

The logo features the letters 'ASK' in a bold, dark blue serif font. Behind the letters is a complex, multi-colored geometric pattern consisting of overlapping lines and shapes in shades of blue, green, yellow, orange, and pink. This central design is enclosed within a white, irregular, star-like shape. The entire composition is surrounded by a decorative border of colorful, overlapping geometric shapes in shades of blue, yellow, and pink.

ASK

Assistant Trainers
Sharing Knowledge

Curriculum for Assistant Trainers

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1. Introduction

Glossary

AT – Assistant Trainer

HT – Head Trainer. In some organisations or courses they may instead be called a trainer, or facilitator. For ease of reading they will be referred to as HT throughout this curriculum.

The Need for a Curriculum for Assistant Trainers

Each country in Europe has its own method of teaching Assistant Trainers (ATs). In some countries, the methodology is well developed and consistent. Some countries have their own written curriculums, and standard ways to teach young people with clear learning pathways. Other countries have no curriculums, and little in the way of guidance for schools or for young people wanting to learn to teach circus.

The ASK project (Assistant trainers sharing knowledge, funded by Erasmus+) has utilised existing knowledge from countries with developed teaching methodology, to create frameworks to support the training of ATs in countries across Europe. In writing this curriculum we understand that there are cultural differences from country to country, which means that the curriculum and guidelines need to be flexible enough to fit the needs of each country using it. This curriculum seeks to acknowledge commonalities, while respecting differences. It is intended as a flexible document that can be adapted, built on and developed.

What Does it Mean to be an Assistant Trainer?

The definition of what an AT is or does varies from country to country, and from school to school. We have based the following chart on what we have found to be the most common roles and responsibilities of ATs across Europe. You may, however, need to make adaptations to this if you are working with younger/older, or less/more experienced trainers.

Job Levels in the Youth Circus				
Working towards a European standard				
	Responsibility	Pedagogics	Artistic Education	Health & Safety
Assistant Trainer (level 1)	to help during the circus activity	to take care of individuals and small groups under the supervision of a basic trainer or a trainer	to support an artistic approach to be a role-model for the participants	to know the basic rules to ensure the participants' health and safety during the circus activity and to follow them to notice and report unsafe situations
Basic Trainer (level 2)	to work autonomously during circus activities in which the basic skills are introduced	to manage a group of children, young people or adults	to consciously stimulate creativity and imagination	to ensure a safe environment for participants to practice in (safe equipment, the physical and emotional well being) to notice and report unsafe situations and to take action in case of an incident, to take the appropriate First Aid and reporting action
Trainer (Level 3)	to realise a long-term program within the pedagogical program of the school or the organisation	to analyse, reflect and adapt his/her pedagogical method according to the participants / group / context he/she is working with or in	to set goals for realising the artistic development of the participant	to practice the health and safety policy of the organisation to evaluate risk considering both the physical and mental well being
Specialised trainer (Level 4a)	to map out the pedagogical program in a specific circus technique to be in charge of activities which lead to the specialisation in a circus technique		to take into account artistic approaches to his/her technique	to develop recommendations and rules for health and safety in his/her technique
Head Trainer (Level 4b)	to prepare a pedagogical program for Circus Arts apprentices	to coordinate a teaching team	to create a program of artistic education	to be responsible for the health and safety in the circus school, organisation or venue where all circus activities are delivered
Trainer of Trainers (Level 4c)	to take part in the development of a Training for Trainers program to be in charge of training activities	to lead reflection on education and group dynamics	to integrate artistic education in his/her pedagogical program	to integrate the health and safety topic in his/her pedagogical program

Criteria for taking part in an Assistant Trainer course:

- Age: 15+ (guideline: this varies from country to country)
- The right attitude (responsibility, maturity, commitment, motivation, engagement)
- Self awareness: knowing why they want to be an AT
- Knowledge (through a course or mentor)
- Experience (through an internship, or experience assisting)

Suggested AT job descriptions can be found in **Appendix 1**.

What Does it Mean to Teach Assistant Trainers?

The training should ideally be led by a trainer/head trainer or facilitator who has educational training and/or professional experience in child and youth circus work. Teacher training experience is desirable. It is also important that they have the time available to commit to the training. Some countries prefer to have multiple trainers fulfilling different roles.

The role of the Head Trainer (HT) is to:

- | | |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| – Be encouraging | – Map progression |
| – Be trustworthy | – Give clear tasks |
| – Give space | – Give correction |
| – Give supervision | – Be a mentor |
| – Provide leadership | – Use initiative |
| – Be a role model | – Not overload |

The training methods used by the HT should serve as an example for the AT. The training should be conducted using active methods and reflection, ensuring the transfer of knowledge into practice. One way of doing this is to use the Experiential Learning Model.

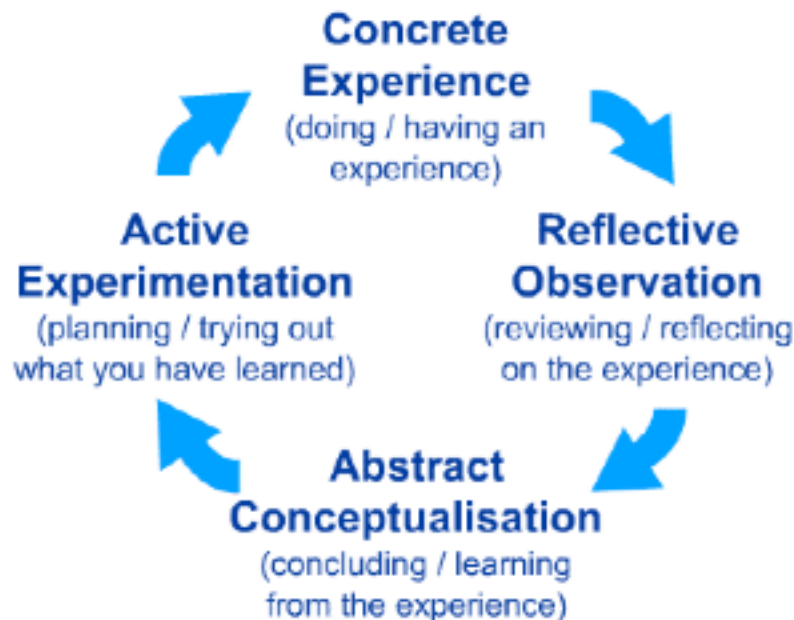
The Experiential Learning Model

The Principles of Experiential Learning are that:

- Learning is a process: it goes beyond classroom
- Learning and doing are not the same thing
- Training should be by design, not by accident

Experiential Learning is the process of learning through experience. It is more specifically defined as “Learning through reflection on doing”.

It can be used as a model for thinking about learning in general



1. **Concrete Experience** – a new experience or situation is encountered, or a reinterpretation of existing experience;
2. **Reflective Observation of the New Experience** – of particular importance are any inconsistencies between experience and understanding;
3. **Abstract Conceptualisation** – reflection gives rise to a new idea, or a modification of an existing abstract concept (the person has learned from their experience);
4. **Active Experimentation** – the learner applies their idea(s) to the world around them, to see what happens.¹

Goals

On Completion of the Training, ATs will Achieve the Following:

Awareness

- Leadership styles: of the AT and others;
- How others perceive the AT as a role model;
- Different learning styles and pace;
- Group dynamics;
- The structure, contents and goals of a circus session.

Skills

- Feedback, evaluation and self-reflection;
- Taking care of the emotional and physical safety of a group, and recognising unsafe situations;
- Communicating coherently with individuals and small groups. This includes verbal and non-verbal communication;
- Behaving respectfully, and receiving respect in return;
- Giving and receiving feedback: AT to participants, HT to AT;
- Increased vocabulary in circus pedagogical terms;
- How to plan a lesson;
- How to set goals.

¹Ref: McLeod, S. A. (2017, Oct 24). Kolb's Learning Styles and Experiential Learning Cycle. Retrieved from <https://www.simplypsychology.org/learning-kolb.html>

Knowledge

- The values, policies and regulations of the organisation that the AT works within;
- Basic developmental stages of children;
- How to create a safe and optimal environment for learning;
- First aid: what to do and what not to do when someone is injured;
- The circus landscape: schools, traditions, what happens in other countries;
- The roles and responsibilities of an Assistant Trainer.

2. The Structure of the Curriculum

Ideally, the curriculum will be used to form a structured course, delivered to a group of ATs. In some countries and/or schools this will not be possible. We have structured the curriculum so that it can be used to teach both groups, and individual ATs.

The curriculum consists of the following:

- Structured learning: this will consist of around 50 hours of learning, and includes practical and theoretical models.
- Internship: this consists of ‘on the job’ training, where the AT observes, assists and eventually leads activities. Throughout the internship there is a constant appraisal process, with the HT feeding back to the AT, and the AT feeding back on their learning experience. The suggested length for the internship is around 60 hours.

It is also recommended that the AT receives some form of First Aid training.

Each curriculum chapter/module is structured as follows:

The Learning Goals of the Module

Awareness: You can recognise it, and can see it in yourself and others.

Skills: You are able to do it.

Knowledge: You know it exists.

Information on the Module Subject

This section will detail the information that the HT needs to get across to the AT in the module.

Activities/Toolkit

Suggested activities that will help the AT learn the module content, and provide information models.

Links/Further Reading/Notes

Links for further reading will be here, as well as any other information necessary for the module.

The Curriculum

3. Introduction to ASK training

Awareness

- Who else is on the course?
- Reasons for completing the course, expectations, and how the course will work;
- What it means to be an AT;
- Roles and responsibilities.

Skills

- New games;
- Activities for facilitating the start of a course.

Knowledge

- The structure of the course, and the ATs' journey through it;
- Practicalities and logistics of the training.

Information

The first training module of the ASK curriculum introduces Assistant Trainer(s) to the course. At the beginning of the module, ATs will:

- Receive a welcome pack;
- Discuss: why be an AT? Motivations for being there;
- Look at guidelines to be followed and expectations that the AT, HT and school have. The ATs should be involved in this process to ensure buy in;
- Talk through the logistics of the course, including: duration, hours, breaks, meals, toilets, fire exits etc;
- Discuss the goals of the course, and their own learning path.

Activity/Toolkit

Welcome Pack

The welcome pack contents may contain information on course logistics, the training space, contact details, any rules and regulations, and anything else the AT(s) need to know throughout the course. This could be in a format which will enable information to be added as the course unfolds, such as a ring binder/folder, or it could be part of a diary or journal given to the participant(s) on the first day. Allocate time to go through the pack and answer any questions.

Ice Breaking Games

Include name games, if the ATs don't already know each other.

Hand, Pair, Share

This is an active game for sharing information:

ATs mingle. When they hear 'Hand', they raise one hand. When they hear 'Pair', they join their hand with another person's hand. When they hear 'Share', they talk. Subjects can include: 'Why circus?', 'What's your motivation to be on the course?', and any others that seem relevant.

Intro Activity: Making it Work

An effective and inclusive way of setting the 'rules' of a course.

ATs discuss and set rules that they can agree to for the duration of the course, e.g. turn up on time, speak to each other with respect etc. The HT facilitates this process, writing the rules as a list on a flipchart and offering prompts if needed, however the ATs are responsible for setting and agreeing to the rules. Ensure that everyone is in agreement with these guidelines.

Expectations

Use one sheet of flipchart paper for each of the questions below, and ask all of the ATs to write something on each sheet. This can be done via discussion, paper carousel, snow wall etc.²

- What does the AT expect from the HT?
- What does the HT expect from the AT?
- What does the AT's school expect from the AT?
- What does the AT expect from the school?
- What do the ATs expect from each other?

On completion of the course, as part of the evaluation, the list of expectations can be referred back to, to see if they were met.

Goal Setting Exercise

At this stage, this can be as simple as finishing the sentence: "At the end of the course I want to be/ know/be able to..."

See Appendix 2 for more games.

² Paper carousel: groups stay together and Flipchart papers rotate from group to group, so that all groups contribute.

Snow wall: Post-It notes of thoughts and ideas are placed on a wall.

4. Introduction to the Assistant Trainer's Teaching Environment

Awareness

- Of the ethics and values within the AT's circus school;
- Of the roles and responsibilities of an AT;
- Of the relationships that an AT needs to maintain.

Skills

- Able to locate equipment and first aid supplies;
- Able to discuss the policies and procedures of the school.

Knowledge

- The conduct expected by the AT's organisation, of the AT in the classroom;
- Policies and procedures of the working space;
- Where to find equipment, people and advice.

Information

Introduce the AT(s) to:

- The learning environment they will be working in;
- The policies and procedures of the school they work in.

Getting to Know the AT's Space

Rigging - where to find:

- Circus kit;
- First aid kit/station.

Who to approach for:

- Employment contracts, police checks, wages/finances and other administration;
- Safeguarding: in case of accidents, incidents, or safeguarding issues;
- Rigging and other circus equipment issues and questions (including replacements, repairs, and moving aerial equipment in and out).

See **Appendix 3** for models of company reporting structures.

Policies and Procedures the AT May Need to be Aware of

Policies and procedures will differ in each country and school, so you will need to adapt this training to what is relevant in the AT's workplace. Below is a suggested list of policies that the AT may need to be familiar with:

- Code of conduct for working with children;
- Safeguarding policy, including: Social Media policy, and Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection policy;
- Health and Safety policy and Risk Assessments;
- Equalities policy and action plan;
- In Case of Emergency/medical forms, and the privacy/data protection procedures around these;
- Rigging policy: what is allowed, and what isn't;
- In case of fire procedure;
- In case of accident procedure;
- Collection of children procedure.

Roles and Responsibilities of an Assistant Trainer

- To be present in a positive and contributing way;
- To provide active support: before, during and after a lesson;
- To be fit and able to work, and to know their boundaries;
- To be willing to learn a broad range of skills appropriate to the venue;
- To realise that there is no one way of teaching;
- To be a role model; to be an example and pass on expertise;
- To be able to deconstruct individual skills for ease of learning (baby steps).

Relationships

The AT will need to develop and maintain relationships with:

- The HT;
- Parents/carers;
- Students.

Activity/Toolkit

Some activities and tools that the HT can use to teach the above information include:

Practical discussion on how things work in the space;

- Ask the AT(s) what they think their roles and responsibilities are;
- Explore the space using a treasure hunt: for example, discover the administrator, the first aid kit, keys for equipment cupboards etc.;
- Have a bespoke checklist made to ensure the AT has all of the information they need by the end of the module.

