Trade Union Training
for Project Work

Trainers Course
Support Pack

etui.
This publication forms part of the toolkit Trade Union Training for Project Work produced by the Education Department of the European Trade Union Institute to support its programme of certified training in project work and project management for trade unions.

The following booklets are currently available in English and French:

- Project Work for Trade Union Representatives – Course Book
- Project Work for Trade Union Representatives – Tutor Notes
- Trainers Course – Course Materials
- Trainers Course – Support Pack

Others will be added over the course of the next few years.
Table of contents

5 Introduction

6 ETUI Education teaching methodology and methods: an overview

7 Trade union education values in the classroom

8 Active learning

9 ETUI and active learning

11 Preparing to teach, giving and receiving feedback and reflection

13 Taking report backs from groups

15 Recording activity

17 Portfolio building and accreditation

18 The European Qualifications Framework
Introduction

This pack of trainer’s resources has been produced to support your activities in delivering the ETUI Introductory Course *Project Work for Trade Union Representatives*. However, as you will see, this pack contains helpful advice that we hope may be useful on other trade union training courses.

ETUI Education has produced this pack to support new and less experienced trade union tutors and trainers. The content of this pack will also be helpful to more experienced tutors as they review and reflect on their teaching practice.

This pack is not meant to be exhaustive and will be added to and amended in the light of reflecting on teaching practice, as well as feedback from trade union tutors and trainers throughout Europe. Therefore, the editorial team at ETUI Education would also welcome your comments and suggestions as to how we can improve this pack in relation to the breadth of the topics covered and the depth of the content offered.

Please pass on any comments or suggestions to:

Silvana Pennella
spennell@etui.org
ETUI Education teaching methodology and methods: an overview

Delivering training the 'ETUI' way

ETUI Education uses an approach to learning that actively involves individuals working collectively with each other. There are several important reasons for this.

Many trade union representatives may not have participated in formal education and training for several years. They may have experienced being 'talked at' or 'lectured to' and as a result may not have enjoyed elements of their previous education or training.

To benefit from trade union courses, union learners often need a new experience of learning where their active contribution is expected and valued by the tutor and other course participants. Talking about how course content relates to their workplace or union setting with other course participants puts union learners at the centre rather than on the periphery of classroom activity, and will automatically engage their interest.

Secondly, skills development and the application of skills is a vital component of ETUI Education. Trade union tutors create opportunities for learners to practise the skills they need through activity in the classroom.

Thirdly, union learning or training usually means working with other people, and collective activity is central to the union representative's or officer's job. By working in pairs, groups and in plenary sessions, participants work on issues and problems and learn to listen, debate, co-operate, plan and organise with their colleagues.

Most importantly, participants on ETUI courses are a huge resource in themselves, coming from a wide range of backgrounds and experience, often with highly developed skills. While participants will have things to learn from a course, they also have things to contribute, too. It is the tutor's job to ensure that this knowledge and experience is used in a structured way throughout the course, for the benefit of all course participants.
Successful trade union activities are dependent on shared values and attitudes. These values and attitudes are included in all ETUI courses and therefore support our training activities. They can be described as:

**Justice and fairness**

Fair treatment in all aspects of work with open and just procedures for all.

**Equality and equity**

Equality of opportunity and equity or treatment require the elimination of prejudice and procedures which openly or covertly discriminate against people on the grounds of gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, disability and age.

**Democracy**

The greatest possible involvement in decision-making and participation in activities and information-sharing that support and defend members and their union activities.

**Unity**

Maintaining cohesion between union members and groups of members in working towards shared trade union objectives.

The above values and attitudes underpin the work of ETUI Education and are reflected in our approach to teaching and learning.

ETUI’s teaching methods are designed to maximise course participants’ capacity for working collectively and co-operatively. This approach is often referred to as ‘what is studied is reinforced by the way it is studied’.
**Active learning**

**What is active learning?**

'Active learning' is an educational approach that matches teaching and learning methods with trade union goals and ETUI Education’s value base.

Active learning invites learners to reflect on issues and aims that they identify, to work together to decide the best courses of action and to reflect critically on the new situation. This kind of learning is sometimes called 'experiential learning', 'student-centred learning', 'learning by doing', 'discovery learning' or 'participatory education'.

