

INSTRUCTION VS FACILITATION

"'But it's no use now,' thought poor Alice, 'to pretend to be two people! Why there's hardly enough of me to make one respectable person!'"

- 'Alice's Adventures in Wonderland', Lewis Carroll

All trainers work along a line between instruction and facilitation. The list below shows some of the differences between the two extremes of working.

Instructors

- Believe they have expertise in the subjects in which they instruct
- Centre sessions on themselves and in achieving the training objectives
- Remain detached and separate from the group
- Concentrate heavily on content and the passing on of skills, knowledge and behaviours
- Discourage participation, except on specific issues or where they decide it is appropriate
- Ask few questions and when they do question they focus on closed or leading questioning techniques
- See themselves as in charge of the session and operating in a parental role (transactional analysis)
- Use detailed training session plans and stick to them to ensure consistency of training
- Discourage feedback during the session, preferring to use evaluation techniques at the end

Facilitators

- Believe that participants already have reserves of knowledge and experience and that their job is to encourage them to share this information
- Centre on the participants and how best to support them in the process
- Work hard to build and maintain empathy with participants
- Concentrate on the process of working together and consider both technical and interpersonal aspects of learning
- Encourage people to participate at all times and contribute fully during the session
- Ask lots of open questions to explore issues fully and encourage quieter members to participate
- See themselves in an equal partnership with participants who are in control of their own learning and operating in an adult role (transactional analysis)
- Use an outline session plan which is flexible in content to allow the session to reflect the needs of participants
- Encourage feedback on all aspects of the process