Notes:

This module is straightforward to deliver in a 1:1 training situation, where the AT is learning in their own space. On an AT course where the ATs are not in their own space the HT/Facilitator should use the policies/procedures of their own school/working space as examples. The AT can then translate this information to their own space.

5. The Big Picture: Circus Now

Awareness

- Of the AT's place within the bigger picture of circus.

Skills

- Ability to talk about different types of circus activity, and genres.

Knowledge

- The current circus landscape in the local area, nationally, and internationally;
- Circus is a wide and diverse world; encompassing youth and social circus, circus for fun, sport, education, and artistic practice - contemporary and traditional;
- Where to find some information on both contemporary and classical circus.

Information

Circus is a much more varied and diverse world now than it was 50 years ago, when circus activity was mainly confined to touring circus shows and variety theatres.

Nowadays, there are a wide variety of circus activities taking place, as well as many organisations which have been created to support this activity. In this module the AT should learn about:

- The circus landscape: schools, traditions, and what happens in other countries;
- Circus in education: does it exist in mainstream schools in your country? What form does it take? Is it part of the curriculum? In sports classes or drama?;
- Social circus: what is it? Why is it important? What projects exist, locally, nationally internationally?;
- Further education in circus: what schools exist where?;
- Circus as art: information on traditional and contemporary circus. Differences and similarities.

Circus Organisations and Networks

Many organisations exist to support circus on local, national, and international levels.

See **Appendix 4** for a map of European circus advocacy organisations.

Activities/Toolkit

If ATs have some knowledge of the circus world: place titles of genres at different stations, divide the ATs into groups, and rotate them through the stations, discussing the genres at each station. Ask them to write the words they would associate with each genre on paper.

Feedback and have discussion on completion.

If ATs have no knowledge, you can place information on each genre around the room - this can include posters, magazines, or even Google on computers. Put ATs into groups: the groups ideally need to be large enough to provide one person for each subject. The groups split and disperse: one person for each genre. They spend 5 minutes learning about the genre, then the groups are reformed. Each person in the group then reports back on what they learned about their genre. NOTE: If there are more genres than group members, the exercise can be done more than once.

Links

[Cirque du Soleil Social Circus Map](#)

[Carnival Cinema's world circus map](#)

[CircusTalk](#)

[Circopedia](#)

6. Child Development

Awareness

- Children need different teaching methods at different stages of development.

Skills

- Start to recognise different teaching methods relevant to age.

Knowledge

- That development stages exist: what to expect and how to teach, depending on which stage of development children are at;
- That there will always be variation and differences from child to child: this can only be a general guide.

Information

It is important as a trainer of children that the AT has a basic understanding of the stages of child development; so they are informed about what is appropriate for a child to learn at what age. This will also inform them on how to structure lessons, so that activities are engaging and appealing to the age group of the class.

It is important that the AT knows that this is a general guide, and there will always be exceptions, so teaching needs to be flexible enough within the age groups to support slower developers and provide enough challenge for quicker learners.

There may also be variations in individual skills: for example, motor skills may be advanced but social skills may be less developed.

A definition of Child Development:

Child development refers to the sequence of physical, language, thought and emotional changes that occur in a child from birth to the beginning of adulthood. During this process a child progresses from dependency on their parents/guardians to increasing independence.

Age	Development Stage
0 – 2	
Social Interactions	• Relationships with people close to them, such as parents and siblings, are the most important; • Eye contact is the main way to communicate.
Body Image in Relation to the World, Self Awareness, Emotions	• Don't yet have full awareness of their body. They take in information through the mouth and eyes; • Begin to realise they are a distinct being, separate from their surroundings • To communicate, they need eye contact. You need to face them when talking.

Experimentation, Discovery	- Everything is experimental at this age; - Start to play with colours, size, textures; - Begin to realise that an object still exists even when hidden.
Motor Skills	They can become frustrated at this age because they want something but don't yet have the motor skills to achieve it.
3 – 5	
Social Interactions	- Everything is experimental at this age; - Start to play with colours, size, textures; - Begin to realise that an object still exists even when hidden.
Body Image in Relation to the World, Self Awareness, Emotions	Able to visualise their own body in motion.
Experimentation, Discovery	- Personal challenge becomes an important learning process; - Creates hypotheses and utopian projects. Looks for concrete solutions.
Motor Skills	- Muscular development allows greater precision of movement; - Able to learn by visualisation.
6 – 9	
Social Interactions	- Start to be less egocentric; - They like speaking, and ask many questions; - Start to make strong friendships; - Start to realise gender differences.
Body Image in Relation to the World, Self Awareness, Emotions	- Understand that they are growing and how their body works, and what organs they have; - Understand there is death; that they will die and so will their relatives; - Start to understand time. - Can express their feelings in words.
Experimentation, Discovery	- They have strong feelings about justice; - Know what truth and lies are; - Discover spatial distances.

Motor Skills	• Want to learn about their body and use it, and to challenge themselves; • They gain experience of pain.
9 – 12	
Social Interactions	• May experience mood swings; • Able to reason, listen to arguments and adapt their own judgment; • Understand humour, particularly verbal humour; • May use physical complaints to avoid tasks; • Same sex friendships are important, not yet interested in opposite sex.
Body Image in Relation to the World, Self Awareness, Emotions	• Able to visualise their own body in motion.
Experimentation, Discovery	• Personal challenge becomes an important learning process; • They create hypotheses and utopian projects, research concrete solutions.
Motor Skills	• Important muscular development allows more precise movements; • Able to learn by visualisation.
12 – 15	
Social Interactions	• Need to belong to a group that they can feel close/similar to; • They test the difference between genders.
Body Image in Relation to the World, Self Awareness, Emotions	• Feel distance/differences/similarities with their parents; • They are emotional and overwhelmed.
Experimentation, Discovery	• They are curious about world, but they feel bored easily if they are not engaged; • Need to express their negative feelings, their resistance, so they can build their identity.
Motor Skills	• Need to experiment a lot with what is possible and what is not; • They set their own boundaries.

15 – 18	
Social Interactions	• Need independence and trust, and at the same time they need to have authentic leaders around; • Need to have a role in the group.
Body Image in Relation to the World, Self Awareness, Emotions	• They are emotional and sometimes they are overwhelmed; • Need to have good reflected image from their relatives; • They have problems explaining their own feelings.
Experimentation, Discovery	• Can research and go deep into a topic they are interested in.
Motor Skills	• Need to experiment a lot with what is possible and what is not. They set their own boundaries.

Activities/Toolkit

- Ask the AT to design a 5/10 minute circus class for different age groups;
- Ask others to role play the age group, and ask the AT to run the class. Reflect and discuss;
- Discuss the theory. Ask the AT for their personal experience of the different age groups. They can reflect on classes they have taught, or if they have no experience with the age groups they can discuss experiences from childhood, or siblings. Ask if the descriptions resonate, and if there are more things that they would add.

References/Further Reading

Henri Wallon (1879–1962): Stages of Child development. “La conscience et la vie subconsciente” in G. Dumas, Nouveau traité de psychologie, PUF, Paris (1920–1921)

Jean Piaget (1896–1980): Piaget’s theory of cognitive development

Sara Smilansky (1922–2006): Sociodramatic Play an the Four Types of Play

<https://childdevelopment.com.au/areas-of-concern/what-is-child-development/>

7. The Learning Zone

Awareness

- There are different ways to teach the same skills.

Skills

- Start to understand how to pitch teaching at the right level for the student, making the learning more student centred.

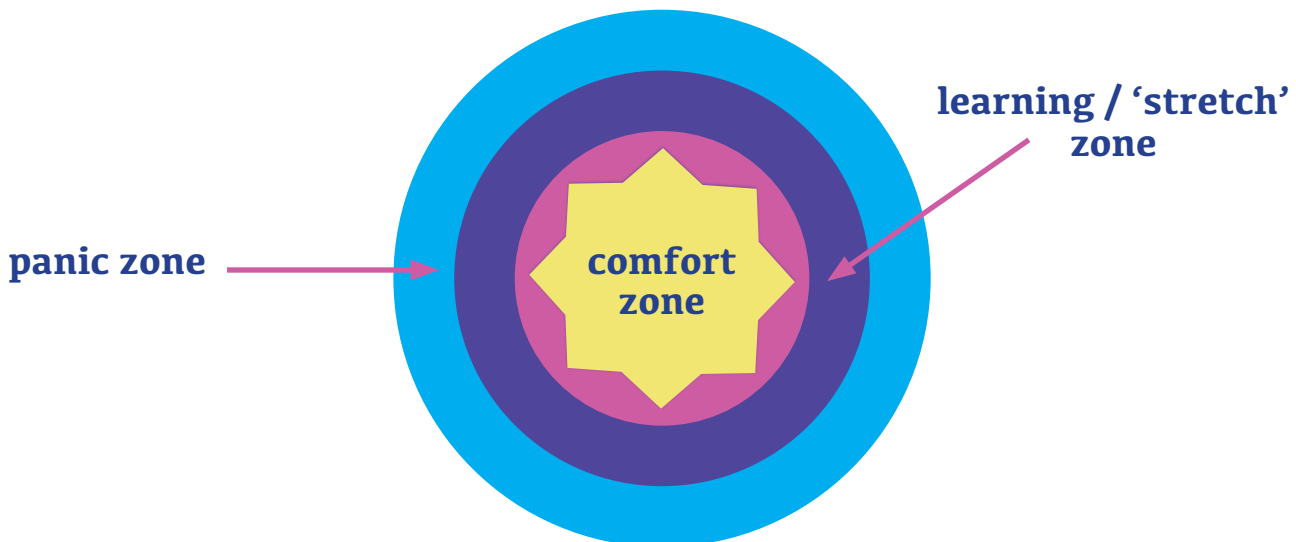
Knowledge

- Learn about comfort/stretch/panic zones and how they apply to teaching.

Information

Emotional Care

In order to learn we have to explore and venture out into the unknown. We already know our immediate surroundings, which form our 'comfort zone'. In the comfort zone things are familiar to us; we feel comfortable and don't have to take any risks. The comfort zone is important, because it gives us a place to return to, to reflect and make sense of things – a safe haven.



Although it is cozy to stay in our comfort zone, we have to leave it in order to get to know the unknown. We need to explore our learning zone, sometimes referred to as our 'stretch zone', which lies just outside of our secure environment. Only in the learning zone can we grow and learn, live out our curiosity and make new discoveries, slowly expanding our comfort zone by becoming more familiar with more things.

However, beyond our learning zone lies our panic zone, where learning is impossible, as it is blocked by a sense of fear. Any learning connected with negative emotions is memorised in a part of the human brain that we can only access in similar emotional situations. Experiences of being in our panic zone are frequently traumatic, and any sense of curiosity is shut down by a need to get out of our panic zone. Therefore, we should aim to get close to, but not into, our panic zone.

In the transition from comfort zone to learning zone we need to be careful when taking risks that we don't go too far out of our comfort zone – beyond the learning zone – into the panic zone, where all of our energy is used up managing/controlling our anxiety, and no energy can flow into learning.

Importantly, these three zones are different for different situations and different for each person: we all have our own unique comfort zone, learning zone and panic zone.

Where one zone ends and another starts is often not clearly visible. This means that we must never push someone else into their learning zone, as we cannot see where one zone leads into the next. All we can do is invite others to leave their comfort zone, value their decision, take them seriously, and give them support, so that they won't enter their panic zone.

When explaining a process, try to do so in 'baby steps'. Over explaining or providing too much information before the activity can cause anxiety and make the task seem insurmountable. You need to balance keeping instruction simple enough to absorb, while making sure enough information is given to keep the activity safe.

Motivation

Discipline plays a part in learning, though not in the sense of control or a 'stick'. Learners often give up easily when something isn't working straight away. It's the trainer's job to encourage students to keep trying, and find new and creative ways to keep them involved.

Social Learning

In group work learning will almost always be due to interactions with others. It is therefore particularly important to lead the group in the right direction.

Observation

Allow time to observe the group. Let them work in pairs, in small groups, large groups. Notice the effect this has on different individuals.

Give participants the opportunity to get to know each other, even if it is a group that is already familiar. Make sure the children are aware of their own behaviour. This can be done by specific positive feedback. It gives them the opportunity to see each other, and how they play together.

Assertiveness

As a trainer, you need to create an environment where you encourage children to stand up for their own ideas, no matter how out of the ordinary they may be. Give everyone a chance to express themselves. Make sure the children listen to each other's thoughts and feelings, and show respect. Be confident in the way you communicate. As a trainer, you are responsible for clear and transparent communication with your children.

Collaboration

In order for a session to run smoothly it is essential that you collaborate with your fellow trainers in a complimentary way. This means you take different roles in the class. In terms of guiding you, make sure that you make clear agreements with your co-facilitator about who leads and who supports. Be a good example to the children you work with by taking turns.

Activities/Toolkit

Ask the AT(s) to describe a learning experience:

- When they stayed in their comfort zone;
- When they went into the panic zone;
- When they were in the stretch zone.

For each experience ask them how it felt. Get them to describe this in as much detail as possible.

Ask them to think about what could have made their experience better. What would they have done in the teacher's position?

This exercise can be done as a sharing experience between two or three ATs, or as an individual written exercise. Make sure that the AT has the opportunity to share the experience and talk it through, either with each other or with the HT.

Ask the AT to design an activity to teach a student. Work out two options to make the activity easier if the student struggles, and two ways to make it more difficult if they pick it up quickly.

8. The Zone of Proximal Development

Awareness

- With guidance and encouragement from a more knowledgeable other, a learner can progress further and faster than on their own.

