



training
innovation



GUIDE FOR THE LEARNING FACILITATOR

Guidelines to develop the new trainer's role
in the 21st century

Methodological guide to use Group Dynamics
developing INNOVATION in formal learning
environments

TRAINING INNOVATION Project.
Tools to valorise, develop and mobilise the competences linked to
innovation, acquired through informal learning

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1.- TRAINING INNOVATION: A DIFFERENT WAY OF LEARNING TO ACT OTHERWISE.

Provocation, which involves eliminating from our thought the established patterns used regularly to solve problems, is one of the most powerful creativity techniques. Because ...”**what is really insane is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results**” (Albert Einstein).

We have to question our hypothesis and use the “zero-base” assumption: not taking anything for granted: use the doubt as our method and be sceptical now with the recipes that yesterday worked. Because what was valid in a context might not be valid now.

This is what we planned when starting TRAINING INNOVATION. We could have used google and one of its more than 85,000,000 entries with this concept. Nevertheless, we aimed at developing a **NON CONVENTIONAL and INFORMAL** project. We were not willing to reinvent the wheel, or to assume the present state of the art without any criticism.

Non Conventional and Informal because we estimate the creation of “**specific and individual**” learning solutions for people, for the organisations, for the territories, further than the general and without criticism application of the standards.

Non Conventional and Informal, because we are willing to work focusing on results (learning results and learning with results for employment and competitiveness), rather than focusing on execution (obsessed by contents, stages and program).

Non Conventional and Informal because we share the **EQF** commitment, the European Qualification Framework, which will allow the translation to interpret and transfer the qualifications more easily from one country to another, its commitment for the “**learning outcomes**” no matter the learning process followed. And consequently, it places all the learning: formal, not formal and informal in the same level. Because this L.O. (learning outcomes) change the approach from the input (length, contents... of the standard training) to the output (what the person knows, understands and is able to do). That is, from the training program and specifications, to the acquired knowledge – skills – abilities.

Non Conventional and Informal because, in the learning field, informal learning is more effective than formal: 70 (experience)- 20 (through others) – 10 (formal).

Non Conventional and Informal because we believe that learning is a process and not a group of events, which occurs naturally and basically socially. And if we know that informal learning is more effective, we cannot continue doing the same as yesterday. Times change and so do learning patterns.

Non Conventional and Informal because the traditional manual-training and the procedure to transfer know-how, useful in predictable and stable environments, efficacious when the verbs: to plan, to organise, to coordinate and to control reigned, in Taylorism and Fordism, is not enough any more.

Non Conventional and Informal because “the same for all” is not enough any more; because it offers the same experiences without taking into account the different learning styles of the different generations; because it is exclusively cognitive (it forgets the emotional) and being-present – magisterial; because this standardised proposal by “speciality files” ends being generalist and indifferent; because it places “examination” at the training pedestal, when the objective of learning is to use; because it ends reinforcing the weak situation of the people with the highest training needs (Mateo effect)

Non Conventional and Informal because with TRAINING INNOVATION we are willing to favour dynamics helping “learning more and training less”: Learning means changing the behaviour, through experience, to improve. It underlines the person: willing to achieve better learning results and learning with

more results (f.ex. to have access to employment, to innovation...). With the same experiences as yesterday (the same training pattern, magisterial, the same specialities...) it is really foolish.

With TRAINING INNOVATION we have aimed at recovering the excitement for the Non Conventional and Informal. We cannot become obsessed by doubling the dose of the past useful solutions, as if “more of the same” were twice as good. Persisting, as Kif and Kof in “Who moved my cheese”, going to the same place to fetch the cheese, will not change the situation. Let us, then, learn from the mice Sniff and Scurry: let us think differently; Also in vocational training. As if we continue doing the same, we will have the same results; and today’s learning results, also learning with results will be scarce.

We have aimed at “making the formal informal”. And this commitment has resulted in two choices:

- 1) First, we *have found it suitable to use* the **GROUP DYNAMICS**, which have proven to be a powerful tool to favour this kind of learning. Understanding its nature allow the teacher to benefit from his/her students’ potential to favour a better learning.
- 2) Then, we have committed for different capacities we have identified in the base of the innovative behaviour: Emotional Intelligence, Serendipity, Creativity and Lateral Thinking, Positivism and Open mind and Team Work.

