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Theater-based training for supporting innovations in enterprises

(THENOVA)

Intellectual output 1:

Feeling, experiencing, and acting: Theater-based training program for trainers in small and medium-sized enterprises

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1. INTRODUCTION

This output presents the training program for trainers in small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) on the use of theater-based methods when designing their training courses and delivering their training sessions to the staff in SMEs.

The training program consists of 2 parts: the curriculum of the training program, which outlines the key data of the training, and the detailed descriptions of the training contents. The latter ones were tested by the THENOVA partnership during the face-to-face training workshop, which was designed and delivered by the professional artists from the network Rhenania (Cologne, Germany).

1.1. Background and introduction into the training

Nowadays, professional artists are successfully discovering new markets towards providing training services to companies (i.e. in personnel development) and are incrementally recognized as innovation drivers for other branches.

The Erasmus+ co-funded project "Theater-based training for supporting innovations in enterprises" (short: THENOVA, www.thenova.eu) aims at exploring potentials of the creative industry for their integration into training services at Europe's enterprises with a specific focus on the needs of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). THENOVA partnership considers performance techniques and approaches used by professional artists as a powerful tool for creating thought-provoking and inspiring training for SMEs staff.

In order to design and deliver theater-based training sessions to company personnel, SME trainers and facilitators should be, first, trained themselves in using a wide range of performative methods. These methods cover a wide range of body, facial, voice techniques, performative interaction with counterparts, (self)-reflection tools etc. This type of theater-based training course, which aims at empowering SME trainers to act as professional artists, is not available yet within the educational portfolios of Europe's training institutions. Thus, THENOVA partnership, consisting of two higher education institutions, two training companies, one companies' network and – last but not least – a professional artists network, developed a training program entitled "Feeling, experiencing, and acting: Theater-based training methods for SME trainers" and tested it with 12 pilot SME trainers. This training program is intended to be a unique educational provision and can be freely used and/or adapted by any Europe's training provider wishing to offer similar training to their customers.

1.2. Target groups

The primary target group of the training program are different types of trainers working in/with SMEs: in-house trainers, external trainers, facilitators, mentors, coaches etc.

In addition, the contents of the training program might be useful for educators working in the vocational education and training, adult education, or higher education sector: they also can benefit from the innovative training methods and receive further inspirations towards innovating their teaching practices through integrating theater-based methods.

1.3 Objective of the training course

The training course aims at boosting skills and competences of SMEs trainers towards designing and delivering theater-based staff training.

1.4. Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the training course, participants (SME trainers) will be able:

- to understand the variety and the pedagogical value of the theater-based methods;
- to identify and select the appropriate theater-based techniques, which fit the context of their training settings;
- to (re)design their own training courses and sessions by including theater-based methods;
- to demonstrate artistic, performance and creative skills when delivering their training sessions;
- to promote positive behavioral changes and innovation spirit of SME staff through theatre-based training.

1.5. Structure and indicative contents of the training

The contents of the training are composed of a range of theater-based methods, which are organized in 5 modules as follows:

- Module 1: Communication/Interpersonal skills
- Module 2: Self-motivation/Leadership/Self-development
- Module 3: Self-awareness
- Module 4: Agile project management /Stress management
- Module 5: Team Building & cooperation

This approach refers to the need to deal with theater-based methods (TBM) not abstractly when designing corresponding training contents, but present them in a few specific

application fields, which reflect the most burning training issues in SMEs. At the same time, the TBMs remain universal and can be applied by any SME trainer in any training situation. Thus, the organization of the TBM in the 5 modules ensures their better visualization in a concrete training situation and demonstrates their transferability to other contexts.

1.6.   Delivery of the training: strategy and methods

The core method for the delivery of the training contents are different theater-based exercises. This means, the training program is expected to be delivered in a very practical manner and in face-to-face format. The interaction between a training facilitator and training participants is therefore an essential element of the delivery strategy. Where applicable, a few theoretical sessions might be advisable to underpin the scientific background of the theater-based methods.

Each module contains exercises, which promote a (few) specific skill(s) of a SME trainer, such as:

- Exercises on stimulating creativity and spontaneity,
- Role playing,
- Improvisation,
- Scripted role playing,
- Speech and storytelling,
- Movement and nonverbal performance,
- Invisible theatre,
- Ensemble exercises (i.e., group dynamic, role change, conflict solution).