In a trade union context it is characterised by:

— Facilitation by tutors who are themselves committed trade unionists and who see themselves as informed 'facilitators of learning' rather than 'experts'
— The use of dialogue and questioning to develop critical thinking and confidence in interpreting and working on issues or problems that learners bring to the learning environment
— The related development of the participant’s own knowledge using a collective approach to problem-solving that equips union learners to apply learning to their role in the workplace and/or the union.

Active learning is not a rigid system of ideas and practices. Instead it offers ways of learning and facilitating learning that are adaptable to changing circumstances, cultures and teaching or training priorities.
ETUI and active learning

ETUI uses approaches to learning that actively involve individuals working collectively. There are several reasons for this:

Starting from where learners are

Trade union learners learn best when the subject of learning relates to and builds on their own experience. Most learners attend trade union courses in a representative capacity. They want to develop their role, knowledge or skills base in relation to that, to improve their skills as an effective union representatives or union officer. Often it will be one particular problem or issue, perhaps the need to acquire a new skill or develop an understanding on a topic or subject, that prompts union learners to seek training. These are the starting points that form the basis for activity on ETUI Education’s training courses.

Developing a union approach

All trade union organisations have distinct aims and objectives. In working together, seeking to involve everyone, encouraging discussion on difficult issues and developing research and planning skills, active learning techniques develop and reinforce the values that are the basis for union activity. By working in pairs and in groups, learners work on issues and problems, learn to listen, debate, co-operate, plan and organise with their union colleagues.

Skills development and subject knowledge

Skills development is a vital component of the ETUI training programme. This is because union representatives need to be able to do certain things well at the workplace and in the union. One of the most effective ways of acquiring skills is through experience – learning by doing. ETUI tutors create opportunities for participants to practice the skills they need in the union or in their workplace through activities in the classroom.
Varying activities

There are many different ways of organising activities that enable learners to achieve the learning aims and objectives of a course. It is very important to vary the types of activities throughout the day to keep the interest and involvement of participants.

For example, on the ETUI Introductory Course participants will be asked to find and present key information. The tutor can organise this learning in a variety of ways:
— Create mixed groups ‘finding out’ activities using a library or the internet
— Give nationally, sectorally or occupationally based groups a case study to work on
— Ask pairs to produce a checklist about good practice in project work
— Set individuals an information-gathering assignment to be carried out using the internet
— Organise a whole class role-play of a union project team involving several specialisms or responsibilities.

ETUI tutors also vary the pace and timing of activities to ensure that learning aims and objectives are met and all learners are actively involved and on task throughout the day.

Some educational activities will need sufficient time for work to be developed in depth. Others will be short and sharp, designed to move things along quickly. Tutors may wish to use activities that are linked, providing course participants with an opportunity to construct an approach or a larger piece of work through a series of interlinked activities that culminates in a crucial and definitive learning or training objective.
Preparing to teach, giving and receiving feedback and reflection

The importance of planning

ETUI Education has produced these notes along with other key resources to enable you, as a trade union educator, to successfully and effectively deliver an important element of the ETUI’s programme on project work and project management.

The learner-centred nature of ETUI’s courses means that, although a sample teaching schedule is provided in the Introductory Course Project Work for Trade Union Representatives, there is sufficient flexibility for you as tutor to use, adjust or add to the materials according to need. This means that you will need to plan your teaching.

Careful planning is crucial for you as a tutor delivering an ETUI-designed and resourced course. In any case, you will probably be a trade union educator or trainer who has experience of a variety of different circumstances and demands that can often arise in the processes of teaching and learning. Careful consideration and planning will help you be prepared for and respond to these demands.

Active learning and tutors

Active learning involves the ability to listen and learn from others, and this clearly affects the role of the tutor. By listening to learners, tutors can build an understanding of their workplace situation and the skills and knowledge that will best serve learners in carrying out their role.

Based on the real problems and concerns of the learner, active learning requires a highly skilled, well-organised tutor. To help create the environment for active learning, tutors need to be able to plan and structure learning so that all course participants make progress.

Giving feedback

Experience has shown that there is a tendency for trainers to make one of two immediate responses to a participant’s performance when giving feedback. One response is to report what you would have done yourself in the same situation. The other response, which is particularly common where an innovative or non-traditional approach is being employed, is to identify the ‘problems’ rather than ‘gains’ associated with participant’s
contribution. Neither response is likely to lead to improved performance by the course participant or to a relationship of trust and mutual respect.