2.- TRAINING INNOVATION: THE NEW ROLE OF THE TRAINER AS A “LEARNING FACILITATOR”

During the living cycle of a project such as TRAINING INNOVATION, there are various changes: in people, in organisations, in the systems. In November 2010 a new ISO standard was created, whose objective is to improve the quality of the world market offer regarding not formal education and training. It is **ISO 29.990**: Learning services for not formal education and training; Basic requirements for the service suppliers.

This standard uses the expression: “services to learn”, rather than “training” in order to give more importance to the learner and to the process results and to underline the entire range of choices available to develop the learning services.

Let us share our reflection. Training is one of the ways to have access to learning. It is not the only, nor – as seen before – the most efficacious; and for learning to happen, a **LEARNING FACILITATOR** is necessary, a supplier of learning services, someone who works with the learners to help them learn.

The main role of the teacher should be helping the student search and interpret the data, combine them and put them into context. The best way to do it is through the generation of cooperative learning processes. Learning is a process that might be boosted in a group work context. The interaction with others contributes to enhance, encourage and complement individual abilities.

It is a person who shares and provides experiences to the learners, in a systematic and methodical manner, to reach the planned learning results (know – understand – know-how).

The learning facilitator evaluates the distance between the learner’s effective development level (what he/she is able to do on his/her own) and the potential development level (what he/she is able to do with support) in an experiential field.

He/she plans the learning activities on an ex ante evaluation base. He/she provides experiences adapted to the features of the individuals or groups and planned learning results. He/she accompanies and guides, within a context, the learning results. He/she checks and evaluates the learning processes and results.

Among others, the facilitator has the following abilities:

- Personal competences, such as the learning and communication ability, ability to motivate and manage conflicts, to manage the inter-culture diversity...
- Technical competences, including the skills inherent in training, such as evaluating the training needs, the results...
- Professional competences including the facilitator’s skill to suggest learning experiences according to his/her clients’ professional objectives.

2.1.- The “group facilitator / organiser”; a key element in the group dynamics.

The Group Dynamics are built by the “group” and by the “FACILITATOR / ORGANISER”. The facilitator/organiser’s role should be “guiding” the group, encouraging the active participation of all its members and searching the correct execution of the activities composing the dynamics.

2.1.1- The ROLES a good “facilitator/organiser” should play

Within the group, each one has his/her role. The organiser should encourage a group of functions favouring the balanced development of the group’s life. We can classify them into 4 groups:

COMMUNICATION	Take care that nobody ignores, despises, under-estimates, hogs the limelight... and make everyone estimate, appreciate, encourage... thus creating a confident ambience enabling open and easy communication.
	Encourage dialogue as a vehicle for knowledge and collaboration, favouring the mutual action inside the group and outside it.
	Pay attention to each one’s life inside the group: their needs, problems, worries, frustrations, the resources they do not use...
CO RESPONSIBILITY	Act as one of many in the group, the coordinator should assume his/her role, he/she should make questions, communicate experiences, act as an adult, undergo revisions, follow the rules for the good work of the team...
	Do not consider the group as a private ownership. Give responsibility to each one so that the coordination might be in turns, and therefore, all might learn by experiencing.
	Try to make all take part as much as possible, providing ideas, initiatives, enthusiasm, realism, critical attitude, etc.
	Teach practically that the less the group needs you, the best. This is a sign of maturity.
MOTIVATION	Take care for the global climate of the group: external and internal environment so that it might work in a unified, satisfied and efficacious manner.
	Achieve coherent objectives, contents and methods, built from the group’s reality and possibilities; suggesting particular challenges encouraging the achievement of new ones
	Offer some keys to interpret, searching and confrontation ways... Encourage the group to discover by itself, presenting according to respect, support, secret, precision parameters
APPROACH TO REALITY	Offer some keys to analyse and interpret what happens, the causes and consequences, the group resources to diagnose suitably and solve efficaciously.
	Face the group to its own reality, to get educated in group from what they live.
	Help linking the group’s life – phenomena, rules... – with the life of the society it reflects. Favour the openness, the critical, collaborative and transforming attitude within the group and, through it, in society.

