

# Theory task 4



Theory Task 4As a trainer of adults, I have found the setting of ground rules to be very beneficial particularly when having a group of learners for a course lasting several days or run over several weekly sessions.

When ground rules are established they set limits and boundaries for all participants. Atherton, J. S (2005) defines ground rules as ??? the minimum necessary conditions required for getting learning work done in a class.??? and according to the new Professional Standards for Teachers, Tutors and Trainers in the Lifelong Learning Sector my aim as a Trainer is to ??? create a safe learning environment that promotes tolerance, respect and cooperation between learners??? This clearly implies that all learners need boundaries and rules within which to work.??? The creating of norms or expectations or rules is a natural part of group dynamics. Learners need a sense of structure and will feel psychologically safer if they know what is expected of them??™ ( Francis and Gould, 2009 p22) Therefore they are something I always do very early in the first session as it not only satisfies the objective of setting the rules but also acts as an icebreaker, giving all the learners the opportunity to get involved. The resulting ground rules form the backbone of both respect and discipline and help gel the group and myself together. The rules must be clear and fair to all, and adhered to by everyone including myself! Often, if a ground rule is broken, it is the other students that will point it out and enforces group discipline.

Below are some of the common ground rules that are set by my learners and myself. ? Start and finish on the time ? Switch off mobile phones ? Only one conversation at a time ? Full attendance and punctually ? Confidentiality ? Respect each other and their opinionsThe Ground rules are necessary to

ensure the students get the most out of any session, generally time is limited. If learners are continually arriving late they disrupt the flow of the lesson, the same applies if using mobile phones. Attendance at all sessions will have an impact on whether a student achieves the objectives, usually failing to attend means learners fall behind with their work and they then don't meet their targets.

Respect for each other's opinions is important, if learners are constantly interrupting another person or they are being made to feel their opinion does not count they will become demoralised, this can then lead to low self-esteem and students then fail to achieve. There are three main ways of establishing ground rules these are: 1. The trainer setting their own 2. The learners setting their own 3. The trainer and learner setting them together. There are advantages and disadvantages to all the above methods, if I set the ground rules I will get what I want and impose my rules on the learners and the learners will have no input and could lead to the learners not feeling part of the session and could lead to a lack of involvement throughout the course, whereas if the students make the ground rules it could achieve the opposite effect and create chaos in the classroom and I would have no real boundaries to operate in. Involving the learners in creating ground rules encourages them to take responsibility and ownership for their own learning and will inevitably create a more open and trusting and participative environment. I always use the joint method because if the learners are allowed to participate in setting the ground rules they may take ownership of them and will be more likely to adhere to them.

Atherton, J. S claims that it is the teachers'™ job to help clarify them, not to impose them. Ground rules only really work when they are shared. If tutor-led, then they should be stated verbally or provided to the learners on a handout or slide, with the opportunity for the learners to respond, add more and negotiate the rules™. This provides good role modelling and a transparency about expectations for behaviours. There are various ways to achieve this e. g. Brainstorming Snowballing Group activity. I prefer the method of brainstorming to achieve this involves the learners and myself and it is relatively quick and gives the opportunity for everyone to get involved however I have found that sometimes it is far too easy for learner to say pass. Other methods I™ve considered are Snowballing which gradually builds up a collective and agreed group list from smaller group lists and the final list is presented to me.

This too involves all the group however it can be time-consuming and as I would only be involved at the that their list my not contain some of the rules I need and if I add to the list at the end it may appear I am imposing my own rules and that the exercise was meaningless. Adult learners are generally attending courses voluntarily, more motivated to learn, have more self-discipline than younger learners and are not usually disruptive, however despite good ground rules disruption does occur. This can be due to Boredom Lack of understanding The level of challenge is too low or too high To overcome disruption I try and make my sessions as active as possible and include all the learners in the activity so learners don™t become bored and disruptive. I also aim to teach the topic in an interesting way that appeals to different learning styles

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