose.

NOTES:

NOTES:

HOW TO BE A GOOD TRAINER?

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