2.1.2.- Important elements the coordinator should know regarding the group techniques

Following the line of the first section of this book, group dynamics, the coordinator should master the techniques, should have experienced them and know how to use them to build a mature human group and to produce according to the programming objectives and to each technique in each step of the process. He / she should also take into account other elements:

CONSIDER RELATIVELY	All the techniques in the group dynamics have relative value. The most important thing is the climate of freedom, communication, collaboration, participation and responsibility. The techniques should adapt to this climate.
PLAN	The techniques should be planned according to the objectives to reach and the activities to carry out. We cannot improvise.
REDUCE VERBAL COMMUNICATION	The verbal instructions and explanations should be as few as possible. It is better to visualise the sentences through graphs on the blackboard or on posters.
COMBINE TECHNIQUES	In one meeting, sometimes, different techniques can be combined, which enriches the activities and makes the group more dynamic.
CREATE OTHER TECHNIQUES	Each one must discover the most suitable techniques for their objectives and the situation of their groups; these will be probably the best. The creativity of a motivated group is unlimited; particularly young people often surprise with unnamed techniques that do not appear in books, but which should be included. The books might offer ideas, but we should not get limited by them. We should be creative.
TRAIN ON GROUP DYNAMICS	The training should not be just offering recipes for group dynamics techniques, nor suggest stiff rules for their use, but encouraging the group to discover and then organise, freely and with creativity, its own dynamics.
EXCHANGE CREATIONS	There are, in many groups and sectors, very valuable experiences that still belong to a few people. Communicating to the others what we have discovered or invented is positive. Many things do not improve because we grow the inferiority complex or individualism.
ADAPT TO THE TIME AND PLACE	The techniques should be adapted to the time we have. There are some techniques that might be used in 2 or more sessions. Regarding the place of the meeting, it would be advisable to have a big room so that several groups could meet at the same time and move easily; well illuminated, ventilated and without noise; with a blackboard or corkboard; comfortable chairs, big table to be able to write comfortably. It is advisable that the physical aspects are checked by the coordinator (unfortunately, this does not always happen). When the physical environment is uncomfortable, the group psychical-affective ambience gets harmed.
ENSURE THE MATERIAL ELEMENTS	It is worth having at hand some elements that are used and indicated in many dynamics (photographs, leaflet-files, newspaper and magazine cuttings, different-sized envelopes, cardboard, safety pins and other pins, blackboard and chalk, glue, adhesive tape, scissors, roller pens, pens, markers, songs books, sheets of paper, etc.) It is advisable to have them stored in the group meeting place so that they might be used at any time, in case we have to change the planned technique or if something unexpected happens. Sometimes, the small details spoil the great performances.

3.- GUIDELINES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF GROUP DYNAMICS

The group dynamics are techniques aimed at making the components of a group to acquire (thanks to the processes observed and experienced in it) new concepts, knowledge, skills and behaviours. They are proposals of collective structured situations that could range from a problem, a model of behaviour or simulated conflicts the facilitator used to make the group components regard themselves and identify the others' behaviours with learning purpose, not as much to assimilate knowledge as to change their behaviour and sometimes their attitude. They never have to be considered as the purpose themselves, but as tools or means to achieve the real group learning purpose.

The group dynamics have the great advantage, compared with other techniques, that they provide a context also to favour learning in three particular fields:

- a) Knowledge and how to use it
- b) Skills
- c) Values and attitudes

3.1.- What Group Dynamics are and are not for

Group Dynamics are NOT for:	
<i>Being taken as a game ...</i>	Some organisers almost identify dynamics with games. They see them as an amusement, to make their work with the group become easier. We have to insist on it: Techniques are not games
<i>Encouraging comradeship ...</i>	Those who regard them like that will only achieve a superficial friendship.
<i>Giving an opportunity to speak and speculate...</i>	It would be very poor to limit the techniques to that. The organiser who use them to spend time or to "make the meeting more pleasant" or to make the members of the group "be more at ease" will waste many of the rich possibilities the techniques include.
<i>Being used in a pure manner ...</i>	Always using them "according to the book", without combining them or adapting them is the best way to take potentialities away from them. Where is the coordinator's creativity?

The Group Dynamics ARE for:	
<i>Giving seriousness and deepness ...</i>	The techniques are used to find the systematic reflection in the group
<i>Creating a group...</i>	The techniques are a way to achieve progressively deeper human relations, to develop joint and fraternal attitudes.
<i>Finding solutions for the problems...</i>	To try to solve internal group conflicts, to favour integration and communication in the group, to develop the critical sense, to make the group work more effective.

3.2- Group Dynamics: a different way to “learn”

The Group Dynamics should be taken as an opportunity to break a traditional dynamic reigning in the classroom. With them, we can generate knowledge and learning in an amusing and attractive way, enabling interaction among people. The group dynamics have a specific amusement value that not only stimulates emotiveness and creativity; it also introduces dynamism and positive strength into the groups.

