

# ICA:UK ToP Trainer Competencies

Revised June 2019



## Introduction

This table of ToP trainer competencies is an update of work done in 1998. It is intended as a practical, user-friendly tool for those on the ToP trainers' journey, and should be used in conjunction with the trainers' briefing notes. The competencies recognise that using ToP methods is part of being able to train them, so facilitation competencies are included.

## Contents

The table is divided into four sections as follows:

1. facilitation competencies
2. training competencies
3. design & planning competencies
4. ToP-related competencies

## Levels of competence

There are three levels of competence related to each dimension and indicator: **aware of**, **competent in**, and **master of**. These levels also relate to stages of the trainers' journey: a trainee trainer needs to be aware of the competencies relevant to that course, a co-trainer should be competent in them, and a lead trainer should have reached the master level.

## How to use the competencies

These competencies form the basis for assessing your ongoing progress. They are intended both for self and peer assessment. You can use them before and/or after training on a course, or at any other time. They can be used by Lead Trainers supporting trainee and co-trainers as well as by those on the journey. They will also be the basis for discussions between any trainee and their mentor. The form can be used by:

- reflecting on your/the trainee's current level relative to each indicator and marking the *current level* box with a 0 if you're just starting, an A if you're aware, a C for competent and an M for Master
- considering & recording action to be taken to develop (either individually or in conversation with peers). Remember that even when you've reached the 'Master' level there's still action that can be taken!
- using a new form each time you self-assess, so you can track your progress
- asking colleagues/mentor to validate your self-assessment if you want to progress to the next level on the Trainer's Journey.

**Trainer's Name:**

**Date of self-assessment:**

**I. Facilitation competencies**

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Assessment</b>	
		<b>Current Level (0, A, C, M)</b>	<b>Action to be taken</b>
Awareness of internationally accepted facilitation competencies	Is aware of the IAF Facilitation competencies and ensuring that facilitation practice is in alignment with those.		
Modelling ToP facilitator behaviour & role	Has clear understanding of, and identifies with, ICA background and philosophy, (the roots of the methods) and ICA:UK values		
	Uses verbal & non-verbal skills appropriately		
	Able to use a variety of questions		
	Is well-prepared for all sessions eg <i>equipment, plans</i>		
	Honours the contribution of all group members eg <i>seeking &amp; recognising contributions</i>		
	Maintains a neutral stance as a facilitator		
	Keeps the group focused on the task in hand eg <i>restating Focus Question</i>		
	Shows flexibility of style, and ability to flex process when necessary eg <i>humour, silence, changes of pace</i>		
	Able to explain abstract concepts and practical situations clearly and effectively eg <i>when giving feedback to participants after practice</i>		
	Able to manage time effectively to meet participants needs and course aims		
	Follows up course with documentation and communication as appropriate eg <i>sending practice Consensus Workshop product to participants</i>		

## 2. Training Competencies

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Assessment</b>	
		<b>Current Level (0, A, C, M)</b>	<b>Action to be taken</b>
Creating a collaborative learning environment	Able to set up and use space appropriately for purpose & group		
	Creates a positive climate of safety and trust for all group members eg <i>active listening, inclusive language</i>		
	Aware of group energy, and able to influence it productively when necessary		
	Manages disruptive and unproductive group behaviour eg <i>recognises and points out disruptions</i>		
	Opens up own training & facilitation skills to group scrutiny eg <i>admits where mistakes have been made</i>		
	Adapts process and content of activities to meet the needs of the group eg <i>short sessions when time pressure</i>		
	Is aware of different learning styles & approaches within the group eg <i>audial/visual/kinaesthetic</i>		
	Is aware of the learning goals of each participant eg <i>relates learning points to participants' expectations</i>		
Able to give feedback to participants in a way that is both constructive & sensitive eg <i>after practice sessions</i>			

## 2. Training Competencies (continued)

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Assessment</b>	
		<b>Current Level (0, A, C, M)</b>	<b>Action to be taken</b>
Effective member of training team	Able to work in a participatory manner with diverse co-trainers eg <i>culture, gender, age, experience</i>		
	Able to give and receive feedback from colleagues eg <i>end of day planning</i>		
	Maintains an awareness of co-trainers' support needs when not facilitating eg <i>for supplementary facilitation</i>		
	Supports the personal development agenda of co-trainers eg <i>in allocation of tasks</i>		
	Able to deal with all the practicalities in running a course eg <i>breaks, sticky walls, liaising with venue staff</i>		
	Takes responsibility for own development as a facilitator & trainer eg <i>maintains knowledge base</i>		
	Keeps an eye on overall course objectives and specific session objectives, and ensures these are met even when methodology is flexed		

### 3. Design/Planning Competencies

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Assessment</b>	
		<b>Current Level (0, A, C, M)</b>	<b>Action to be taken</b>
Designing an appropriate process	Able to use the Participatory Event Design tool to design an appropriate process for the group, whether training or facilitating eg <i>considers group and the diversity of their needs</i>		
	Relates appropriately to clients before during and after the facilitation		
	A varied toolkit, and ways to bridge gaps in it eg <i>able to research other methods when necessary</i>		
Comprehensive Planning	Takes into account all aspects during planning process eg <i>catering, materials</i>		
	Involves colleagues and clients as appropriate during the planning and design		
	Liases with the venue beforehand		

#### 4. ToP-related competencies

*NB There is a continuous flow between the dimensions in this section, so each dimension is a pre-requisite for the next one*

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Assessment</b>	
		<b>Current Level (0, A, C, M)</b>	<b>Action to be taken</b>
Overall understanding of ToP methods	Has experience & knowledge base appropriate to the course and participants eg <i>examples of application of ToP methods</i>		
	Clear about which ToP method best suits which situation		
	Knowledge of other (non-ToP) methods, how they compare and contrast with ToP methods, and able to share them when appropriate eg <i>PA</i>		
	Can reflect on the relative merits and limitations of TOP methods eg <i>examples of situations which do not best suit ToP</i>		
	Able to use & explain Rational & Experiential Aims		
	Awareness of the philosophical underpinnings of the ToP methods and an ability to reference them as required		
Understanding of ORID	Understands the 4 levels and their importance as foundation stones		
Understanding & use of Focused Conversation Method	Understands 4 levels of method eg <i>can give examples</i>		
	Able to facilitate a meaningful Focused Conversation comfortably		
	Can probe group for deeper insights		
Understanding & use of Consensus Workshop Method	Keeps focus on Focus Question		
	Guides group to meaningful clusters & names		
	Allows group to own the result of their work		
Understanding & use of Action planning Method	Holds tension between Victory & current reality		
	Pushes group to articulate a genuine commitment		
	Maintains focus during tasks and calendar		

**4. ToP-related competencies (continued)**

*NB There is a continuous flow between the dimensions in this section, so each dimension is a pre-requisite for the next one*

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Assessment</b>	
		<b>Current Level (0, A, C, M)</b>	<b>Action to be taken</b>
Understanding & use of Participatory Strategic Planning Method	Able to explain the differences between the 4 stages, the rationale behind those differences, and how those stages are facilitated		
	Able to use stories and examples effectively to help participants through the process		
	Able to maintain own and group's focus & commitment throughout the whole process		