Skills

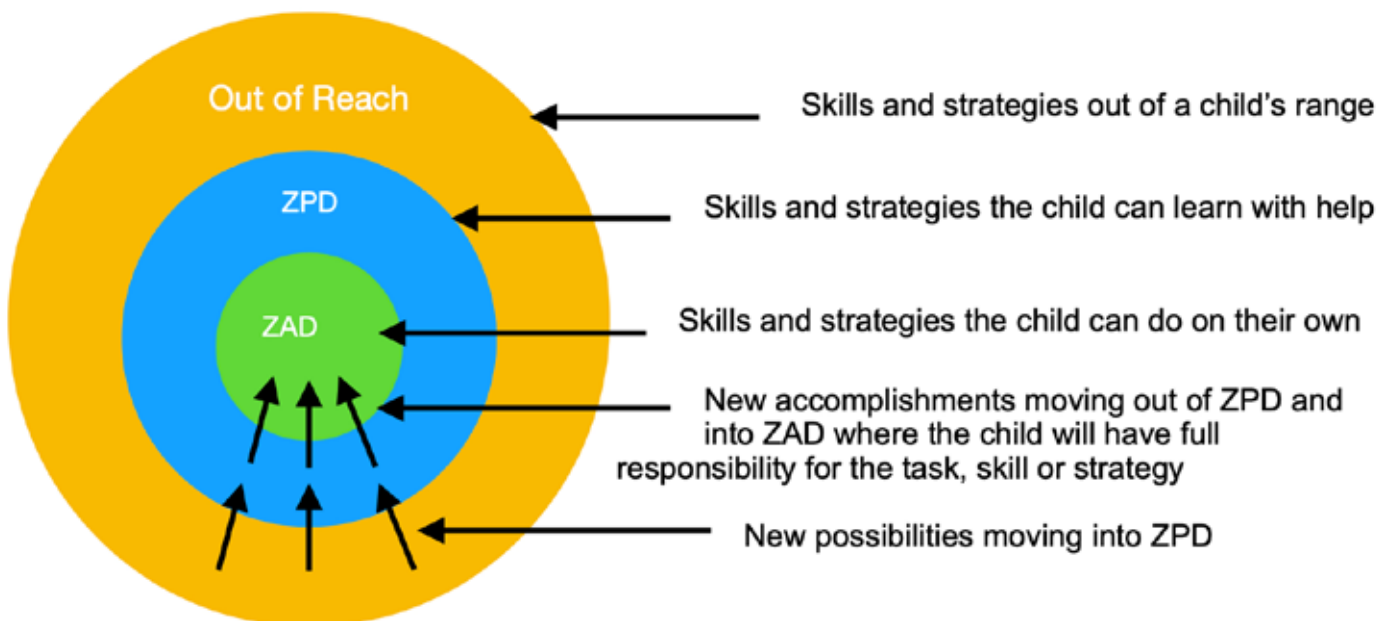
- Start to recognise how to keep learning in the 'zone of proximal development', to avoid disengagement;
- How to break skills into smaller steps to keep students feeling safe.

Knowledge

- Of Lev Vygotsky's 'zone of proximal development';
- Of Wood, Bruner and Ross's theory of 'scaffolding'.

Information

The concept, 'zone of proximal development', was developed by Soviet psychologist Lev Vygotsky. It refers to the difference between what a learner can do without help and what they can achieve with guidance and encouragement from a skilled partner. Thus, the term "proximal" refers to those skills that the learner is "close" to mastering.



ZPD – zone of proximal development

ZAD – zone of actual development

Vygotsky believed that when a learner is in the zone of proximal development for a particular task, providing appropriate assistance will give them enough of a "boost" to achieve the task.

Three important components can aid the learning process:

- The presence of someone with knowledge and skills beyond that of the learner (a more knowledgeable other);
- Social interactions with a skilful tutor, that allow the learner to observe and practice their skills;
- Scaffolding, or supportive activities provided by the educator, or more competent peer, to support the student as he or she is led through the ZPD.

It is important to start your explanation from the level where the participant(s) is, or they will most likely disengage. This means there is a need for creative differentiation.

Scaffolding

The theory of scaffolding was introduced by Wood, Bruner and Ross (1976).

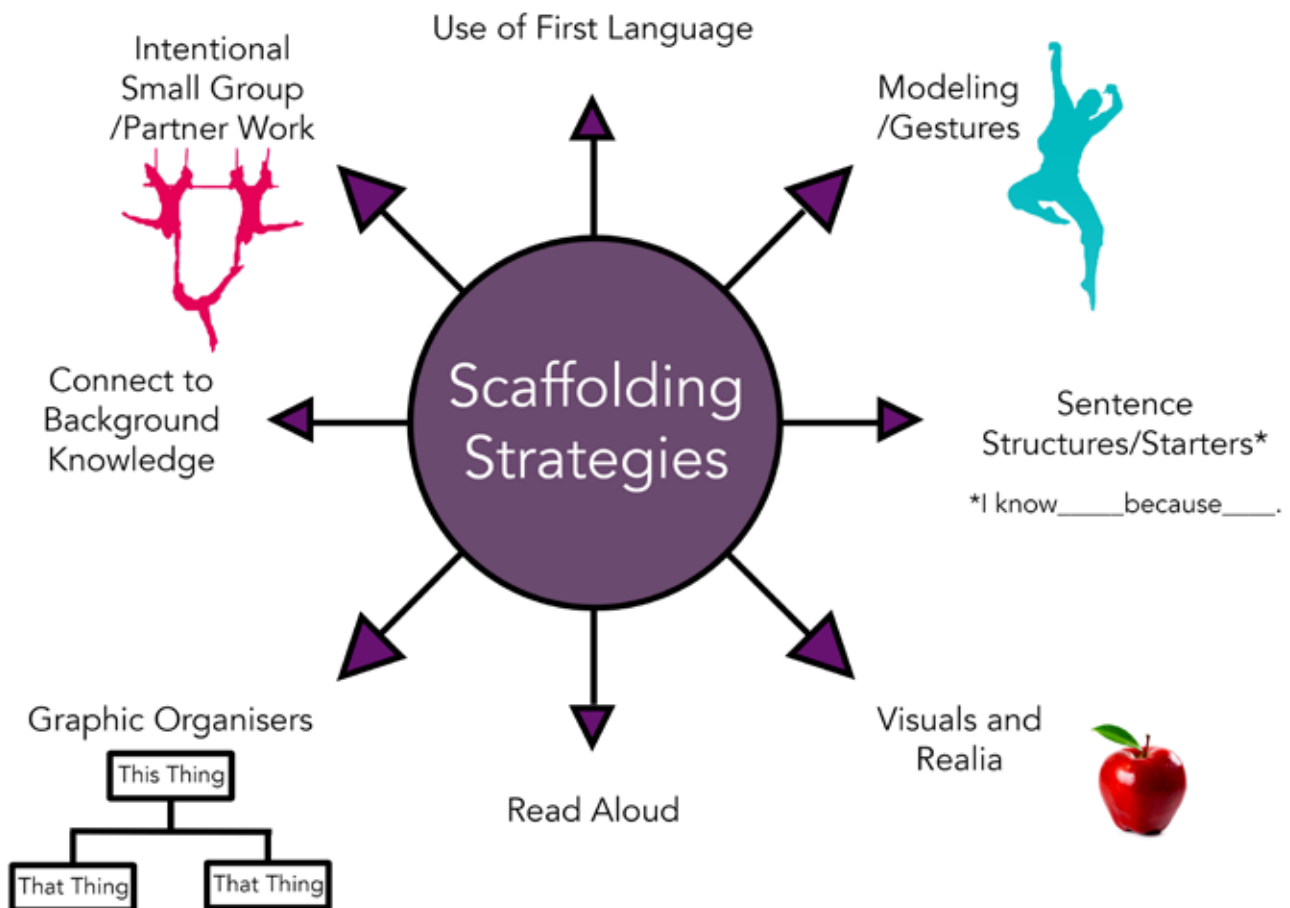
Scaffolding consists of activities provided by the trainer, or more competent peer, to support the learner as they are led through the zone of proximal development.

Support is gradually withdrawn as it becomes unnecessary, much as a scaffold is removed from a building during construction. The learner will then be able to complete the task again on their own.

Scaffolding is defined as a process 'that enables a child or novice to solve a task or achieve a goal that would be beyond his unassisted efforts.'

Scaffolding requires adults to 'control those elements of the task that are initially beyond the learner's capability, thus permitting him to concentrate upon and complete only those elements that are within his range of competence'.

There is no single 'best' strategy for a child to progress: assistance seems most effective when the trainer varies their strategy depending on how the learner is doing. This can include the following:



Also:

- General encouragement e.g. 'now you have a go';
- Specific instructions e.g. 'throw a ball in an arc from one hand to the other';
- Direct demonstration, e.g. showing the child how to throw the ball.
- Some students can be asked to 'help' others in their learning (which prevents the fastest ones to disengage out of boredom).

Activities/Toolkit

Set the AT the task of planning a lesson, keeping in mind the zone of proximal development. Make sure that they are working with skills they are confident in.

For example, juggling: find 10 throws/tricks/combinations with one ball. Put them in an order of difficulty. Teach a group the tricks and find ways to support as they start to struggle. How does this work with a group with differing abilities?

References/Further Reading

Lev S. Vygotski (1896–1934): Sociocultural theory

McLeod, Saul: The Zone of Proximal Development and Scaffolding:

<https://www.simplypsychology.org/Zone-of-Proximal-Development.html>

9. Flow

Awareness

- Emotions have an impact on the ability to learn. There is an optimum place for learning, which is dependent on the balance between challenge and perceived skill level.

Skills

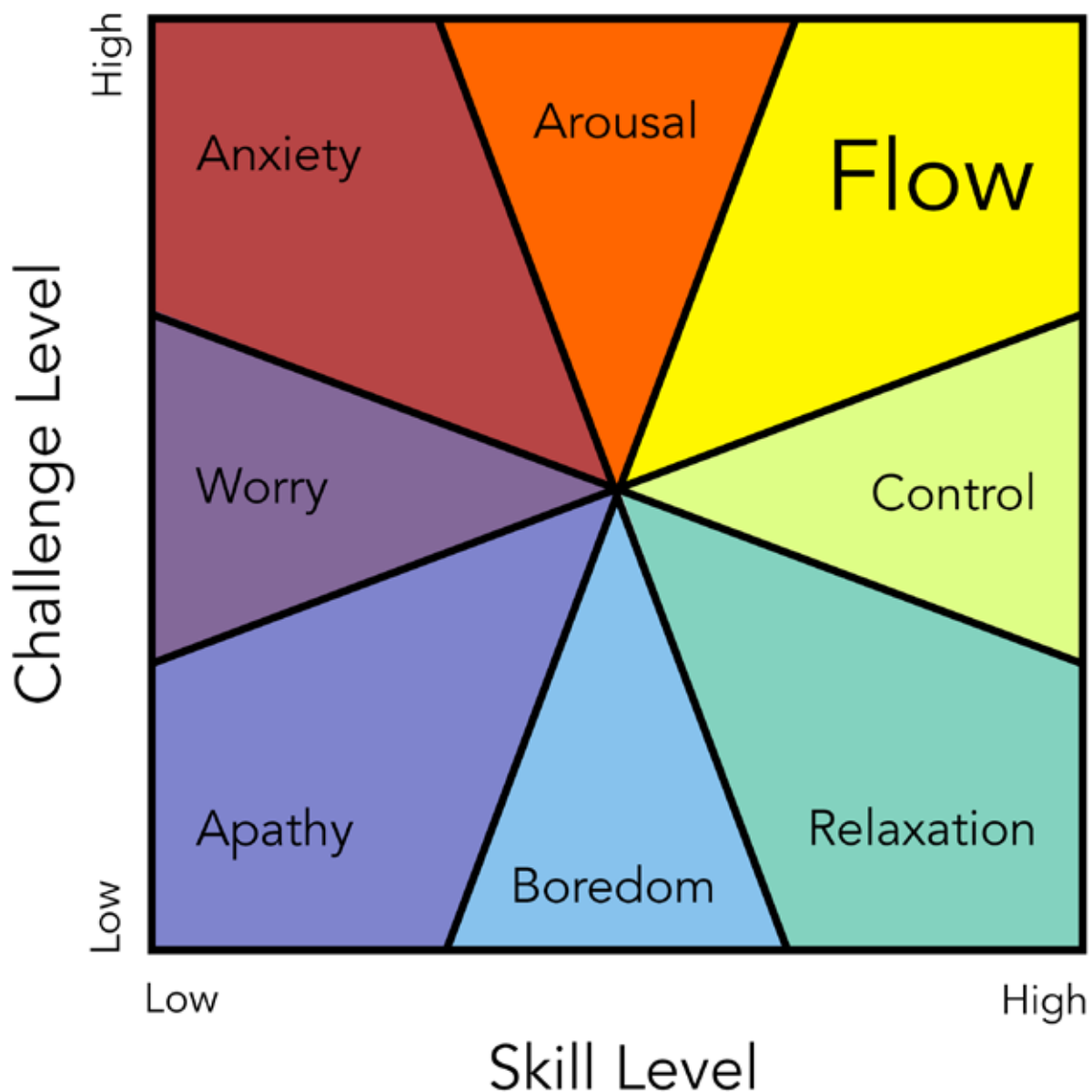
- Begins to understand how to design a circus session that can lead the student into a state of Flow.

Knowledge

- Of the concept of 'Flow', through Mihaly Csikzentmihalyi's 1990 model.

Information

The Flow Model was first introduced by positive psychologist Mihaly Csikzentmihalyi. He wrote about the



³ Note: Csikzentmihalyi published his book in 1990, but didn't publish this version of the model till 1997.

process of Flow in his book 'Flow: the Psychology of Optimal Experience'.³

The model shows the emotional states that we are likely to experience when trying to complete a task, depending on the perceived difficulty of the challenge, and our perception of our skill levels.

For example, if a task isn't challenging enough, and doesn't require a lot of skill, then we are likely to feel apathy towards it. But facing a challenging task without the required skills could easily result in worry and anxiety.

To find a balance and perform at our best, we need a challenge that is significant and interesting, and we need well developed skills, so that we are confident we can meet the challenge. This moves us to a position where we can experience "flow" (being totally involved and engaged in the activity).

This state of flow is often observed in people who have mastered their business, art, sport, or hobby. They make whatever they're doing look easy, and they're totally engaged with it.

Components of Flow

How do you know when you're experiencing flow? Csíkszentmihályi identified 10 experiences that go with the state of being in flow:

1. Having a clear understanding of what you want to achieve;
2. Being able to concentrate for a sustained period of time;
3. Losing the feeling of consciousness of one's self;
4. Finding that time passes quickly;
5. Getting direct and immediate feedback from observers or trainers;
6. Experiencing a balance between your ability levels, and the challenge;
7. Having a sense of personal control over the situation;
8. Feeling that the activity is intrinsically rewarding;
9. Lacking awareness of bodily needs;
10. Being completely absorbed in the activity itself.