The Group Dynamics have also been called “experiential”, as they make us live or feel a real situation. This is very important due to the prevalence of the formal element in the educational and training processes. It is necessary to favour processes allowing us to “**learn more and train less**”

Our OBJECTIVES when planning Group Dynamics are the following:

- 1) Generate observable data and experiences through the performance of different established activities in a Group Dynamics.
- 2) Select and analyse the data generated in the Dynamics.
- 3) Identify the personal beliefs, emotions and feelings provoked by the observed behaviours.
- 4) Get conclusions and develop new mental beliefs and patterns
- 5) Encourage the generalisation and transference of this learning to real-life situations.

In general, the Group Dynamics might be used in many ways:

- a. Encourage or enhance the lessons of a learning process.
- b. Make theoretical concepts transferable or translatable to real situations
- c. Diagnose and develop specific skills and attitudes
- d. Evaluate knowledge
- e. Identify the group’s expectations
- f. Fix the rules for a group
- g. Overcome the stagnant situation of a group dynamics
- h. Energise or prepare a group for learning
- i. Diagnose and analyse the group dynamic processes
- j. Integrate working teams, etc.

3.3.- How to choose the suitable group dynamics.

No technique might be used in every circumstance. We always have to adapt them to the circumstances, problems and features of the group.

It is extremely important, in practice, to choose the probably most suitable technique in each case. It is not possible to provide any guidelines that might be used in each particular situation of the group. It is impossible for an organiser to find some kind of recipe indicating which dynamics to use for each group/situation. It is the organiser’s know-how, knowledge, skills and abilities that can guide him/her in each particular case. This is due to the fact that we are not working with standardised things or objects, always following the same standards for the execution of the program, but with people who change, who are different, who interact, who interrelate, who exchange.

Nevertheless, there are some criteria or factors to be taken into account when choosing the group dynamics or technique to be used with a particular group.

According to Cirigliano and Villaverde, **the factors an organiser should take into account** to use a group dynamics are:

<i>The objectives sought...</i>	The different techniques search for different objectives. First, we have to define the objectives, and then we will choose the technique.
<i>The maturity and training of the group...</i>	Not all the techniques involve the same complexity. If the group is not very experienced, we will have to start with simple techniques, with gradual participation. If the group is trained and motivated enough, we can choose techniques involving higher personal commitment.
<i>The group's size...</i>	The groups' behaviour depends, to a great extent, on their size <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>In small groups</i>, cohesion is easier; they are more sure and confident. They all have time to take part, the mutual knowledge is personal, the relations are affectionate, and the organiser is really known. ○ <i>In medium-sized groups</i>, relations are variable. Sub-groups appear easily. There is social knowledge, but not personal. The organiser is known partially. ○ <i>In big groups</i> lack of personal knowledge prevails. Confidence is difficult. Relations are provisional. The organiser is superficially known. In these groups, it is advisable to use techniques allowing making sub-groups and then sharing the experience.
<i>The physical environment ...</i>	Not all the techniques require the same time and space.
<i>The features of the external environment...</i>	That is, the climate of psychological acceptance or refusal originated around the group. Many people still think that working in group or knowing each other better is a waste of time. It is usually found satisfying that the organiser explains some contents and the others listen in silence. If we are really willing to educate, we cannot refuse deepening into the attitudes.
<i>The features of the members...</i>	The age, the interests and motivations each one brings when coming into a group, the previous experiences they have had. The experiences influence when choosing a technique. We have to create the necessary ambience for the experience to become rewarding and not to have the feeling of wasting time.
<i>The organiser's experience and capacity...</i>	All the techniques do not require the same degree of knowledge. To use some of them, it is necessary to master the different situations that might arise. An organiser should not lead a group to show off, or to experience with it to see what happens. A group is not a test laboratory. If the organiser does not have the ability to control the processes generated by the use of a technique, it is better not to use it. It is good, necessary and advisable that the organiser who suggests a technique has already experienced it him/herself.

3.4.- Valid rules for any group dynamics

In spite of the variety and number of existing techniques, we can mention a group of guidelines that might be useful for all; some kind of DECALOGUE...

