

# Curriculum

## Instructional course for co-trainers

### Introduction

#### What is it?

This curriculum provides the foundations for a course made for future Easy-to-read (ETR) training instructors. It can be used by organisations to train individuals with Easy-to-read needs. Following the course, participants can collaborate with other instructors (most often, individuals without ETR needs) as “co-trainers” to teach future Easy-to-Read translators.

The curriculum is composed of four modules that organisations can use with participants. The modules focus on personal skills, speaking skills, digital skills and knowledge about Easy-to-read and accessible communication.

The modules have been conceived as adaptable elements for the course. Courses can be held using all four modules. Alternatively, modules can be selected individually and used to highlight areas most beneficial for participants. In both cases, modules can be adapted to suit participants’ needs and existing skill sets. If all modules are used, we recommend a three-day minimum time frame. Courses with multiple modules can also be extended over a longer period of time, depending on individual needs and resources.

#### How long does it take?

This curriculum has been designed as a three-day course (to be divided up into sessions of different lengths and tailored to the participants).

However, the length of the course will depend on the number of participants, as well as their support needs, learning pace and personal backgrounds. For example, university students might prefer a quicker pace, whereas another participant might require more time with the training material. Consult with the participants about their specific needs prior to your course and adapt the training sessions accordingly.

In general, encourage participants to consider this course as a starting point for their future work as co-trainers. Further coaching and individual assistance may be needed for a participant to feel comfortable when developing their own training sessions or cooperating with other instructors.

## Who is it for?

The course is intended for people who need accessible information and use Easy-to-read in their daily lives. They may have an intellectual disability, but those with Easy-to-read needs can also include language learners, people with an acquired brain injury, or other populations with language, reading or learning difficulties.

You can select the participants for this instructional course as you wish. Helpful criteria for selecting participants include an individual's experience using and proofreading Easy-to-read materials. We recommend choosing the participants after holding personal meetings in which:

- the aim of the course is explained clearly,
- the personal experience of the candidate is explored,
- the candidate agrees to participate, and
- possibilities for the candidates as future co-trainers are explained.

It must be clear to the participants that being a co-trainer requires sharing details about their personal lives. In general, it is encouraged that all participants be aware of their individual support needs.

## How many individuals can participate? How many instructors?

To ensure that the curriculum works well, the maximum capacity for a course should be set at 5 to 6 people.

Two instructors should be available to lead this course. We strongly recommend including a member of the target group as one of these instructors. For example, individuals with Easy-to-read needs or language learners offer greater representation and can share their personal experiences.

It is also possible to solicit external instructors for the different modules, such as actors or experts in the field of communication.

## How should you prepare for this training?

Considering this course's target population, it is necessary to ensure that all training materials are available in Easy-to-read format. The materials, especially those that require an individual's active participation, should be made available to participants in advance to allow for adequate preparation time.

On the days of the training, take regular breaks and prioritise the interactive elements of the course to encourage participant engagement.

Keep in mind that the course must be accessible to all participants. It is helpful to discuss potential support needs prior to the training and adapt the modules accordingly. For example, participants may need support because of a sight or hearing impairment, a physical disability or may use assistive technology.

Modifications associated with these, and other needs could include preparing accessible documents, hiring a sign language interpreter, ensuring the course venue is accessible for participants with reduced mobility, or inquiring about food allergies if meals or snacks are provided.

It is helpful to reflect on how a positive, supportive environment can be fostered from the start of the course. This may be of particular importance for participants with intellectual disabilities. Before starting the course modules, make clear and concerted efforts to assist every participant in feeling accepted and comfortable within the group.

At the end of the course, we recommend taking the time to celebrate participants' achievement with a brief closing ceremony and the distribution of certificates of participation.

## Which training format should you choose?

The course modules have been conceived as in-person exercises. However, according to your needs and the needs of the participants, it is possible to modify the modules and to conduct the course in a virtual or hybrid environment.

## Why was this course developed?

This course was developed for the Erasmus+ project **Capito! Compris! Understood! Verstanden!** co-funded by the European Union.

The aim of this course is to render training sessions more effective and inclusive by inviting people with Easy-to-read needs to share their perspectives and experiences.

# Module 1: Personal skills

## Introduction:

In this module, individuals will learn about the personal skills required to become a co-trainer and will work to improve interpersonal skills, as well as their creativity, self-confidence and empathy.

## Time needed:

1 day

## Material and preparation:

- Module produced in the CCUV project: Role play cards for testing group facilitators.
- Icebreakers (for example, an emoji board)
- Ideas for movement breaks and relaxation
- Slides in Easy-to-read language
- Simulation or role play exercises.