Remember that all of these factors and experiences don't necessarily have to be in place for flow to happen. But you're likely to experience many of them when flow occurs.

Activities/Toolkit

Discuss with the AT: have you experienced flow? What happened? Is there anything you can do so that it happens again?

Ask the ATs to choose a specific skill and then design an ideal environment for flow to happen. Keep in mind the list of components while doing this.

Further Reading/Viewing

TED Talk by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi: Flow, the secret to happiness (2004)

https://www.ted.com/talks/mihaly_csikszentmihalyi_flow_the_secret_to_happiness

10. Creative Thinking

Awareness

- There are many ways to structure lessons to make them creative and interesting.

Skills

- Start to think creatively;
- Creative lesson planning;
- Keeping learning interesting;
- Tools for performance work.

Knowledge

- The different types of thinking, and how they can be used to structure learning.

Information

As a trainer it's important to stimulate creative thinking; if students do the same thing every lesson this doesn't happen. The AT can gently persuade them to practice in a different way and to think outside of the known system. They can use the following themes or techniques in their sessions to encourage this:

- **Divergent thinking:** brainstorm- big and fast, nothing is 'wrong';
- **Original Thinking:** merge activities to make something new;
- **Redefining:** give a different meaning to certain concepts or objects (look at content and form);
- **Flexible Thinking:** step into the unknown, try different strategies, and find new opportunities or ways of working.

Activities/Toolkit

Divergent thinking

- Instruct a class to build a structure (such as a house, a car etc.) with tubes, or circus props. It can be built in many different ways, even though everyone gets the same guidelines.

Original Thinking

- How can you merge beat boxing and juggling with each other? How can you put a performance together with a ballet dancer and a stilt walker?

Redefining

- Use circus props as something different: e.g. a juggling club as a telephone, or a diabolo as a hat.

Flexible Thinking

- Do a regular warm up in a different way, by forming an exciting story around it;
- How many new tricks can you come up with for one ball?

11. Creating a Good Learning Environment

Awareness

- Of the different preferences students have for receiving information;
- That creating a good learning environment is essential for learning.

Skills

- Start to recognise different ways of receiving information;
- Start to adapt teaching methods depending on the needs of the student.

Knowledge

- What creates a good learning environment;
- Lozanov's research on learning and motivation.

Information

It is essential that the AT knows they have a responsibility to support the learning experience of their students, and to ensure that they are equipped with the tools and knowledge on how to facilitate this.

When students arrive the AT should welcome them to the workshop/day/course/event.

While teaching the students they should:

- Make them feel important;
- Give them a sense of belonging (part of a team);
- Give them ownership;
- Give them a sense of responsibility;
- Create a supportive environment;
- Ask them how they are. Check in regularly, communicate;
- Give them a sense they are being invested in;
- Allow time for drink and food;
- Have a strong well thought out plan, which can be modified to learners' needs;
- Praise their achievements, build confidence;
- Be flexible;
- Give them a space to contribute and thank them;
- Allow for reflection time.

Psychiatrist and psychotherapist Georgi Lozanov did research on learning and motivation. He concluded that your learning goes up if you:

- Are feeling confident;
- Believe in the presenter;
- Feel the topic is important;
- Enjoy the work;
- Feel valued.

Educational psychologist Walter Burke Barbe and his colleagues proposed three “modalities” of learning: **Visual, Auditory, and Kinaesthetic**. These were often referred to simply as VAK.

- Visual learning involves the use of seen or observed things, including pictures, diagrams, demonstrations, displays, handouts, films, flip-chart, etc.
- Auditory learning involves the transfer of information through listening: to the spoken word, of self or others, of sounds and noises.

- Kinaesthetic learning involves physical experience: moving touching, feeling, holding, doing, and practical hands-on experiences.

Research on learning styles has not proven that matching activities to one's learning style improves learning; however, all learners benefit if several senses are used in learning, and varying teaching methods to include visual, auditory and kinaesthetic methods expands the trainers' toolkits and undeniably makes lessons more interesting.

Using visual, auditory and kinesthetic elements in learning activities can also enable the participation of learners of all abilities. On inclusion, see Chapter 18.

Activities/Toolkit

- Teach another person to do a skill (e.g. juggle 3 balls), using visual elements in teaching only (take time to prepare).
- Repeat using auditory teaching.
- Repeat again focusing on the kinaesthetic

Using the points above, have the AT(s) design both an ideal session, and a session where they ignore all of the guidance. Role play the sessions if possible, then have the learners discuss how they felt in both situations.

Discuss ways of using this knowledge in class. How would they design the activities to increase learning? How can the use of visual, auditory and kinesthetic elements help inclusion in class?

Further Reading

Kolb & Kolb: "Learning Styles and Learning Space" from Academy of Management, Learning and Education. <https://people.ok.ubc.ca/cstother/Learning%20Styles%20&%20Learning%20Spaces.pdf>
References: John Dewey, Kurt Lewin

Chicki, Nancy: Learning Styles: <https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/learning-styles-preferences/>

Visual, Auditory, and Kinesthetic Learning Styles (VAK):
<http://nwlink.com/~donclark/hrd/styles/vakt.html>

12. Group Leadership Styles

Awareness

- Awareness of the AT's personal leadership style: the one they are most comfortable in.

Skills

- Start to recognise which leadership style is useful when: and begin to choose the appropriate style at the appropriate time;
- How to change role when the situation requires it.

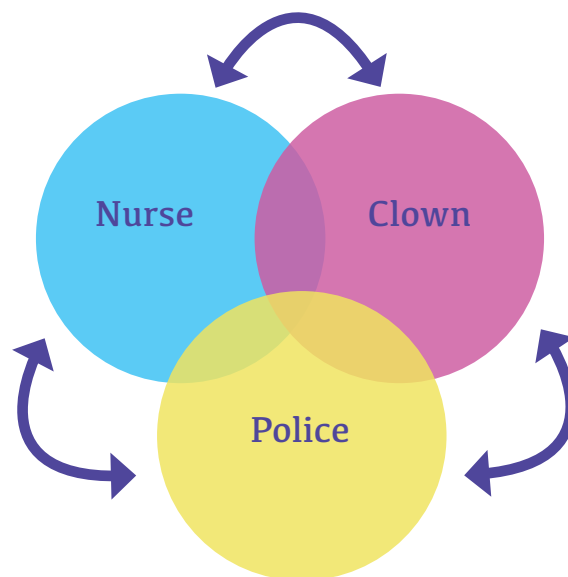
Knowledge

- Of differences in leadership styles;
- Of the relevance of the organisation's Code of Conduct.

Information

All trainers will have a specific way of dealing with children and young people. It is important for trainers to recognise their natural style, and also be able to use different styles so they can be a good teacher all round.

A useful model to use is Police, Nurse and Clown. These are three distinct styles and have their own functions. It is important to develop all three roles within one trainer as they are all necessary at different times. It's usual to feel a natural affinity towards one or two of the roles; for the other(s) more effort will be required.



POLICE

Characteristics	Regulates, controls, observes, intervenes
Ensures	Overview, structure, physical (space, material) safety
Targets	Situation
Example	Puts all the children in a circle at the start of the lesson

NURSE

Characteristics	Watch, care, individual contact, confidence
Ensures	Calm, domesticity, security, emotional security (bullying, exclusion, general well-being)
Targets	Children: individually and in groups
Example	Takes a crying child with them and comforts them

CLOWN

Characteristics	Play, animated, entertaining, enthusiastic
Ensures	Action, fun, jokes
Targets	Game, action
Example	Leads a group game. Works on a creative performance

The trainer may be on their own with a group, or with other trainers. If a trainer is alone, the children will depend on them for all three aspects. If there are two or more trainers with a group, they can decide in consultation with their colleagues which role to play. Try to balance these roles within the facilitator team. It is good to change roles: it is difficult to always have the energy to play the clown, and not everyone always wants to be the rule enforcer. Discuss beforehand who will take which role, don't assume it will be obvious.

When there are two trainers, the roles can be divided between 'tractor' and 'pusher'. The tractor (often the Clown) takes the children through the tasks and games. The 'pusher' ensures everyone takes part. The Police role in this case is divided between the two trainers, but is often the responsibility of the pusher.

There are occasions when it will be necessary to put more emphasis on one of the leadership styles. For instance (in order of emphasis):

- For maximum visibility/fun: 1. Clown, 2. Nurse, 3. Police.
- For maximum presence/safety: 1. Police 2. Nurse 3. Clown.

All trainers are responsible for creating a safe, stimulating environment. The training space will usually have a policy and/or code of conduct relating to child protection: please refer to this. The policy will refer to:

- Placing limits on physical and emotional actions, such as: intimidation and bullying, use of dangerous objects or equipment, or encroaching on personal space;
- Class structure, defining rules, and structured and non-structured play;
- Class rules: shoes off, no chewing gum, hair tied back, jewellery removed, listen when someone is talking etc;
- Self care: acceptable methods of controlling class members' behaviour, personal safety and wellbeing.

Activities/Toolkit

Discuss with the AT(s) the pros and cons of each leadership style. Ask them to describe a situation where the Police/Clown/Nurse should be in charge respectively.

Ask the AT(s) to describe a situation for each of the styles where their influence would NOT be appropriate.

Ask the AT(s) to plan a lesson, describing what happens throughout and who would be in charge at which point.

In an internship or a usual class situation: ask the AT to observe other trainers and map out which roles are being played when. Observe what works and why, and what doesn't work.

Talk through the Code of Conduct if the organisation has one. If not, discuss the subjects that a policy would relate to, as outlined above.

Further Reading

Leadership styles in youth work:

<https://www.youthwork-practice.com/youthworker-training/leadership-styles.html>

13. Group Dynamics

Awareness

- That there are different stages in a group's journey. You can use different games/activities for different stages;
- Of the way groups behave at different stages of familiarity.

Skills

- Ability to recognise the difference between a group that is working well and one that isn't, and how to manage it;
- Managing the energy of a small group. Planning activities appropriate to the familiarity of the group;
- Know some games to play for each stage of the group's journey.

Knowledge

- Model: Tuckman's theory of group dynamics.

Information

There are many reasons and purposes for groups to form, and a lot of factors that influence their behaviour. Understanding the dynamics of a group, and how to influence them is a valuable tool for an AT, or any trainer. Knowledge of group dynamics can give an AT the ability to predict a group's behaviour, and to plan activities around the stage the group is at, to make the best use of the group's time and energy. Bear in mind it is always the HT who is responsible for the group dynamics, not the AT.

The group may form or be influenced by many different circumstances, for example:

- A one day workshop;
- A one week workshop leading to a performance;
- A year long programme;
- Two autonomous groups coming together, for example for a youth exchange;
- An established group, when new members join.

There are many different theories of group dynamics. One of the most widely known and used is Dr Bruce Tuckman's theory of group dynamics, also known as the "Orming Model". According to Dr Tuckman there are five stages of development a group passes through: Forming, Storming, Norming, Performing and Adjourning.

Forming: Who's Here? Look Around

When a group first comes together there is confusion about what is required, there are no group roles and no-one knows what is expected.

Communication will be superficial/general/anonymous. Group members will not want to take risks and will want to protect themselves.

At this stage, the group needs clear leadership. They will appreciate being given goals and purpose.

This is the beginning of building effective relationships; individuals will want to feel included, a part of the group. This stage can take time and shouldn't be rushed.

Storming: Pressure, Conflict, Clarity

During the storming phase, members of the group start to connect and build relationships. They assert their position, make friends and try to create a niche for themselves.

The group starts to push boundaries: how much influence you can have on the group as an individual? Conflict can soon arise as members try to define their role within the group. If you are the leader, why should anyone follow you?

The group starts to form smaller groups – duos and trios.

Clear communication, focus on the purpose and goal of the group, and individual support for members will help them to work through this phase.

Norming: How we Work, What's Acceptable

The 'norming' stage is often very productive. There is greater clarity about what is expected, and about individual roles within the group, so focus can move to completing the task at hand. Initial roles and responsibilities have been established, and the group now understands the rules under which they will operate. The focus is now around procedures, objectives, systems, and action. The trainer's role is to empower, keep focus, resolve any group dynamic issues and stay focused on goals.

Performing: The Task

Belonging to a 'performing' group is exciting. The quality and depth of relationships means that the group is at its best, and gathers momentum. Communication is more personal/clear. Issues are resolved quickly as members support each other. The group takes more responsibility. There is more intimacy. They start to achieve goals, have a shared purpose and a collective spirit.

The role of the trainer is to keep the group at this stage, looking out for barriers to continued performance, and intervening when necessary if they spot any issues.

Adjourning/Mourning

Belonging to a 'performing' group is an incredible and often profound experience. Members feel a deep sense of belonging, connectedness, achievement and purpose. It is no surprise that when the group's purpose ends, there can be a period of grief. Often individuals will meet up regularly afterwards to try to recapture the sense of performing they experienced, and a lucky few go on to enjoy life long friendships as a result of this experience.

It is important at this stage that there is closure and recognition of the work that has been accomplished. This is a time for conclusions, evaluations, feed back/forward, and reflection.

It is worth mentioning that a group will not always move through these stages consecutively. It will sometimes be necessary to go back to a previous stage; particularly if there has been a change, such as new members joining, or current members leaving. A group may need to go through some of the early stages multiple times before they can move on to the performing stage, especially if it is a group which finds trust and rapport challenging.

Activities/Toolkit

Forming

- Name games;
- Information games;
- Information giving and gathering;
- Deciding on boundaries: making it work;
- Imaginary map: walk around an imaginary map on the floor. Where were you born? Where do you want to go on holiday? Where do you live? People meet in the same places on the map without it being contrived;
- Rope divide: Lay a rope across the centre of the room. Ask questions to show differences and similarities. You can also identify the needs of individuals in the group. Participants move to one side of the rope or the other in answer to questions (can also be done as a circle that you step into if the answer is relevant to you).

Storming

- Trust games;
- Teamwork;
- Sharing methods;
- Recap aims;
- Zoom out (look at the situation objectively).

Norming

- Team games;
- Circle games.