A more useful approach is for tutors to try and establish an atmosphere of mutual problem-solving and mutual appreciation. Start by building up your course participant’s confidence. Make an informal remark about something you liked about their performance. As with all communication, giving feedback is not just a matter of what you say, but when and how you say it. Be sensitive and treat your learners how you would wish to be treated yourself.

In order to give helpful feedback, try to:
— Be realistic: direct your comments towards actions that your participants can control
— Be specific: generalisations are not helpful
— Pinpoint something that your course participants can influence or change
— Be sensitive to the goals of your participants
— Be consciously non-judgmental
— Be aware of balancing positive and negative feedback. Positive feedback on its own allows no room for improvement and negative feedback alone is discouraging
— Be prompt: delay reduces impact.

Receiving feedback

Receiving feedback requires as many skills as giving feedback. Experience suggests immediate reactions lie somewhere between two extremes. One extreme is to accept whatever you are told as indisputably accurate and to follow the given advice without further question. The other is to resent what is perceived to be unwelcome ’advice’. Again, neither response is likely to lead to improved performance or to a relationship of trust and mutual respect.

A more useful approach is to explore what is meant by the feedback and what the implications would be if you were to adopt it. A response such as: “Thank you, I’ll think about that,” commits the trainer to nothing until there is a chance to mull things over further. You may find there’s a really important point being made in the feedback that you will want to use in your own way, perhaps in a later activity. It is important to be open to feedback and be prepared to consider comments which may challenge your own perceptions.

Advice on receiving feedback

As a receiver of feedback you need to:
— Be explicit: make it clear what kind of feedback you are seeking
— Be aware: notice your own reactions, both intellectual and emotional
— Be silent: you will hear more if you concentrate on listening rather than explaining or justifying yourself. Consciously try to avoid being defensive
— Be clear: exactly what is your colleague saying to you? Ask for clarification if necessary. Check understanding regularly.
Taking report backs from groups

Reflecting and moving on

The key focus of the Introductory Course is on the development of skills and knowledge for project work. Group work facilitates discussion and analysis of any concerns. However, the purpose of discussion is not only awareness-raising; it is also to enable participants to work out how they will move forward and to share those ideas with other course participants.

It is good practice for tutors to agree timing for activities but to be ready to move things forward if participants run out of steam, or allocate extra time if it is needed to complete a task properly.

Reporting back from group activities serves different functions. For example, work in small groups can be a way of structuring the learning for a whole class setting. In this case, the report back or plenary session may involve detailed analysis and evaluation of findings. In other cases, the focus of learning is in the small group itself and the report back will be brief.

Case studies

As a trade union tutor or trainer, you may wish to reflect and discuss with other trade union educators or trainers how best to respond to the following scenarios:

Feedback on activities

1. A group that feeds back indicates a completely incorrect way of dealing with a given situation.
2. A shy participant speaking for the first time quotes the wrong piece of legislation during the feedback session.
3. A participant insists on feeding back from their group – despite others wanting to do it.
4. A participant refuses to feed back to the whole course, but actively takes part during the task in their small group.
Peer feedback

1. You are team-teaching with an experienced colleague who does not stick to the agreed plan but goes off at a tangent.
2. You are asked to observe a session delivered by a new tutor. They are obviously nervous and make some mistakes in their summary of the session.
3. You observe an experienced tutor who asks for feedback after the session. You thought they talked for too long and didn’t really respond to the questions raised by the course participants.
4. You have received negative feedback following your session from a colleague. You didn’t agree with their feedback as you believe the session went really well and the reps enjoyed it.

Organisation of work during the course

1. A participant has taken the time to type up all their notes on their laptop and has filed them away in a logical order.
2. A participant hasn’t been keeping many notes and puts all their work in a carrier bag at the end of the session.
3. You have received complaints about the people who arrive late and disrupt the sessions.
4. A participant is disappointed that they can’t discuss their important key issue as the course structure is scheduled to look at this issue on the afternoon of the last day. They need advice now.
As part of the *Trainers Course* and the Introductory Course *Project Work for Trade Union Representatives*, you will have been introduced to specifically designed educational units. These educational units contain 'Learning outcomes' and 'Assessment criteria'.