## Intended outcomes:

- Participants will acquire the personal skills and knowledge needed to design and deliver engaging training sessions tailored to diverse audiences.
- Participants will gain a basic understanding of various pedagogical approaches, including methodologies, techniques, and best practices for teaching.
- Participants will be confident in their abilities to train other people and learn how to create a positive and relaxing atmosphere to make participants feel comfortable.
- Participants will understand their role as future co-trainers and how to work with another instructor.
- Participants will feel comfortable when they talk about their own lives and share their experiences, especially when it comes to their Easy-to-read needs.

## Contents:

This module addresses the following content areas:

- Introduction to Training
  - Definition and importance of training
  - Role and responsibilities of a trainer
- Creating a positive atmosphere for training sessions
  - Icebreakers and relaxation exercises
  - Active listening and empathy
  - Facilitation skills
  - Prompt questions, small talk.
- Creating an engaging training for all
  - Methods for interactive training sessions

- Methods to promote open and respectful communication.
- Create space and time for people to share their views and experiences.
- Becoming a confident co-trainer
  - Relaxation exercises to manage stress.
  - Speaking exercises
  - Speaking in front of a group
  - Getting comfortable with sharing one's own experiences and talking about Easy-to-read needs.
- Working with another trainer
  - Role of the other trainer
  - Working as a team of trainers

## How-to:

Prior to beginning the module, prepare these materials:

- Theoretical information about training sessions
- Videos to showcase examples of good/bad training sessions.
- Toolkit of different exercises for relaxation and participation that can be used during the training, like icebreakers.
- Role play using the Roleplay cards for testing group facilitators (produced in the CCUV project)

It can be especially beneficial to include a member of the target group as one of the instructors for this module.

# Module 2: Speaking skills

## Introduction:

One of the most important abilities of a (co-)trainer is their speaking skills. A general knowledge of the content material is not sufficient in and of itself: trainers must also be able to communicate their knowledge to the participants appropriately. They must be confident in their role as a teacher.

Some co-trainers with Easy-to-read needs may require special support when communicating. The goal of this module is to help participants find a way of speaking and communicating that makes them feel comfortable and confident.

## Time needed:

1 day for the module, but since speaking skills are transversal skills, they will also be trained in other modules.

## Material and preparation:

- Some slides written in Easy-to-read and handouts about theoretical knowledge – but focus on practical exercises.
- Accessible materials for practical exercises
- If needed, a video camera and a screen.
- An accessible room big enough for all participants to move around comfortably. If the training is given online, exercises must be modified to ensure every participant can be involved.

## Intended outcomes:

- Participants will be aware of the importance of developing personal speaking skills. They will get an idea of how to communicate effectively.
- Participants will have a basic knowledge of different teaching and learning methods, the communication process and the basic rules of public speaking.
- Participants will be aware of the importance of delivering information confidently and competently, and being a relatable teacher, especially by sharing their own story with others.
- Learning by doing thanks to the practical exercises in this module, participants will train their public speaking skills and will be more self-confident in public speaking.
- Participants will learn some useful strategies and methods to cope with stress and anxiety.
- Participants will get an idea of how to use their body and their voice to communicate in the best way possible.
- Participants will be aware that everybody has their own way of communicating, and that there is not just one “perfect” way of speaking.

- Participants will be confident about speaking and teaching in an Easy-to-Read training session. They will also be aware that becoming a good speaker and teacher is a long process, and that the more they train, the better they will become as co-trainers.

## Contents:

This module contains mainly practical exercises. Participants must learn how to provide positive, non-judgemental feedback before starting the actual module. They may be asked to comment on other participants' performances.

Exercises may also be video recorded so that participants can evaluate themselves.

The main focus of this module is on empowerment and horizontal communication, thus on encouraging participants to speak publicly and to give positive feedback about their performances.

- Practical exercises about introducing oneself and their personal story – learning by doing.
- Posture and voice – body exercises and voice training (i.e. singing exercises)
- Stress is normal – knowledge and exercises about stage fright and stage manners.
- Relax! How to cope with stress and anxiety, useful tricks and ideas to use during a presentation.
- Prepare and rehearse! Exercises to prepare for a presentation, rehearsing the presentation in front of family and friends, letting participants know that they will get better in public speaking the more they practise it.
- Some theoretical input about communication barriers and “good” effective speeches, basic rules of public speaking, communication, teaching, and learning methods, and ways of interacting with the audience.
- Finding a personal communication style and learning how to include different communication needs (of both the teacher and the audience)

## How-to

- Include some theoretical information.
- Mainly focus on practical exercises and providing feedback

# Module 3: Digital Skills

## Introduction:

Digital tools are used for nearly all types of communication. Digital tools can provide additional resources (subtitles, visual illustrations) that reinforce the key messages of the course/activity.

This module describes which digital tools future co-trainers should be able to work with. It is beneficial if they already have some basic digital skills like launching a web browser, opening a document, participating in virtual meetings or sending an email.