Performing

- Performance games;
- Improvising games;
- Experimental games.

Adjourning/Mourning

- Celebration games, relaxing and calming down games, to continue feelings of trust within the group;
- Post it notes with messages on other peoples' backs;
- Have everyone write a memory, and then make a timeline from them;
- Lifting people in the silks/parachute.

Questions You Can Ask the AT:

- Why is it important to have a solid group?
- Which kind of group do you work with?
- What is the main purpose of the group?
- Can you imagine what problems a group may have?
- What happens when a new person joins an established group?
- What can be done to help new people become accepted into an established group?
- Can you recognise destructive situations/behaviours?

See **Appendix 2** for games.

Notes

If you have a class for Assistant Trainers, they will go through the different group stages themselves.

If you teach your Assistant Trainer(s) one by one, while giving classes to students, you should reflect on your sessions with reference to group dynamics.

Remember: the HT is responsible for leading the group dynamics, the AT just supports!

Further Reading

Forming, Storming, Norming, and Performing. Understanding the Stages of Team Formation:

https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newLDR_86.htm

The Nine Belbin Team Roles: <https://www.belbin.com/about/belbin-team-roles/>

14. Communication

Awareness

- That communication is always verbal and nonverbal;
- That information is received through multiple channels;
- What and how to communicate with HT, students and parents.

Skills

- Ability to communicate effectively.

Knowledge

- How to use body language and positive affirmation to communicate effectively.

Information

Communication is the act of transferring information from one place or person to another.

- For example, we use verbal communication to explain a task or a game, as well as to give positive affirmation;
- We use non-verbal communication to sustain our verbal communication, and to teach by demonstration.

Be aware of the impact of communication.

Messages are received by another person through three channels:

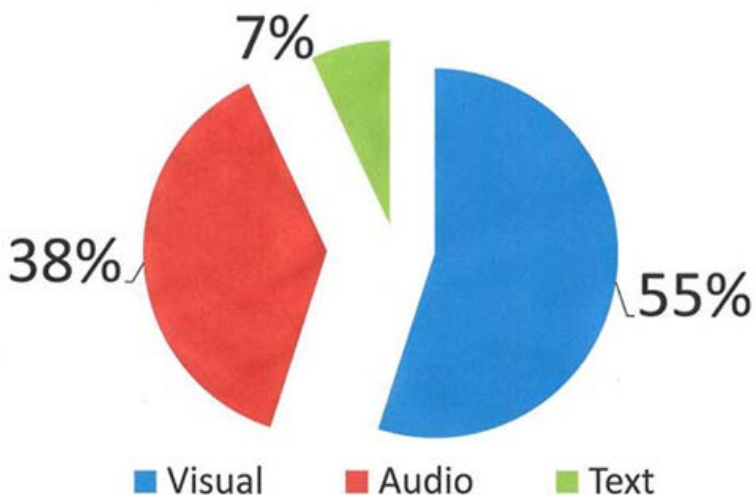
7% Through content/words.

38% Through vocal elements (tone of voice, intonation, rhythm,).

55% Through non-verbal actions (gestures, posture, facial expressions).

(see different models about Verbal and nonverbal communication).

Impact of Communication



Source: UCLA study on how audience learns during a presentation

Communicating with your Class

Customising our tone of voice or behaviour can influence the mood of the class or activity. If we want the class to be high energy, we can reflect this in how we speak and move. We may need to take into account how individual students receive information: some may not respond if you speak quietly! Different situations and personalities affect how you communicate.

The way we communicate is important in gaining the students' enthusiasm to perform tasks or play games.

A good circus trainer has good self-awareness and communicates clearly with the class. This can be done verbally and non-verbally. This is important whether teaching a warm-up, games, diabolo tricks, roll bola or aerial.

Communicate respectfully. Bear in mind we need to set a good example and be a role model for the students.

Giving feedback is a part of communication in class. See Chapter 20 for more information about giving feedback.

Body Language

Positive body language is important to build rapport with the students.

This can include:

- Smiling;
- Mirroring;
- Open attitude/posture;
- Leaning towards the student;
- Making eye contact.

Positive affirmation

AT

Ask the AT to use compliments and encouragement when teaching, but ensure they are sincere, clear and timely. Positive feedback can be verbal and nonverbal: e.g. smiles, nods, and words of encouragement. The children should know that the AT has seen them, and that they appreciate what they do.

The Group

Let the children empower each other. There is nothing more encouraging than receiving a compliment from your peers.

Activity

Activity can be planned to provide positive reinforcement by including tasks that always 'succeed', and are therefore rewarding.

Activities/Toolkit

Explaining a task or game

Ask an AT to explain a game that they know. In a group of ATs, the ATs can take turns in leading and playing games. For an AT training alone, they can lead a game in class and the HT or students can feed back.

Notes for the AT:

Be sure that you know the game or task. Get the attention of the class.

When you talk, check that:

- Your voice is calm, your words are clear, and customised to the group;
- Your explanation is structured, and is an appropriate length;

Check that the group understands.

Performing the task or game

- Give a clear starting signal;
- Stop the game/task at the right time, and give a signal when it will end soon;
- Even if you actively participate, ensure that you remain actively observing the group.

After the game, the participants or HT should feedback, and give tips on communication.

15. Safety, Freedom, Challenge

Awareness

- The three components of a learning environment and how they balance/interact;
- The AT's responsibility to support the creation of a safe space and learning environment under the guidance of the HT.

Skills

- Start to know how to create a good learning environment.

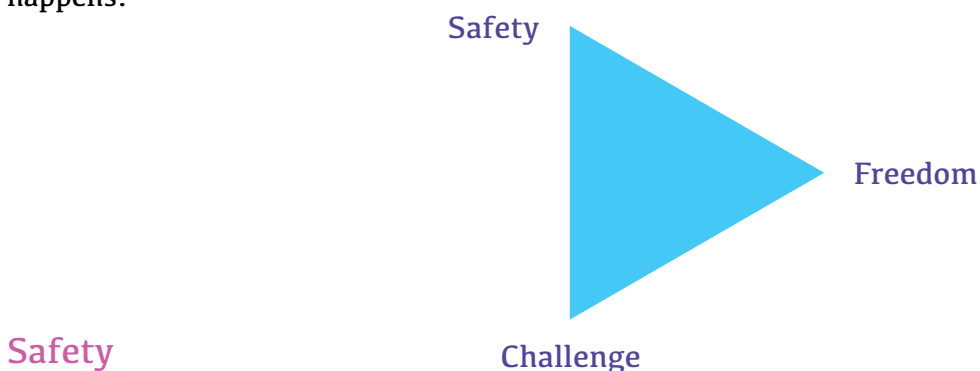
Knowledge

- The 'Safety, Freedom, Challenge' Model;
- How to balancing the three elements to tailor the learning experience for students;
- The difference between Free Play and Structured Play.

Information

Safety, Freedom, Challenge

The ideal learning environment for participants has three components: **safety, freedom and challenge**. A trainer is responsible for creating these conditions. Ideally the three conditions will be balanced at all times, both for the group and for each individual child. This is difficult to achieve, but rewarding when it happens.



Trainers are responsible for creating a safe positive environment where children feel secure. How much security a group needs is always different; it depends on the specific situation, and can also change throughout the activity. Additionally, the type and amount of security needed is also different for each child.

First impressions are important, they only happen once, so it's important that the AT knows they need to get off to a good start.

Getting regular feedback from the group and individuals is important. They should have the opportunity to set their own pace, and participate in their own way.

Trust building is a process. The AT will need to gain the trust of a group for them to feel safe. This continues throughout the whole journey

The AT should always be aware of and sincerely committed to the children, and not patronise them. Take them seriously and treat them with respect.

By using humour and fun, a trainer can create a friendly, stimulating atmosphere. They need to be aware, however that humour should be used with care and with respect for the participants. It should never be used to undermine.

The sense of safety depends not only on personal attitude, but also on practical organisation. From start to finish, trainers should provide a safe environment through using suitable equipment and space, planning activities, making sure there is a proper division of responsibilities between the various trainers etc. Examples of unsafe practice include juggling in too low a space, or aerial with no crash mats present.

Freedom

Freedom is essential for any learning process. This means being mentally, physically and socially free to discover new things. Circus can encourage different ways of thinking and acting, and children need freedom to experience this. It is important that the children are free to try new ways of doing things, to make mistakes and to learn from them.

When participants have choice their motivation will be higher.

If children decide to sit out the trainer should give them the freedom to stay there for a while, but not to forget about them. It's fine for children to have the opportunity to pause briefly during the activity, but it's not good if this lasts the whole session. They should be asked why they are sitting out (boredom, tiredness, frustration...), and encouraged to become involved in the activity.

Too much freedom can feel very unsafe for some children who will not be able to deal with it, which could lead to them dropping out. However, some children may need more freedom to pursue their own goals, so flexibility is needed.

The aim is to be a warm, flexible and democratic leader who has respect for each individual. The participants recognise the AT as someone who is there to help and offer solutions, and is willing to revise the program if needed.

Challenge

In addition to safety and freedom, challenge is also very important. Participants can be free and safe, but not really progressing. We can encourage progress by discovering new tricks and boundaries – this is challenge!

Challenge arises when you take children outside of their comfort zone: just far enough so that they are forced to find new solutions, but not so far that they no longer feel safe – see the Learning Zone model in Chapter 7.

Simplicity is good: activities can be made challenging with minor adjustments.

Baby steps: circus is in itself quite challenging; new materials, difficult techniques... The AT should be able to provide challenges for beginner, intermediate, and advanced levels.

The AT may come up with a very challenging task, which some students pick it up straight away.

Alternatively, some children may not be able to do a task that is considered easy. Observe and adapt as needed.

It is important to balance the three components. When freedom is too high it will decrease safety.

Both in preparation, and during the session the AT can play with these basic conditions. When setting assignments for a group the AT needs to consider safety, freedom and challenge.

Safety, freedom and challenge need to stay in close relationship. It is a fragile balance that is different for each individual.

Structured Play vs. Free Play

It is worth mentioning here the types of play that can influence the safety, freedom and challenge in a class.

Structured Play is explained, initiated and supervised by the trainer.

- It occurs at a specific time and place;
- Is organised and delivered by adults;
- Contributes to about 25% of children's overall activity;
- Examples include playing for a sports team, taking swimming lessons or going to a gymnastics class.

Free Play means that children do what they want to in their play, with the trainer encouraging and controlling only when necessary. This can be done by allowing them to play by themselves and/or suggesting games or activities to the children without determining them.

Please note: the trainer remains in charge and must always see the whole picture and remain in control. The children decide what happens, the trainer supports where possible and gives them the opportunity to enrich their game.

- It is self motivated and spontaneous;
- Is directed by children;
- Is reported by children to be associated with fun, pleasure, choice and freedom;
- Examples include building a fort, climbing rocks or trees, splashing in puddles, playing hide and seek with friends.

Activities/Toolkit

Ask the AT the following

- What does safety mean to you in a circus environment?
- What does freedom mean?
- What does challenge mean?
- How does the AT make students feel safe? Discuss all aspects of safety here: physical and emotional;
- What are the boundaries of freedom?
- What ideas does the AT have for challenges?
- How do you choose when to use structured or free play? Describe the context, situation and goal when using either.

Design a session balancing the three components: Safety, Freedom and Challenge.

How would this work in a mixed ability group? Take into account social, physical and emotional abilities;

- Which component is the AT most comfortable with?
- How does this complement the earlier Leadership Styles in Chapter 12?
- How does this concept fit with groups the AT already works with? Would the balance be different for different groups?

16. Lesson Planning

Awareness

- Structure, content and goals of a circus session.

Skills

- Start to know how to plan and structure circus sessions.

Knowledge

- Models for lesson planning.

Information

Planning a Session

When creating a session or activity, there are some important things to consider:

The goals of the session should be clear, specific and concise, and take into account cognitive, social, emotional and technical objectives.

Think about:

- Who is taking part in the activity (age, experience, enthusiasm...)?
- In what context does the activity take place (end of week, first contact...)?
- Logistics (weather, space, time...).

Activities/Toolkit

Plan a lesson using the following format:

Prologue – First Act

Preparing the Lesson with the Head Trainer

Goals/objectives

Safety

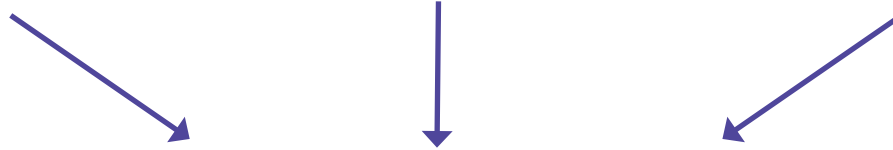
Equipment needed

Opening – Second Act

Prepare Space	Welcome Time	Introduce Game	Warm Up
With or without young people	Test the atmosphere	Specific game. Refer to objectives	– Physical – Mental – Specific
Be safety conscious	Leave space for the young people		

Dramatic Part (The Show) - Third Act - Choose One, Two, or All of These

Technical Skills	Free Time	Creative Time
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Choose how you will work with the group:

Individual tuition.
Working in small groups.
The whole group together.

Final Part – Choose Your Way

Cool Down	Feedback	Clean Up
Stretching	Whole group	With or without young people
Sensorial Games	(or)	
Relaxation	Individual	

17. Goals

Awareness

- Importance of goal setting for progress in circus.

Skills

- Ability to set personal goals. Begin to teach members of the class to do the same.

Knowledge

- Framing;
- SMART objectives.

Information

The Importance of Framing

It is important that activities are properly framed so that the participants can be aware of their limits and use the process to deepen their learning. This only works if the AT as a coach has a clear goal. A good goal is clear, concise and concrete but also flexible so that participants have the opportunity to decide how they learn.

For example: students can be asked to prepare a performance of two minutes in which they include at least three learned elements of juggling.

It is a good idea to set goals/objectives with students. Without an objective, there is a risk that the activity will be out of control and unachievable. The objective determines the direction of the activity, but sometimes there is a need to adjust or modify it according to the group.

The objectives also define what kind of matters the feedback should focus on. For more information about giving feedback, see Chapter 20.

SMART Objectives

The SMART mnemonic is one method used to set goals.

When you use **SMART**, you can create clear, attainable and meaningful goals, and develop the motivation, action plan, and support to achieve them.