The <i>Decalogue</i> of group techniques for the organiser	
1	Know beforehand the theoretical bases of the group dynamics
2	Before using them, you must know well enough their structure, their operation, their possibilities and risks
3	All the participants should understand thoroughly what each exercise in the dynamics consists in and once the rules are known they should accept them.
4	Follow, as far as possible, the procedure indicated for each case.
5	Use them with a clear and well-defined objective
6	Give the necessary and enough time to carry out the exercise. Do not make it in a hurry.
7	Take carefully into account the level of the group
8	Try to overcome fears, inhibitions and stress and create feeling of safety, developing cooperation, responsibility, creativity and respect abilities and attitudes.
9	Create a friendly atmosphere, avoiding competition and encouraging active participation and listening.
10	Always make an evaluation of the used technique with the group.

3.5.- The values of the group techniques

The values we can find in them speak by themselves. Schematically, I would point out the following:	They are a valuable help in socialisation. Individualisation and socialisation , far from being opposed, are complementary aspects of the same reality of the person.
	They bring about an improvement of the person's acceptance of the others and the contrast with other points of view.
	They encourage a responsible attitude , as it is not only to organiser who does and undoes, but the entire group gets involved.
	The individuals learn more effective ways to work together, they open themselves to new experiences, they improve their communication, they develop mutual confidence and encourage interpersonal dialogue.

3.6- Some limitations and problems of the use of the Group Dynamics

EXTRINSIC limitations	
They are factors limiting the good development of a technique and, subsequently, its efficaciousness. They are determined by:	
The number of members of a group	Either too much or too little
The physical environment	Small places, where the sub-groups disturb each other, impossibility to hear the others, unsuitable furniture...
The time available	The group tasks require more time than other methodologies (magisterial lectures, conferences...) to be developed. A group with a stiff timetable of its members will find an important limit in the use of the group techniques.
Lack of material resources	The organiser and the group should care of getting the material many techniques require: paper, cardboard, envelops, pens, blackboard, slide projector, tape recorder, files and documents photocopies, newspaper and magazine cuttings, markers, photographs, cards, files... If these materials are not prepared beforehand and we improvise, we can ensure the failure of the technique.

INTRINSIC limitations	
They are problems more difficult to solve, which the organiser should know so that, taking them into account, he/she tries to limit them as much as possible:	
Group work favours parasitism...	... of some members, who benefit from the others' work. This is an accusation we can often hear. But it should not threaten any organiser. Why? Because one of the objectives of the group techniques is to create collaboration and co-responsibility habits in the passive members of the group.
The individual and group behaviour are different...	This is a true statement every organiser with some expertise will have probably already assumed. An organiser who faces for the first time the task of organising a group could have the temptation of thinking that a member who behaves differently individually and in group has incoherent and immature behaviour and might feel disappointed and frustrated in his/her work. He/she should not; as it is more than proven that the groups always influence emotionally its members to some extent. The group dynamics allows the individuals knowing these influences.
Favour the development of the group dynamics, without leading it...	This is clearly recognised by Hostie: " <i>It is not, certainly, easy to combine leadership (regarding objectives and working methodological modalities) with non-leadership (regarding the group discoveries and individual awareness). But the organisers are conscious of this difficult task and make an effort to do their best</i> ". Fluctuant and very difficult balance, but it should be faced by all the organisers.

3.7.- Behaviour observation and evaluation in the group dynamics: an opportunity for continuous improvement

The group dynamics offer a good opportunity to learn how to live in group, to give them dynamism and learn about them. The evaluation is the best and widest resource. The following is what should be evaluated in a group dynamics:

Elements that should be EVALUATED by the organiser in a Group Dynamics	
<i>The time distribution</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did they plan the time at the beginning of the session? • How did they really spend it? • Peak instants of the meeting
<i>The existing posts</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have the posts been distributed? • Which criterion was used? • How were they performed? • Did the posts arise spontaneously? Were they necessary?
<i>Difficulties the group has overcome</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulties and problems for the group's work • How have them been solved?
<i>Participation of the members</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did they allow dialogue? • Were there any people in silence? Yes? No? Why? • Significant gestures observed: number of interventions, characteristics (addressed to one member, to the group in general...)
<i>Tension in the group</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If there were any, when? How were they solved? • If there were not any, why?
<i>Working plan</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was the scheduled working plan followed? Why? • Was it difficult to start working? Why? • Use of the available resources
<i>Decision making</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How: voting, as an imposition, general agreement? • Why and what were the decisions made for?