Questionnaire – Relation to the participants

RELATION TO THE PARTICIPANTS: HIERARCHY OR HORIZONTALITY

How do we relate to participants, what power distance do we wish to maintain, how asymmetrical do we see the role of learner / teacher? A focus on how we regulate our relationship to learners.

What is this dimension about?

One of the key features of a learning experience is the hierarchical distance between learners and teachers. In a vertical setting the roles are very asymmetrical: the teacher is seen as the one possessing the relevant knowledge, responsible for passing it to the learners, who are passive receptors. In a horizontal setting the contributions of participants are valorised, their experiences considered important. Several factors can influence the positioning of a pedagogical intervention on the vertical / horizontal scale, not just the personal dispositions of the trainer. The institutional culture, the national culture of the facilitator and also the participants also matter. Indeed, according to Hofstede there are national cultures more oriented towards higher power distance and other oriented towards horizontality. But what is the consequence of a hierarchical learner – facilitator relationship? Does this necessarily have a negative impact on learning? According to Bourgeois and Nizet (1997:171) sociocognitive conflicts are a key element in the learning process. These consist in social confrontations of several points of view. They become a resource when

they are followed by the resolution of the conflict through the elaboration of a new answer. In asymmetrical settings this elaboration and negotiation is replaced by a relational regulation, that gives priority to the answer provided by the party with higher status, that is the facilitator (p. 187). In a training setting the roles are by definition asymmetrical, but the facilitator can opt for a variety of strategies to compensate this asymmetry. The question at this point is whether or not she wishes to do so.

Presentation of categories

- Epistemic position: the trainer appears as the monopolistic source of knowledge, her questions to learners are not open questions but inquire into whether the learners know the correct answer.
- Discipline: the trainer exerts her authority by limiting the freedom of the learners by establishing a strict discipline and control of the learners
- Use of space and time: the trainer occupies a privileged part of space (the front) and speaks most of the time, as what she says is more relevant than what the learners could say. Time and space are not shared equally.
- Decision-making: the teacher is responsible for making decisions or the group
- Divergence / convergence: The students are expected to adjust to the facilitator in terms of rhythm, style, etc.



PLEASE FILL OUT THE GREEN AND THE RED SECTION BEFORE WATCHING YOUR VIDEO RECORDING

Use the scale 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree

Prescriptive items	1	2	3	4	5
The trainer should be a figure of authority					
Authority is more important than collaboration					
Involving the students in decision making triggers uncertainty and inefficiency					
The trainer should not adjust to learners, the learners should adjust					
It is important to induce collaboration amongst participants					
The frontal way is the best way of teaching					
Learners should sit in a circle / semi-circle so that they all see each other					
The aim of asking questions is to check whether learners have the correct answers.					
Trainers should not share personal information with learners, that could undermine her authority					

PLEASE FILL OUT THE RED SECTION BEFORE WATCHING YOUR VIDEO RECORDING, THEN HIDE IT BY FOLDING THE PAPER. FILL OUT THE BLUE SECTION AFTER VIEWING THE RECORDING. THEN OPEN AND COMPARE. DO YOU SEE ANY DIFFERENCES?

Use the scale 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree	AFTER VIEWING						BEFORE VIEWING					
Descriptive items	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5		
I position myself as a figure of authority												
I let the learners see me as someone who can make mistakes or not know every answer												
I make seating arrangement so that all learners see each other not just me												
Whenever possible I involve participants in decision making												
I avoid the frontal teaching stile												
I speak more than participants												
I ask questions to which there is only one right answer												
I avoid sharing personal information to keep a distance from participants												
I let participants initiate												
I ask open questions to which there are many possible answers												
I present myself as someone intimidating												