Specific

“I want to juggle 5 balls” is a better aim than “I want to be a better juggler”.

Measurable

“To do this I need to do 50 throws twice a day”.

Achievable

“I can do 3 and 4 balls already, and I know the steps I need to take and the pattern for 5 balls”; or “I know who can teach me this”.

Relevant

“I enjoy juggling and want to perform professionally one day”.

Time-bound

“Within 6 months”; rather than sometime in the future.

Types of Objectives

Circus is not just about learning tricks. It seeks to expand cognitive limits (systems thinking), emotional boundaries (surprising yourself), social boundaries and technical boundaries. The objectives can be any combination of these, for example mainly social and cognitive, or just technical.

Activities/Toolkit

Look at recent lesson plans. Do they have clear aims? Do they fit into the SMART mnemonic?

Ask the AT(s) to do a personal goal setting exercise. This can either be a circus or non-circus goal. The idea is for the AT to develop the habit of goal setting.

Links

SMART Goals – How to Make Your Goals Achievable:

<https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/smart-goals.htm>

18. Inclusion

Awareness

- Of the rights of all people in a circus class.

Skills

- Confidence to welcome people of all abilities into a circus class;
- Start to think creatively about adapting teaching to fit the needs of individuals.

Knowledge

- Of the differences between Medical and Social models of disability.

Information

What rights do people have when they come to a circus class?

The right to be included;
The right to be respected;
The right to have a voice;
The right to say 'no';
The right to take their time;
The right to fail.

Medical and Social Models

The **Medical** model suggests that the disabled person is the 'problem', and disabled people cannot participate in a non-disabled world, because their legs, eyes, ears etc. don't work. The disabled person is a burden that needs care, help, and has 'special needs' that don't get met by mainstream services or funding.

The **Social** model of disability is a way of viewing the world, developed by disabled people. The model says that people are disabled by barriers in society, not by their impairment or difference. Barriers can be physical, like a building not having accessible toilets. Or they can be caused by people's attitudes to difference, like assuming that disabled people are unable to do certain things.

Disability is not about physical, sensory, or learning impairments, or health issues. Disability is about the exclusion of certain people from social, economic and political activities because those designing facilities and arranging activities have not acknowledged personal requirements resulting from impairments.

What extra needs would wheelchair users, people with learning difficulties, challenging behaviour or visually impaired need in a circus class?

Good practice is all that is needed for all participants

Throw away labels and realise that everyone has the same needs: to be treated as an individual, know boundaries, be challenged and have support.

You may want to think about how to change the perceptions of someone with an impairment who may not think that they are capable of achieving a goal at circus and how to help them achieve this goal over time. Ask: What would you like to do? Do you need help/support? Reduce/remove barriers.

Treat all people as individuals. Everyone to some extent has their own 'special needs'.

Activities/Toolkit

Ask someone to lie on a large piece of paper and draw around them. In the shape they leave on the floor ask the AT(s) to write in the shape what needs a disabled person may have if attending a class.

Most often the majority of needs they will write are the same as anyone attending a class, e.g. ease of access, warmth, friendly attitudes, clear communication, access to toilets...

Result: this exercise can reinforce the idea that disabled students are just like other students in that they have the same human needs.

Discuss this with the AT(s).

Set up a circus class and ask the AT(s) to take turns as a student with impairments. You can use cards which they can choose with different impairments written on them, eg. blind, wheelchair user, missing one arm, deaf. Using circus equipment, ask the AT to experiment in finding ways to teach the student circus skills. What would a blind person need to walk a tight wire? What would a wheelchair user need to do aerial?

Result: AT(s) are encouraged to think of creative solutions to challenges that are presented to them.

Notes

There was much discussion during the trainings about the differences across Europe in relation to the training of disabled people in circus, particularly around the language used to describe disabled people. The language used here is in line with UK terminology.

There will be regional differences in the terms used, and it would be wise to consult local or national advocacy organisations in your country for information on terminology when teaching this module.

Further info/Links

[Extraordinary Bodies: Circus for Everybody – The Trainers Toolkit](#)

19. Child Protection, First Aid and Additional Training

As there are different procedures and legal frameworks in different countries, regions and schools, we suggest that anyone using this curriculum refers to local guidelines and arranges relevant training in child protection and first aid.

We are aware that in some countries it is compulsory for ATs to have first aid training, whereas in others the AT would only need to know the procedure if there is an accident or incident.

Depending on the groups the AT may be working with they may need additional training, for example cultural or religious awareness.

It is beyond the scope of this curriculum to provide up to date information for training across Europe. Please seek out relevant training locally if it is not possible to provide it within your organisation, or if the AT needs official certification to carry out their work.

20. Internship

Information

The internship is an essential part of the AT's training and serves to embed the learning gained from the training in this curriculum.

It is essential that there is a clear understanding between the delivery organisation and the AT's home organisation, to ensure there is commitment on both sides to giving the AT the best training experience possible.

Every training space is different and the internship should be designed around the programmes that the AT will be assisting on. We suggest that the HT/organisation hosting the AT create a log book/journal with the AT to record their progress. In countries where the Internship is sandwiched between a two part course, the log book may be an integral part of the training and form the basis of an accreditation on completion.

Time Period of Internship

The length of the internship will be determined by the capacity of the AT's hosting organisation but is recommended to be around 60 hours.

Goal of Internship

The AT should be able to implement and apply knowledge that they have learned during the AT course. The HT should take responsibility for observing the AT in action, and giving regular feedback.

Content of Internship

The internship will go through 4 phases, with the AT taking on additional responsibilities as their experience grows:

1. Observing and taking part in teaching sessions;
2. Preparation of content for teaching sessions;
3. Teaching parts of lessons: for example first a game, then a game and a warmup...;
4. Teaching the whole lesson on their own, while observed by a HT (this depends on the maturity of the AT. It's recommended that they teach a small group).

If possible, give the AT the opportunity to create a circus act/performance with young people.

Feedback

One of the most important aspects of the internship is giving and receiving feedback. The HT should act as a mentor to the AT and give constructive criticism on the AT's performance. It is important to structure feedback so that it is given at appropriate times and within a planned programme.

This may consist of:

- Discussions before and after sessions:
 - Before: to discuss the plan;
 - After: to discuss what happened in the class;
- In depth discussion at intervals (e.g. termly) throughout the internship, to give broader feedback on the whole process;
- One final feedback/evaluation at the end of the internship: perhaps after the AT has given a lesson on their own.

The following tools can be used also when the ATs give feedback themselves.

Giving Feedback

Useful feedback is:

- 1. Given with Care.** To be useful, feedback requires the giver to feel concern for and to care for the person receiving feedback - to want to help, not hurt the other person.
- 2. Given with Attention.** It is important to pay attention to what you are doing as you give feedback. This helps you engage in a two-way exchange with some depth of communication.
- 3. Invited by the Recipient.** Feedback is most effective when the receiver has invited the comments. This provides a platform for openness and some guidelines; and it also gives the receiver an opportunity to identify and explore particular areas of concern.
- 4. Directly Expressed.** Good feedback is specific and deals clearly with particular incidents and behaviour. Making vague and woolly statements is of little value. The most useful help is direct, open, and concrete.
- 5. Fully Expressed.** Effective feedback requires more than a bald statement of facts. Feelings also need to be expressed so that the receiver can judge the full impact of their behaviour.
- 6. Uncluttered by Evaluative Judgements.** Often it is helpful not to give feedback composed of judgements or evaluations. If you wish to offer judgements, then it is necessary to state clearly that these are matters of subjective evaluation, and to then simply describe the situation as you see it and let the person concerned make the evaluation.
- 7. Well Timed.** The most useful feedback is given when the receiver is receptive to it and is sufficiently close to the particular event being discussed for it to be fresh in their mind. Storing comments can lead to a build-up of recrimination and reduces the effectiveness of feedback when it is finally given.
- 8. Readily Actionable.** The most useful feedback centres on behaviour that can be changed by the receiver. Feedback concerning matters outside the control of the receiver is less useful. It is often helpful to suggest alternative ways of behaving that allow the receiver to think about new ways of tackling old problems.
- 9. Checked and Clarified.** If possible, feedback should be checked with other people to explore whether others share one person's perceptions. This is especially useful in a training group and can be promoted in a work team. Different viewpoints can be collected and assimilated, points of difference and similarity clarified, and a more objective picture developed.

Three Models of Feedback

1. The Feedback Sandwich

This feedback tool consists of three components:

- Begin with positive feedback;
- Then, introduce constructive or negative feedback; and
- Close with specific feedback that builds up the learner's trust and comfort.

The feedback sandwich aims to minimise any detrimental effect the negative feedback may have on the individual and ensures that the learner is not discouraged.

2. Situation, Behaviour, Impact Feedback Tool

This tool allows the learner to reflect more on their actions whilst understanding precisely what you are commenting on and why, as well as what needs to change.

- Begin by identifying the situation the feedback refers to;
- Then define the specific behaviours you want to address; and
- End by describing how their behaviours impacted you or others.

The situation, behaviour, impact tool offers the learner a chance to reflect on the situation from another perspective, and an opportunity to discuss with you strategies for improvement.

3. Pendleton's Model of Feedback

Pendleton's model of feedback helps to make the learning experience constructive by:

- Highlighting positive behaviours;
- Reinforcing these behaviours, and including a discussion of skills to achieve them; and
- Discussing what the person could have done differently.

Areas of improvement are first identified by the learner, and then followed up with a discussion about strategies to improve their performance.

Feed Forward

A key part of feedback is that it's looking backward. What happened in the past, good or bad? The power of 'Feed Forward' is that it looks ahead. These are positive suggestions for the future.

The rules of 'Feed Forward' are very straight forward:

- Rule 1: no feedback about the past;
- Rule 2: no judging or critiquing ideas.

Those rules are followed by a simple process:

- Write down an area you would like to improve, which would have a big impact on you;
- Ask for two positive suggestions for the future, which would help with that area;
- Repeat, getting positive suggestions from others in the group.

These simple steps are completely different to normal feedback:

Ego-less

Focusing on what they've done before can lead to defensiveness and bruise their ego. Instead, Feed Forward has the advantage of looking at ways to create a better future. It trades judgment of the past for optimism for the future.

Collaborative

Feedback can often be a one sided conversation: a HT tells an AT what they need to do differently. With Feed Forward, you can involve the whole team, tapping into their many experiences and ideas that can lead to improvement.

Actionable

It's easy for feedback to feel critical about things you can't control: the problem already happened and you can't change the past. By definition, all of the takeaways from Feed Forward are things you can take action on: the future is not set.

For further information in supporting ATs through an internship,
please refer to the ASK Guidebook.

21. Evaluation of the Assistant Trainer Course

Awareness

- Of the value of evaluation and how it can be used to improve future courses.

Skills

- Self-reflection; the ability to analyse experience and speak about it.

Knowledge

- Of a variety of tools for evaluation.

Information

On completion of the course it is advisable to ask the AT(s) to feedback on their experience to allow them to have their say and show that you respect their opinion. It is also important to be sensitive to the feelings within the group. A bond is formed between members of any group that go through a process together, and they may find it difficult to say goodbye. There are various 'closing' games that can be used to say goodbye: see Appendix 2.

Activities/Toolkit

Models

1) If you wrote expectation sheets at the start of the course you can refer back to them here.

2) Ask the participants questions:

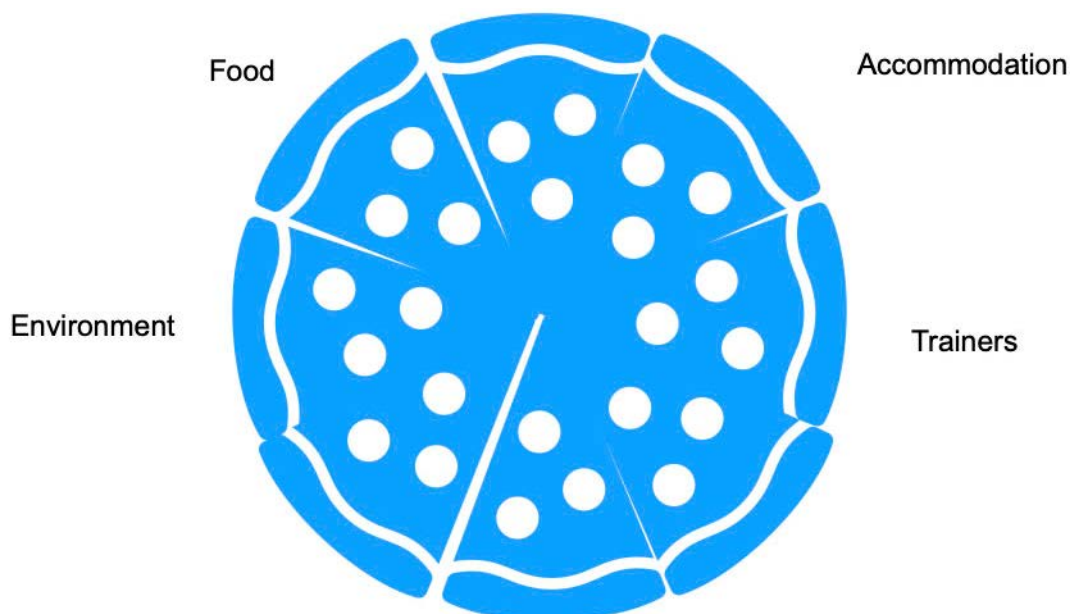
“How satisfied were you with the...”:

- Food;
- Accommodation;
- Environment;
- Trainers;
- Training style;
- Group.

– How did you feel during the course?

– Did you participate enough?

2) Use a 'Pizza' diagram visible to all participants: dots are stuck onto the diagram to signify how they felt. Middle = excellent, outer crust = poor;



- 3) Write down meaningful moments and important thoughts on post-its;
- 4) Line of agreement/disagreement: leader calls out statements and participants move along an imaginary line the length of the room - one end is strongly agree, the other is strongly disagree;
- 5) Comfort/stretch/panic zone: draw a circle on the ground. Middle = comfort. Outside of circle = discomfort. Talk about different stages of learning/activities and ask ATs to stand/mark how they felt at that stage. What helped?
- 6) Paper form/questionnaire with questions relating to each part of the course;
- 7) Positive feedback for other participants: each AT writes their name on a large piece of paper, or draws around their arms to form a 'sleeve'. The other ATs rotate around each paper and write compliments/feedback on the paper, or in the sleeve;
- 8) Use Kahoot or other voting system apps via smartphones;
- 9) Face diagram: 😊 😐 😞 These can be drawn on paper and participant put dots or names on to signify feelings;
- 10) Wish Fairy: draw on a big piece of paper, and make comments on post-its, or write directly on the paper (see diagram below).