The detailed descriptions of the exercises, enriched with the concrete implementation tips and reflection of the pilot participants of the training program, are presented below, in the section "Module descriptions".

1.7. Trainers/facilitators of the training program

Due to the specific theater-based contents of the training program and the practical nature of the delivery strategy, it is highly advisable to engage professional artists as trainers/facilitators. In this manner, new cooperation models between the creative industry, training providers, and SMEs can be established.

1.8. Workload

The estimated workload of the training program is 5 days, or approx. 40 hours.

1.9. Transferability of the training program

The suggested curriculum and training contents of the present program can be used in different ways:
First, educational providers engaged with the delivery of training services to SMEs, can adapt the course materials to their institutional context, include the training program to their portfolio and offer it to SME trainers/facilitators. The contents of the training program are licensed under the Creative Commons License CC BY-SA 4.0 Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International. This license lets others remix, adapt, and build upon this work even for commercial purposes, as long as they credit the authors of this work (partnership of the Erasmus+ project THENOVA Theater-based training for supporting innovations in enterprises, grant no. 2020-1-DE02-KA202-007572), and license their new creations under the identical terms.

Second, the individual descriptions of the exercises can be repeated by enthusiastic SME trainers who wish to try the innovative theater-based methods on their own and implement new techniques in their training.

1.10. The Modules

The training is divided into five modules, which cover the range of applications and whose completion in a course of about one week forms the basis for the training of trainers (for detailed training description see detailed module description). Each module will contain exercises appropriate for promoting specific skills. Normally some exercises might overlap, or promote more than one skill, which is great. The scope of the training is to have a continuity flow, enhancing each day a different skill.

Needs analysis

The module topics were chosen based on qualitative research done in the scope of the project. For this purpose, 43 interviews were conducted, 10 interviews each from Poland (PAIZ), Greece (IDEC) and Austria (FHJ), and 13 from Germany (FHM, Energie Impuls, Rhenania). The interview partners came from a broad range of fields, such as social and technical skills trainers, managerial staff, SME staff and trainees.

The interview data material was evaluated by FHJ staff using a qualitative content analysis.

The results showed that the five most burning topics the interviewees were confronted with in their workplace, were related to the professional background of each person, such as Public Relations, Sales, Human Relations, teaching. The most named topics were:

- Communication: e.g. non-violent communication, effective communication and other communication techniques;
- Digitization: e.g. how to effectively conduct online workshops, in particular, in pandemic times;
- Working in and with teams: e.g. team building, conflict management, stress management;
- Leadership: e.g. development of leadership skills;
- Project management: e.g. agile project management, time management, working with customers.

Concerning the question, which situations or topics would profit most or were most suitable for the use of TBT, three topics were most commonly named:

- Teamwork and team building, also in relation to conflicts;
- Communication training (expression of emotions, negotiations, giving and receiving feedback);
- Presentation techniques.

Based on the results above, the topics of the training modules were defined as follows:

Module 1: Communication/Interpersonal skills

- Introduction to the training,
- Theoretical analysis on communication and theater-based techniques (short),
- Warm-up,
- Ice-breaking exercises,
- Main core of exercises to be specifically developed ,
- Reflection,
- Closing session (mindfulness and relaxing exercises).

Module 2: Self-development and leadership

- Short theoretical analysis on self-motivation and what exactly makes a convincing leader,
- Warm-up,
- Main core of exercises (to be specifically developed),
- Body expression, voice expression, breathing exercises, facial expression, eye contact, emotional contact and awareness,
- Reflection,
- Closing session (mindfulness and relaxing exercises).

Module 3: Self-awareness and camera work

- Theoretical approach: why camera work is so important nowadays,
- Warm-up,

- Main core of exercises specifically developed according to light/video quality, microphone/ audio quality, adequate video presence,
- Reflection,
- Closing session (mindfulness and relaxing exercises).

Module 4: Agile Project management/Stress management
- Short theoretical analysis on time management and stress related issues,
- Warm-up,
- Main core of exercises (to be specifically developed),
- Relaxing exercises, grounding exercises, structuring exercises,
- Reflection,
- Closing session (mindfulness and relaxing exercises).

Module 5: Team Building/ Cooperation
- Theoretical analysis on Team building/ Cooperation and theater-based techniques (short),
- Warm-up,
- Main core of exercises (to be specifically developed),
- Music-based team building, general team building exercises,
- Reflection,
- Closing session (if the participants agree they can present as a team a small piece containing information and practices from the training as a whole).