## Time needed:

Approximately ½ day – longer if participants are unfamiliar with digital tools.

## Material and preparation:

- One computer or tablet for each participant, with all required software (listed below)
- Slides in Easy-to-read language
- Exercises for each software programme

## Intended outcomes:

- Participants will feel at ease with the different types of software and programmes.
- Participants will be able to switch between and combine the different types of software easily.
- Participants will be able to explain how to use these programmes.
- Participants will feel comfortable with using different types of software.

## Contents:

In this module, you will teach your participants how to work with a selection of software and programmes:

- PowerPoint slides/presentation
- Video conferencing software
- Communal note taking tools.
- Video tools

## How-to:

### For each tool

- First, explain how to work with the tool. Prepare slides in Easy-to-read language.



- Provide an example to the participants by modelling the exercise on the software programme.
- Lastly, have the participants do an exercise. Be sure to provide ample time to let the participants familiarise themselves with the software programme.

### Skills to acquire in each software/programme.

- Presentation software: PowerPoint or similar
  - Modify an existing presentation and add speaker notes.
  - Insert text, images or videos into a presentation.
  - Start the presentation.
  - Use presenter mode.
- Video conferencing tool: Zoom or similar.
  - Create an account or use an existing account.
  - Schedule a meeting with or without password and waiting room.
  - Share a conference link.
  - Start the meeting.
    - Admit participants.
    - Monitor microphones + cameras.
    - Use both conferencing software and presentation software.
    - Share the screen.
    - Record the meeting.
    - Monitor chat.
    - End the meeting.
- Video sharing platform: YouTube or similar
  - Start and stop a video.
  - Add subtitles.
  - Play the video full screen.
  - Go back/forward.
  - Adjust the volume.
- Communal note-taking tool: Padlet or similar
  - Open an account or log in.
  - Select a pre-existing document (prefer simple backgrounds for Easy-to-read)
  - Share padlet link.
  - Add and modify a comment.
  - Organise comments.

## Module 4: Easy-to-read knowledge

### Introduction:

This module covers factual knowledge about Easy-to-read, plain language and accessible communication. Participants will gain expertise in the subject area and self-confidence as they acquire this knowledge. In this module, you encourage participants to describe their difficulties and instructors to work closely with them in finding solutions.

## Time needed:

Approximately ½ day

## Material and preparation:

- Accessibility guidelines produced in the CCUV project.
- Training modules produced in the CCUV project.
- Examples of accessible and non-accessible materials
- Slides in Easy-to-read language

## Intended outcomes:

- Participants will feel comfortable with the foundations of the Easy-to-read method. The knowledge gained from this module will leave participants feeling empowered and self-confident.
- Participants will recognise and accept their own limitations: they do not have to be perfect and do not need to know everything, not even about Easy-to-read. They will feel reassured in the knowledge they have gained and will be able to confidently provide input on future training sessions.
- Participants will recognise the expertise that comes with Easy-to-read needs. These participants are experts on comprehensibility. Their support needs are what makes them perfectly suited for the job. Factual knowledge is just a helpful addition to their existing knowledge and experience base.
- Participants will have a clearer picture of their job and tasks as future co-trainers. They will learn that they will never be alone in a training session: other instructors with a wide range of theoretical knowledge will always be present to assist them. While it is helpful for co-trainers to have basic knowledge of the Easy-to-read method, their most important role in future training sessions is to share points of view gained from their personal experiences.

## Contents:

In this module, you will teach your participants background knowledge about:

- Easy-to-read language
- Accessible information
- Communication barriers and how to avoid them.
- Target groups for easy language, reasons for Easy-to-read needs
- Language levels
- What is important in texts, pictures, documents, etc.
- Testing groups and why they are important.
- If feasible and relevant for the group of participants: some legal information, legal right to have access to Easy-to-read information, UN-Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

## How-to:

- Prepare slides in Easy-to-read language about the topics mentioned above. If possible, tailor them to the previous knowledge and experiences of your participants. Take into consideration your participants' needs and do not try to push through all the topics if your participants cannot follow. Factual knowledge is important but is not everything for co-trainers – their personal experience is more relevant.
  - Leave enough time to let the participants brainstorm about their personal experiences. Give them positive feedback about their background and make them feel that they already know a lot. Factual knowledge is just a plus.
  - Include interactive elements like quizzes about Easy-to-read or exercises to raise awareness of what different communication barriers may feel like. You can use several tools from the CCUV toolkit, like the PDF module or the audio module.
  - Make sure to prepare many examples – good ones and bad ones.
  - Include text simplification exercises. You can use the Accessibility Guidelines produced in the CCUV project to teach the Easy-to-read basics. However, make sure to stress that co-trainers do not need to be experts in simplifying texts.
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