**Learning outcomes** are very specific and indicate what participants will be able to do as a result of successfully completing the course.

**Assessment criteria** must be clear and concise and indicate what participants are required to do to demonstrate that they have successfully completed the associated learning outcome or at least part of it.

Tutors need to record how participants achieve each learning outcome and, in trade union education, we tend to do this in ways that avoid formal exams. A course participant may, for instance, wish to draw on practical activities in the workplace or trade union setting to demonstrate that they have achieved a specific learning outcome and its related assessment criteria. They may have done this, for example, by carrying out a safety inspection or equality audit at work.

Because the way trade union learners achieve learning outcomes can be varied and complex, a trade union tutor needs to carefully record when and how a course participant achieves a learning outcome. One way to do this is given on the following page. If you plan use educational units with learning outcomes in your future work, you may find the following *tutor day plan* useful.
## Tutor Day Plan

Course Title:  
Day:  
Date:  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Assessment Criteria</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>FC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>TO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>CM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Evidence**  
SS – Summary Sheet, FC – Flip Chart, TO – Tutor Observation, PO – Peer Observation, Course Minutes (or notes), O – Other
Recording participants’ learning activity and achievement is a crucial element of accreditation, i.e. the award of educational credit or qualification. This is something that ETUI is considering and actively experimenting with. Currently a number of ETUI courses are being accredited using the support of the British TUC. ETUI is evaluating these tests and trials to inform its strategy and future action on accreditation generally.

**Accreditation** is simply recording the evidence that course participants generate to show that they have achieved specific **learning outcomes** in order to gain a credit or qualification.

A crucial element in accreditation is **portfolio building**. By a portfolio we simply mean a folder to record course participants’ work. Normally it is a record of each participant’s response to an activity or task. Each participant’s responses can then be assessed against the appropriate learning outcomes and if the outcomes are met, educational recognition or an award (sometimes a qualification) can be given.

This is the model of accreditation ETUI is currently using with several of the courses on project work and project management, including the **Trainers Course for Project Work** and the Introductory Course **Project work for trade union representatives**. Unfortunately, at the time of writing, the Introductory Course is only accredited in the UK. Organisations and tutors working in other countries may have a similar opportunity to obtain accreditation through their own national qualifications systems. We encourage you strongly to explore the possibilities at national level.

The **Trainers Course** is accredited through the TUC by the UK’s Open College Network. Participants who satisfactorily pass the course will be awarded 6 Credits at Level 3 of the UK Qualifications and Credit Framework. This equates to Level 4 in the European Qualifications Framework.
The European Qualifications Framework

The European Union has been considering for some time the difficult issue of reconciling the different qualification systems operating in the various Member States. In a large political and economic entity like the EU which is encouraging the mobility of labour across national frontiers the understanding and recognition of qualifications awarded in a different country is of fundamental importance. This has proved to be a huge obstacle to mobility in the past, but now there is a beginning of a solution – the European Qualifications Framework (EQF).

The EQF sets out to establish a common European framework to describe what a learner knows, understands and is able to do, regardless of the system where a particular qualification was acquired. It functions as a reference framework to which different countries’ national qualifications systems can be related, so that individuals and employers are better able to understand and compare the qualifications levels of different countries in the different education and training systems.

The EQF comprises eight separate reference levels, which are based on ‘learning outcomes’ (i.e. what the learner can do), thus shifting the focus away from the traditional approach, which emphasises learning inputs (length of a learning experience, type of institution). As an instrument for the promotion of lifelong learning, the EQF encompasses general and adult education, vocational education and training, as well as higher education. The eight levels cover the entire span of qualifications, from those achieved at the end of compulsory education to those awarded at the highest level of academic and professional or vocational education and training.

The EQF was adopted by the European Parliament and Council in April 2008. The resolution encouraged all Member States to relate their qualifications systems or frameworks to the EQF by 2010 and to ensure that all new qualifications issued from 2012 carry a reference to the appropriate EQF level.

The credits and qualifications awarded on ETUI’s accredited courses are all referenced to the EQF. At the time of writing, however, not all countries have yet fully complied with the resolution and related their qualifications to the EQF and thus there may be difficulties in obtaining recognition in some countries. This is, though, an ongoing process and it is simply a question of time before all qualifications will bear EQF recognition.