Responsible Partners for the modules:
- MODULE 1: Communication and interpersonal skills (IDEC)
- MODULE 2: Self-development and leadership (PAIZ)
- MODULE 3: Self-awareness and camera work (FHM)
- MODULE 4: Agile project management & stress management (FHJ)
- MODULE 5: Team building & cooperation (EI OWL)

Coaching and consulting: Kunsthaus Rhenania.

2.   MODULE DESCRIPTIONS

2.1   MODULE 1: COMMUNICATION AND INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

Introduction to the module:

The way we choose to express ourselves, the choice of the words we use, our voice and bodies are the strongest tools we possess to project our ideas in life, not only as professionals, but also as individuals. Before humans developed oral and written speech, we used our bodies and gestures to communicate and collaborate with others and go through everyday challenges.

Since then, civilization has progressed so much, to reach today's – unimaginable for the past –velocity and technological wealth, leading into a world where communication is the key aspect of life.

Today, especially after the pandemic, the world is not as it was. Constant changes and globalisation, travelling and working all over the world, remote working, has made communication and interpersonal skills even more vital. Knowing the keys of communication is the first step to accomplishment and success, professionally and personally.

Having a deep knowledge of how to utilize your communication skills, is an asset that makes you stronger and resilient in any environment you are called to work, or study, or just co-exist in groups of individuals. Our bodies, intellect, our voice, and the way we acknowledge, accept and use them, are our vehicle to communication.

Effective communication leads to stronger teams, to stronger companies or institutions and it is crucial for implementing new ideas and innovation.

Interpersonal skills are important as, the more advanced they are, the better people feel in their working environment, resulting to optimum results and success.

Communication is the core of every business, every relationship, and every element of life. Theater as an art form is the epitome of the communication process. On one level, communication between the actors or performers, and, of course, the communication with the audience, which is sine qua non for theatre. Using theater techniques, mentality, ideas, and exercises to warm up our bodies, voices, and above all brain and sentiment, can be eye opening, reveal new paths of communication and lead us to great discoveries about others and most importantly ourselves.

Module learning objectives:
-   To enhance effective communication between team members,
-   To train self-reflection and self-awareness,
-   To understand the power of body language,
-   To be aware of the signals we send during communication,
-   To build a coordinated team,
-   To use ones whole body and brain mindfully.

Estimated workload:
8 hours, depending on number of participants.

Training methods:
- Improvisation,
- Making choices for the way we see and perform a character,
- Body warm-up.

For suitable exercises see Chapter 3 Exercises:
A1 Exercise Walking in circle and criss-cross,
A3 Exercise Zip Zap Boing,
C1 Exercise Talking Gibberish,
C2 Exercise "Yes and …" (Magic/Mighty Fox),
D1 "Schmidt Scenes".

2.2 MODULE 2: SELF–DEVELOPMENT AND LEADERSHIP

Introduction to the module:
Being constantly alert to the new knowledge and theoretical concepts that are being published and concentrating on their own development is at the core of trainers' profession. Trainers are not only assisting the trainees in acquiring new skills and knowledge but also quite often become role models hence they have a leadership role to fulfil.

Module learning objectives:
- To get the practice of and internalize exercises that can be used in self-development and leadership modules,
- To experience how body work can teach us lessons on leadership,
- To experiment with exercises to find their own ideas on where and for what training objectives they can be used.

Estimated workload (in hours):
8 hours, depending on the number of learners as this will influence the duration of exercises D1 and D2.

Training methods:
- Working with the body,
- Role play,

- Discussion,
- Improvisation,
- Group activities,
- Theoretical introduction.

For suitable exercises see Chapter 3 Exercises:
A1 Exercise Walking in circle and criss-cross,
B1 Voice Warm-up,
B2 Exercise Keep the tone and increase the loudness of the voice,
D1 "Schmidt Scenes",
D2 "King's/Queen's Game".

2.3   MODULE 3: SELF-AWARENESS AND CAMERA WORK

Introduction to the module:
Authenticity is just as important a factor for the persuasiveness and credibility of a person and the effect of the (innovative) content he is saying as the purely technical correctness of messages and communications. A safe and self-confident form of conveying content is of great importance, even more when working with the media. Trainers conduct exercises on self-awareness and help trainees reflect their impact and improve the impression they leave due to their verbal and nonverbal behaviour to the people they communicate to.

