

Trust and honesty: the trainer's perspective

Today's class went really well. There are so many things I can think of, so many reasons to justify why it went well. I think the most crucial among them is trust. There just seems to be a real trusting, open atmosphere and open relationship emerging among the group. This is what helps content to develop, and to draw people in.

I guess it would be useful to pinpoint what helps to establish trust within a group. I think honesty is part of it. If the initial good-will of people to do something meaningful is there, then honesty of contributions can help to build on this initial trust. (Margit)

Trust and openness: trainees' perspective

Quotation A

I appreciated your openness which created a relaxed and friendly atmosphere in the lessons. Owing to this feeling of togetherness, we were quite ready to talk even when our discussion was recorded. (I have to confess that at first I was extremely scared...) We caught ourselves sharing some very personal things with each other sometimes but it came naturally somehow. (Nóra)

Quotation B

I think our courses are well organised and very well built. I like my groupmates and I like working with them. I think the group works very well together, and what is very important, we respect each other. (Dóra)

Commentary:

*In the two extracts the trainer's perspective is complemented by the voices of two trainees from the same group. From my trainer's perspective I mention honesty of contributions as one of the factors which can build trust in a group. In Quotation A Nóra writes: 'We caught ourselves sharing some very personal things with each other sometimes but it came naturally somehow.' I think this quotation highlights that being honest during a group discussion does not only mean saying things which one perceives to be true. Honesty is very closely related to openness and to being personal. In certain situations being honest might mean talking about one's failures or expressing one's confusion and uncertainty, and therefore it can put one in a vulnerable position. It is perhaps worth noting that Nóra, the writer of Quotation A, was a very shy trainee with an introvert personality. She often remarked to me during informal chats that she herself was really surprised that she was able to open up and share quite personal things about herself. Her phrasing in the extracts also indicates this: We caught ourselves sharing some very personal things.
(Margit)*