Appendix 1: Model Job Description

Model Assistant Trainer Job Description

Overview

About the Company

– Use this space to write about the company the AT will be working with. This is useful to do, even if the AT has already been part of the company, e.g. as a student.

Future plans

– Write a short explanation about the company's plans, why it needs an AT at this point, and where they would fit in.

Facilities

List the space and equipment available for teaching.

Responsibilities

What is expected of the AT? Add or delete as relevant:

Teaching

- Greet children on arrival;
- Lead warm ups and warm downs;
- Assist HT in teaching class;
- Lesson planning;
- Teaching a range of skills from beginners to [?] level.

Health and Safety

- Carry out visual safety checks;
- Basic maintenance of equipment, e.g. renewing bar tape;
- Report any accidents or incidences immediately.

Communication

- Provide a connection between children and parents;
- Inform HT of any feedback from students or parents that requires action
- Attend internal and external meetings as appropriate;

Person Specification

Can be divided into 'Essential' and 'Desirable':

- Basic knowledge of circus skills;
- Able to be present in a positive and contributing way;
- Fit and able to work;
- Motivated;
- Enthusiastic/energetic;
- Confident.

Terms and Conditions

Reports to:

Head Trainer?

Hours

[Include payment details: rate of pay, when payment is made and how. Perhaps make a bank details form separately.]

Subject to a trial period?

Ethical Statement:

e.g. “The company strives to be an equal opportunities employer and welcomes applications from all sections of the community.”

Training Time:

When and under what conditions can the AT self train?

Appendix 2

Games for Group Dynamics

Forming

Thumb Wars:

In pairs, face each other and link hands with the ends of your fingers, leaving your thumbs up. Move thumbs back and forth to signal the ritual of beginning a war, and say “1, 2, 3, 4, I declare a thumb war.” Wrestle the opponent’s thumb: to win you must hold the other person’s thumb down. Seal the win by saying: “1, 2, 3, 4, I win thumb war.” Play three rounds.

Rock, Paper, Scissors:

In pairs, play with one hand behind back, or with hand in a fist. Count “1, 2, 3”, then present ‘weapon’: a fist is a rock, a flat hand (palm to the floor) is paper, two fingers moving as if to cut are scissors. Rock beats scissors. Paper beats rock. Scissors beats paper. Play three rounds.

Signs:

In turn, each person says their name and makes a sign/action. Once everyone has done this, one person says their name and sign/action, then says another person’s name and their sign/action. That person then says their name and sign/action, and then another person’s name and sign/action. It continues.

Hoop Pass:

Gather in a circle, with the leader holding a hula-hoop. Ask the group to hold hands, with the hula-hoop hanging on the leader’s elbow, locked in the link. The challenge is to shuffle the hula-hoop all the way around the circle. The game is complete when the hula-hoop makes it back to the leader. (Add a second hoop to make it more of a challenge.)

Scarf Drop:

The group stands in a circle, with one person in the middle with a scarf. They throw the scarf up and call out someone else’s name: that person runs in and catches the scarf – repeat.

Zip, Zap Boing:

In a circle, one person starts by passing the energy on to someone else, using Zip or Zap. ‘Zip’ passes the energy to the side (either side) with prayer hands. ‘Zap’ passes the energy across the circle with prayer hands. ‘Boing’ is a star shape with a body wobble, which bounces the Zip or Zap back to the person it came from.

Name Game Ball Passing:

Say your name and then pass ball to another person. Repeat. Then say someone else’s name and pass ball to that person. Repeat. Choose someone to pass the ball to and say someone else’s name that you want that person to pass the ball to. Repeat.

Points of Contact:

In small groups: when the facilitator says “6 feet” the groups must only have 6 feet in contact with the floor. The facilitator can then say “4 feet, 4 hands”, “3 hands, 4 knees, 1 head”, etc.

Follow the Leader:

This can be played in a circle, but is more often played in a bunch. The group switches leader organically, and the leader’s actions are copied by the group as it moves.

Vampire:

(Also called Zombies.)

A vampire stands in the middle of the circle and walks slowly towards someone. They must say somebody else's name to save themselves from the vampire. The vampire will then continue towards the named person. If you don't say someone's name before the vampire touches you, you swap places with the vampire. Variation: If you don't say someone's name before the vampire touches you, you also become a vampire until everyone is a vampire.

Storming

Count to 10 (Counting Keep Ups):

Gather the group in a close circle. The aim of the game is to count up to the highest number possible, collectively. As soon as two people say a number at the same time, stop the game, remember what number was reached and then start again, attempting to beat it. Close eyes or look at the centre of the circle to help focus.

Imaginary Objects List:

Each player thinks of an imaginary miniature object that they can hold in one hand. A list is written down of each object. Each person must swap his or her object with someone else's, whispering to that person what the object is before moving on to swap for a second time. The objects are then swapped for a third and final time. In turn players reveal what they have in their hand and the object is ticked on the written list. The game is to not lose any objects from the list. Sometimes the game is sabotaged and new objects can appear!

Trust Games

Blind Lead:

In pairs, A leads B around the space. B has eyes closed or wears a blindfold. Swap over.

Concrete mixer:

The group stands in a tight circle, with one person in the middle. The central person closes their eyes and gently leans into the group, who support them as they allow themselves to be off balance. The group then centres the person on their feet again, at which point they open their eyes and join the group. Repeat.

Falling:

Walking around the room, individuals call out their own name followed by an action, e.g. "Pete's falling!" The nearest people catch Pete and stop him from falling.

Fall/Fly/Fart/Hug:

Same as above (Falling), however they can now also say: "Pete needs a hug!", and everyone hugs Pete, "Pete's flying!", Pete makes a crucifix shape with his arms and everyone lifts him up in the air (belly down), or "Pete's farted!" and everyone runs away from Pete.

Wall Crash:

Participants run at a wall with their eyes closed or blindfolded. Two people are standing there ready to stop them.

Norming

Keep Ups:

(Also called Keepie Uppie)

The leader starts, or designates a person in the group to throw a ball in the air. All players are in a bunch, not a circle, scattered with space in between them.

The aim of the game is for everyone to count collectively, counting every time a person keeps the ball up without it touching the floor. As soon as the ball hits the floor the game ends: record the number of keep ups you have done, pause a moment until everybody is ready, then go again - each time aiming to beat the last record. Hit the ball with the palms of the hands like a beach ball.
Use a beach ball or, for more advanced version, a soft plastic football.

Jelly Fish:

In a circle, everyone secretly chooses someone else, without letting them or anyone else know. Remember exactly where you are standing in the circle. On the facilitator's instruction, everyone runs around their chosen person three times, then returns to the exact spot they were in the circle. You can change the number of times, e.g. 7 or 2.

Brain Mash:

In a circle, say your name in turn. Remember the order in which your name was said. Find a new place in the circle, and say your names in the original order, while throwing a ball to the next person to say their name. Remember the order of who throws you the ball and who you throw it to. Move a hat from head to head, to the right, while continuing the pattern of ball throwing and name saying. Then send a foot tap from foot to foot to the left, while continuing the pattern of hat passing, ball throwing, and name saying.

Chair Chess:

All participants except one sit on chairs, with an extra chair that is left empty. The person left standing must walk (not run) towards the empty chair. The aim of the game is for the group to work together to stop the person sitting on the empty chair. Once a player stands up from their chair, they must commit to going to the empty chair, and risk losing the one they were sat on.

Performing

'Evolution':

Rock, Paper, Scissors. Everyone starts as an egg, and plays Rock, Paper, Scissors: if they win they evolve into a chicken, if they lose they remain as an egg. Stages of evolution are: Egg, Chicken, Dinosaur, Princess, Angel. Chickens fight Chickens, Dinosaurs fight Dinosaurs, Princesses fight Princesses, and Angels don't fight; they watch over the rest of the game. If you lose you go back to being an egg.

Grandmother's Footsteps:

(Variations include: What time is it? Mr. Wolf or Mr. Fox.)

The aim of the game is to sneak up and touch Grandma without being seen moving, so players must freeze when Grandma turns around – which could be at any point in the game. The group moves from the opposite side of the room to Grandma. If Grandma sees you, you go back to the starting line.

Wink Murder:

One person leaves the room: they are the detective. Everyone else closes their eyes, in a circle. The leader goes around the circle and touches one person's head, to signify that they are the murderer. There are two ways to play this game: 1. walking around the space, or 2. sat in a circle with the detective in the middle. When the murderer winks at someone, they have to act out a death scene. The detective has two chances to guess who the murderer is.

Splat:

Group stands in a circle with one person in the middle for the duration of the game. This person makes an imaginary custard pie and mimes splatting someone in the circle. The person who is splatted must duck immediately to avoid being 'out'. The two people either side of this person must now splat each other: the slowest person is 'out'. The game continues until there are only two players left. They then stand back to back and have a duel. The person who was in the middle counts and the two must take a step forward on each number: when a number is missed out (1...2...3...4...5...6...8), they turn and splat each other – the fastest player wins.

‘Corners Game’:

Number the four corners and put people in each corner. When your number is called, the people from that corner run into the middle and run back out. Then add moves for people to perform in the middle: reach up, touch the floor and turn around... Keep developing. *The corners are ‘Off Stage’, the middle is ‘The Stage’.*

Giants, Dwarfs, Wizards:

Two teams stand on opposite sides of the room. Each team decides as a group whether they are all Giants, Dwarves, or Wizards, without disclosing it to the other team.

If you are a giant you make yourself as tall as possible with your arms stretched up above your head. If you are a dwarf you crouch down and wriggle your fingers as if tickling someone.

If you are a wizard you hold out your arms in front of you as if you are zapping someone.

Once both teams have decided, they move towards each other, and on the leader’s command each team reveals who they are.

A giant wins over a dwarf, because the giants can stamp on the dwarves and squash them.

A dwarf wins over a wizard because the dwarves can tickle the wizards under their robes.

A wizard wins over a giant because the wizards can zap the giants.

Once you have revealed your character, the winning team must chase the other team and try to tag them before they get back to their line. If someone is tagged then they join the winning team. The game is won when one team has all the participants.

Cat and Mouse:

The whole group is scattered around the space in pairs, with linked arms side by side. Two people are selected. One person is the Cat, the Cat plays catching the Mouse, the Mouse plays being chased. The mouse at any time can choose to join a pair by linking arms. Once linked with a pair, the person furthest away from the mouse switches to become the cat, and the person that was the cat becomes the mouse.

The chase continues.

Clown Mirrors:

Can be played in pairs, or in a circle as a group. One person begins to move, and everyone else copies like a reflection in the mirror. Once they have finished they tap the next person’s shoulder and they continue.

Yes Let’s:

One person makes a suggestion of an action: the group responds, “Yes Let’s...” and everyone creates the action for that suggestion. For example: “Let’s all go surfing”, “let’s all eat ice cream”.

Machine:

In groups, mime various parts to make a whole machine. This can be done with one person starting and the others add themselves to the machine.

Mourning

Picture Frame:

Group a few individuals together: “I saw these people do...amazing things...help each other...listened... had a go...” and frame their faces as if they’re on TV. (A hula-hoop can be used if you don’t have a picture frame.)

Hat of Praise:

Everyone claps when the hat is put on someone’s head and they are praised for their efforts, e.g. working hard, enthusiasm...

Applause Chair:

As above, everyone claps when someone sits on a particular chair and praise is given, e.g. taking risks, being a good spotter...

The facilitator wraps the end of a ball of wool around their finger and ties it. The ball of wool is then thrown to another person and they wrap it around their finger (and compliments are exchanged). The ball is thrown to everyone and one by one each person wraps it around their finger making a web. At the end the web is cut leaving everyone with a piece of the wool to take home on their finger.

Everyone is given a piece of A4 paper and draws around their hand and forearm, writing their name inside the hand. People move around the papers, writing nice things about that person on each arm. (A list of words from A to Z can be compiled beforehand if needed i.e. Ace, Brilliant, Cool.) People take their sleeve home.

Warm up Games

One person is designated on 'it', running after the group and tagging them. When a person is caught, they are stuck in the mud, freezing in a star shape. A person going under their legs frees them.

Same game as Stuck in the Mud, but when you are tagged you must make the shape of a banana with your arms above your head. To un-tag a banana two people must take one arm each and un-peel the banana. The banana is then free and re-joins the game.

Two people are it. They hold hands and chase people. The person they catch joins the chain by linking hands. When a fourth person is caught they link hands but then split into 2 and 2. This game is played until nobody is left and all the players then link hands and make a circle. Everyone shouts, “A-moe-ba, A-moe-ba, A-moe-ba, Aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa-moe-ba!”

A person is designated on it, running to catch members of the group. Once caught the people slowly join as a giant virus, holding hands, teaming up and catching all the people until everyone has the virus.

Once the facilitator says, “go”, everyone tries to tag each other. If you are tagged you freeze until you get tagged again which un-tags you. Beware when un-tagging someone they can immediately tag you back.

Everyone is given one juggling scarf, which is tucked into the back of the trousers like a tail. On the leaders' sound and signal, it's everyone for themselves trying to steal others peoples tails. If you lose your tail, you're out of the game. At the end, the winner is the person with the most tails.

Players all stand in a line at one side of the room and have to run to make it past the catcher, who is in the middle of the space. If you're caught you become a catcher as an octopus on your knees, catching with your arms. The leader calls when to go.

Walk around the room. When the caller says “one” everyone must jump, then continue walking...when the caller says “two” everyone must touch the floor... when the caller says “three” everyone must clap... when the caller says “four” everyone must do a press up. Keep going until the caller says “eight”. The caller will mix the numbers up, and can also ask participants to think of an action for a number.

Touch Blue:

Caller says “touch something blue” everyone must run to touch something blue. This game has endless variations, for example: “touch something white”, “touch something red”, “touch something black”, “touch something big”, “touch something small”, “touch something shiny”, “touch something cold” etc.

