

INTRODUCTION

Many of you have had the pleasure of learning new information or a new skill under the guidance of a skilled teacher, changing your behavior assisted by a skilled therapist, or acquiring new knowledge aided by a skilled trainer. You remember with fondness and admiration that sixth grade teacher, for example, and wonder how he or she worked magic. You have written on evaluations, “outstanding instructor, best training session I have ever attended, I learned a lot!” What was it about these “magicians” that made those situations such rich and rewarding learning experiences?

Behind every learning opportunity there was an ultimate educator: an individual who helped you explore ideas and feelings, assess and analyze, and develop and implement new ways of thinking and behaving. Certainly there was something “special” about these gifted individuals, and yet underneath all that magic, there was keen understanding and some readily identifiable skills that made it all work.

What makes this course different from other “how to train” courses? The difference is subtle but powerful; a difference that gains clarity and importance as you progress through the course. Most “how to train” courses focus on the *content* of training, the “basics,” such as adult learning principles, lesson plan development, training design, training tools, and evaluation—all important and essential *elements* of a trainer development course. Participants in these courses limit their attention to the “tangible” components (the *what*) of training. They learn how to develop, organize, deliver, and evaluate training with a few presentation tips and strategies. When participants apply their new knowledge and skills back in the “real world,” they feel somewhat more competent and may improve their overall rating, but they may still look back to that magical instructor and ask themselves why, when they seemingly applied the same principles and techniques, it just was not as effective (or as enjoyable!).

An effective trainer development course must also explore the *process*—the *how to* of training. What does the instructor *do* to ensure that session participants successfully meet learning objectives? How does the instructor *perform* the magic of training?

This manual and the accompanying training program define the multifaceted role of the “magician” and look behind the smoke and mirrors to uncover the magician’s secrets. You will explore and manipulate principles that underlie all quality “magic shows.” You will learn and practice skills to add to your trick bag and use the magic of this manual to transform yourself into the ultimate educator.

THE ULTIMATE EDUCATOR

Whether the environment is an academic classroom or training venue, the goal is the same: maximum adult learning. With the focus of this course being the identification of principles and skills that contribute to maximum adult learning, the individual who performs the “magic” is the *ultimate educator*.

The ultimate educator is a cross between a teacher and trainer. Employing a combination of academic approaches and training skill-building strategies, the ultimate educator creates a rich learning environment. The skills are universal and cross all learning boundaries and content areas.

Throughout the manual certain terms are interchangeable—training, trainer, education, educator, instruction, instructor. This is a reflection of the vision of the ultimate educator and the “magic” of learning. Teachers and trainers, new or seasoned, can benefit from the principles and skills identified in this manual.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The traditional perception of the instructor as a presenter of information is far too simple. Within individual segments and across an entire course, the ultimate educator wears many hats. The ultimate educator is a coordinator, facilitator, presenter, and designer/developer.

The roles and responsibilities change with the type of training conducted by the ultimate educator. The training program may be a one-hour stand-alone session or a week-long academy; each dictates different and often unique responsibilities for the instructor. You may be called upon to develop training, coordinate a multiday workshop, deliver a single segment, participate in a panel discussion with people you have never met before, or facilitate a group process. While not all responsibilities will be required in all situations, these are some of the critical responsibilities of the educator.

THE COORDINATOR

Man stand for long time with mouth open before roast duck fly in. — Chinese Proverb

Just as much of the design work of training takes place before the trainer takes the stage, much coordination takes place behind the scenes. The ultimate educator must be skilled in the coordination of training.

Often you find that in addition to delivering courses, you are required to perform management tasks related to coordination or training. While there is usually not much glory in these responsibilities, they are critical; without successful coordination, the session cannot take place.

Chapter 2, *Ultimate Coordination*, addresses coordination topics such as logistics, scheduling, publicity, room setup, budget, special needs, trouble shooting, and climate control.

THE FACILITATOR

They are able because they think they are able. — Virgil, *Aeneid*

Learning objectives tell you where you need to go. Training design is the map; presentation, the vehicle; facilitation, the fuel. Effective facilitation skills help guarantee that learning takes place. The ultimate educator is a master facilitator.

Chapter 5, *Ultimate Facilitation*, covers facilitation topics such as responsive behaviors, motivation, commitment, body language, cooperation, group dynamics, activities monitoring, knowledge solicitation, and handling problem participants.

THE PRESENTER

The secret of teaching is to appear to have known all your life what you learned this afternoon. — Unknown

The traditional role of instructor as presenter has received the bulk of attention in training-for-trainer courses and is the most visible role in the training session. One may adequately fill other instructor roles, but an outstanding instructor is always an outstanding presenter. Therefore, the ultimate educator is a skilled presenter.

Chapter 6, *Ultimate Presentation*, de-mystifies the art of presentation. You will learn about organization, hooks, aids, challenges, styles, roles, and how to handle questions and answers.

THE DESIGNER/DEVELOPER

“Can you tell me please which way I ought to go from here?” said Alice.
 “That depends a good deal on where you want to get to,” said the Cat.
 “I don’t much care where,” said Alice
 “Then it doesn’t matter which way you walk,” said the Cat. — Lewis Carroll (1886)

Much of the work of training takes place before the trainer takes the stage. The ultimate educator must be knowledgeable about and skilled in the design and development of training programs.

Once you have established a need for training, it’s time to determine what you intend to teach and what the participant must do to demonstrate that he or she has mastered or learned the objectives of the course. After writing specific performance objectives, the ultimate educator then selects the methods, techniques, and materials that will ensure successful training. Chapter 7, *Ultimate Lesson Development and Design*, explores these components of training programs.

IT'S MAGIC TIME!

The manual and the accompanying training program cover additional topics essential for the development of ultimate educators. Chapter 3, *Ultimate Adult Learning*, provides the foundation for ultimate training and creating the ultimate learning environment. Chapter 4, *Ultimate Style and Skill*, explores the characteristics of successful instructors and provides an opportunity to assess your own personal style. And last, Chapter 8, *Ultimate Closing and Evaluation*, discusses the importance of effective training closure and evaluation.

Are you ready? It's magic time!