Italian Flag:

Group is split into two teams, one team on one side of the room, the other on the opposite side. Members of each team are given numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 etc. the opposite team are given corresponding numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. The flag (a scarf or a jumper) is placed in the middle of the room. The aim of the game is, when your number is called by the leader, to run and take the flag. If the other person with the same number as you touches you when you’ve got the flag, they get the point. If the player makes it home to their groups’ line, they gain a point.

The winning group is whoever gets the most points out of however many rounds.

Variation: instead of the scarf being on the floor, the facilitator can hold it in the air

Dodge Ball:

The striker has the ball and is able to move with the ball in hand, striking participants below the knees to catch them out. When the first person is caught, they become a striker too, and from then the strikers cannot move when the ball is in their hand, so they must work together to catch people, until everyone is caught.

With thanks to Peter Duncan <https://www.co-train.co.uk/>

Some Games Resources

A Playful Path (free download): <https://www.aplayfulpath.com/>

Games for Actors and Non-Actors (Boal): <http://www.deepfun.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/Games-for-actors-and-non-actors...Augusto-Boal.pdf>

Gianni Rodari – Grammatica della Fantasia:
<https://libri.me/grammatica-della-fantasia-gianni-rodari-pdf/>

Homo Ludens (Huizinga):
http://art.yale.edu/file_columns/0000/1474/homo_ludens_johan_huizinga_routledge_1949_.pdf

The Importance of Play (David Whitebread):
http://www.importanceofplay.eu/IMG/pdf/dr_david_whitebread_-_the_importance_of_play.pdf

Circus Games: <https://www.circusgames.net/>

Appendix 3 Model Staff Structure

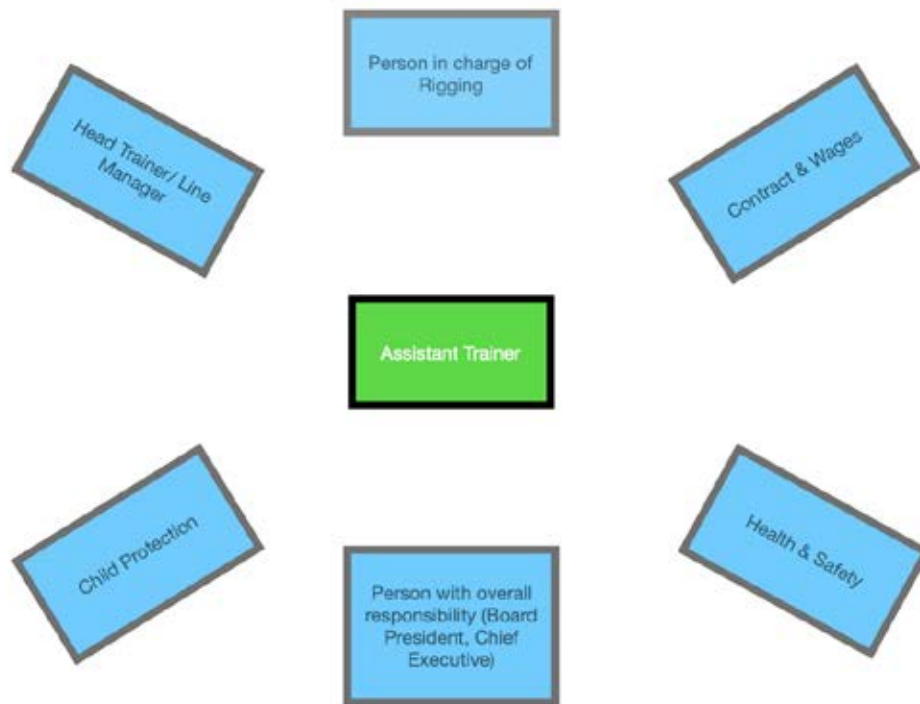
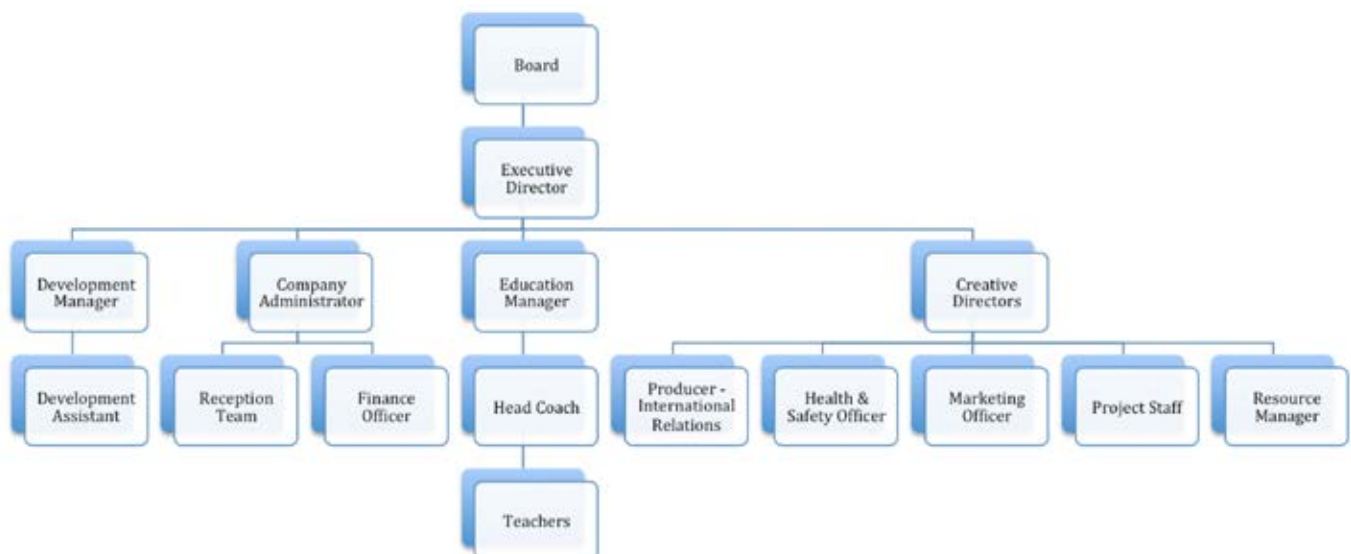


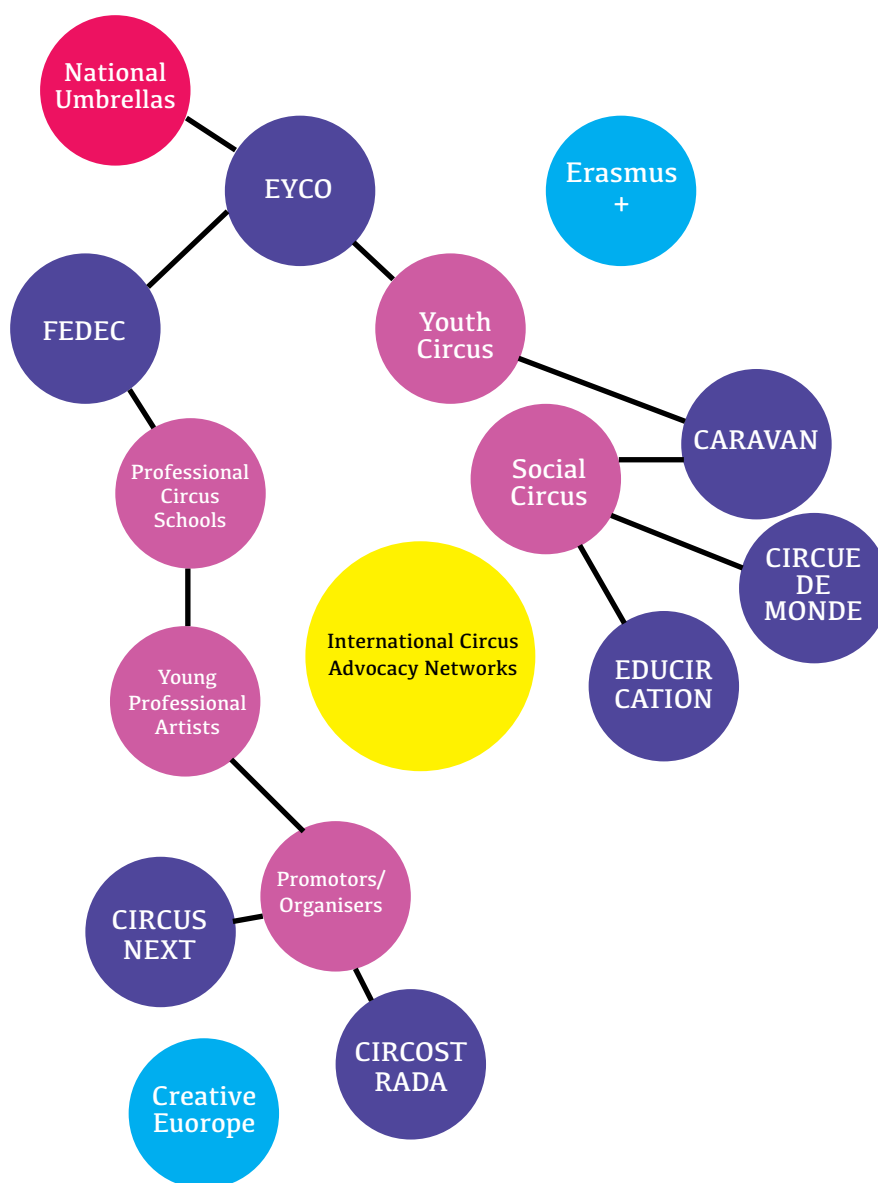
Table 1

Name	Job Title	Responsibilities in relation to AT	Email	Telephone
	Head Trainer	Line management of all Trainers		
	Trainer	Line Management of Assistant Trainers		
	Company Administrator	Contracts, wages		
	Head Rigger	Use of space in relation to aerial equipment; equipment rigging and maintenance,; safety concerns		
	Duty Manager/ Caretaker	Access to school, keys etc; reports on any building issues		



Organisation structure of a large performance company with an education department. If an AT is likely to work across different departments (as happened in this company) they may need a detailed structure like this. An explanation will be needed as to who the A.T would talk to in which circumstance.

Appendix 4 European Circus Advocacy Networks



Contacts

www.eyco.org
www.fedec.eu
www.caravancircusnetwork.eu
www.circuedusoleil.com/citizenship/community
www.educircation.eu
www.circostrada.org
www.circusnext.eu

National Umbrella Organisations

Austria: www.zirkusnetzwerk.at
 Belgium, Flemish part: www.circuscentrum.be
 Denmark: www.dubal.dk
 Estonia: tsirkusekeskus.ee
 Finnish Youth Circus Association (Finland): www.sns.fi
 France: www.ffec.asso.fr
 Germany: www.bag-zirkus.de
 Italy: www.jugglingmagazine.it
 Netherlands: www.circomundo.nl
 Poland: www.carnival.com.pl
 Slovenia: www.cirkokrog.com
 Spain: www.feecse.es
 UK: www.circusworks.org

23. About The ASK Project

The ASK Project: Assistant Trainers Sharing Knowledge was an Erasmus+ funded project running from June 2018 to September 2020.

The aim of the project was to provide a mechanism for Training Assistant Circus Trainers across Europe.

This was done by producing:

A curriculum;

A guidebook for circus schools;

Videos.

The project consisted of:

5 training weeks, each with 22 Head Trainers and Assistant Trainers and 3 facilitators;

6 project management meetings;

4 multiplier event to disseminate the project.

All of the project partners are members of EYCO: the European Youth Circus Organisation. The Finnish Youth Circus Association took the role of lead partner and project co-ordinator. The ten other partners acted as hosts and provided participants for project activities.

Project Partners:

The Finnish Youth Circus Association (Finland)

CircusWorks (UK)

Estonian Contemporary Circus Development Centre (Estonia)

Fundacja Miasto Projekt (Poland)

Vlaams centrum voor circuskunsten vzw (Belgium)

ASD Giocolieri e Dintorni (Italy)

Circomundo (Netherlands)

Federacion Española de Escuelas de Circo Socio Educativo (Spain)

Fédération Française des Ecoles de Cirque (France)

BAG-Zirkuspädagogik (Germany)

Slovensko zdruzenje za cirkusko pedagogiko Cirkokrog (Slovenia)

Thanks To

Project Co-ordinator & Fundraiser

Evianna Lehtipuu

Facilitators

Steven Desanghere

Petra Päivärinne

Lynn Carroll

Curriculum Compiled and Edited by:

Lynn Carroll

As well as all the Head trainers and Assistant Trainers who attended trainings and contributed their knowledge to the curriculum

Adam Banach

Alex Clatworthy

Alice Allan

Aniol Petit Cantero

Anja Emersic

Annabel Carberry

Bernadette Favre

Djamila Jarno

Dot Appleby

Dries Dumortier

Elga Pollet

Emilia Górnisiewicz

Femke Monteny

Fidel Gutiérrez Serna

Frida Lindell

Froukje de Klein

Gaïa Papeux

Gaili Ilisson

Giorgia Bolognesi

Heikki Tolin

Helena Ehrenbusch

Jacek Kwapiński

Jan Jereb

Carmela Birch
Jana Nunčič
Jasmine McInerney
Javier Amigo Pérez
Jonna Väistö
Kim Lazonby
Lara Miglietti
Lasse Parduhn
Laura Greggio
Lejla Aksalic
Lena Biedlingmaier
Leon Johlitz
Leonardo Varriale
Lieven Leemans
Liina Eller
Lisa Tenner
Liza Berden
Magdalena Kisiała
Marco Marinelli

Maria Grazia Ielapi
Markos Teklu
Marta Maiseyenka
Martin Danziger
Martin Iskra
Michaël Vessereau
Michelle Menick
Mirja Tuomi
Nastja Fekonja
Niina Rinta-Opas
Nika Valentinčič
Nina Vandecasteele
Paulina Chodnicka
Pauline Taillard
Peter Duncan
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Pihla Juola
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Pol Vives Perez
Roos van Rijk
Sofie de Vaere
Sofie Van Mieghem
Sophia Knoche
Stefano Bertelli
Stephanie Hay
Vera van Es
Vilja Jyrinki
Villiina Sten
Yohannes Abera Nega
Zef Berišaj
Taika Marttinen
Tanja Manderfeld
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Valentin Becasse

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