Module learning objectives:
- To know the strengths and weaknesses of the own voice and to know how others realize the voice,
- To manage one's own voice (i.e. extend the reflectoric breathing speaking words and sentences, pausing and intonation),
- To practice a confident appearance in front of the camera with a convincing use of the hands, facial expression and postures as means of expression of one's own authentic personality,
- To use eye contact to reach the audience more effectively,
- To practice speaking clearly without filler words and empty phrases.

Estimated workload (in hours):
8 hours

Training methods:

- Working with the body,
- Voice exercises,
- Exercise on self- and group awareness,
- Improvisation,
- Develop and play a scene,
- Reflection, feedback and discussion,

For suitable exercises see Chapter 3 EXERCISES:
A1 Exercise Walking in circle and criss cross,
A4 Stand upright and feel your weight,
B3 Further Voice Exercises,
C1 Exercise Talking Gibberish,
C2 Exercise "Yes and ..." (Magic/Mighty Fox).

2.4   MODULE 4: AGILE PROJECT MANAGEMENT & STRESS MANAGEMENT

Introduction to the module:
Agile project management focuses on flexibility and adaptation. Agility is a characteristic of an organization's management to be flexible and proactive. Furthermore, an agile project management is characterized to be dynamic, instead of static, in order to being able to introduce necessary changes.
The need to use organizational skills in our daily lives, but especially in our professional lives and in the framework of agile management, is manifold.
Awareness about the interaction of several players, teamwork and cooperation are crucial. Above all situations are challenging, in which it is necessary to find:

1) coordination with others to solve complex organizational processes,
2) to find solutions for problems concerning complex content,
3) to coordinate with stakeholders to find groups on contentious issues,
4) to overcome crises, and
5) to find the appropriate communication for all these different challenges.

Module learning objectives:
- To practice through exercises how to identify needs of participants and situations,
- To create situations, in which participants are able to better understand their roles and behaviour,
- To experiment with exercises to practice open and solution-oriented communication,
- To practice thinking out of the box through specific exercises.

Estimated workload (in hours):
8 hours.

Training methods:
- Improvisation exercise (Magic Fox, Mission Impossible),
- Role play (market, queen/king),
- Awareness Exercise (leading exercise).

For suitable exercises see Chapter 3:
A2 Exercise: Walking with closed eyes being led by another person,
C2 Exercise "Yes and…" (Magic/Mighty Fox),
C4 Mission impossible,
D2 King's/Queen's Game,
D3 The weekly market.

2.5   MODULE 5: TEAM BUILDING AND COOPERATION

Introduction to the module:
Team Building is intended to promote a positive working atmosphere and support trusting cooperation. Increased willingness to cooperate and team spirit also increase the efficiency of the team. Dissatisfaction in the cooperation is to be prevented.

Module learning objectives:
- To improve the ability to anticipate,
- To enhance mindfulness of the pace and input of others,
- To increase spontaneity and reaction to group communication,
- To enhance self- and group awareness by concentrating of the behaviour of the others.

Estimated workload (in hours):
8 hours.

Training methods:
- Working with the body,
- Improvisation,
- Group activities,
- Exercise on self- and group awareness,

- Reflection, feedback and discussion.

For suitable exercises see Chapter 3:
A1 Exercise Walking in circle and criss-cross,
A3 Exercise Zip Zap Boing,
B2 Exercise: Keep the tone and increase the loudness of the voice,
C3 Exercise Typewriter,
C5 Machine building.

3. EXERCISES

The exercises described in this publication are widely used in theater schools and theater-based training. Unless otherwise stated (see the respective exercises), they are commonly in use.

For users convenience, we categorised the exercises into 4 groups as follows:

Group A   Basic: Body and Group Awareness
Group B   Basic: Voice Exercises
Group C   Improvisation Exercises
Group D   Short Scenes/Basic Acting

Below the exercises under each group are presented in details by explaining how to perform them. The important part of the description of each exercise is **Personal feedback of trainees**: as we explained previously, the exercises were practiced by the THENOVA group during the 5-day workshop offered by professional artists from the network Rhenania. After each exercise, THENOVA members shared their feedback with trainers and peers about the impact produced by exercises. These personal impressions might help SME trainers to adjust their own training sessions and anticipate possible risks and challenges when performing their own exercises.

A   BASIC: BODY and GROUP AWARENESS

A1 Walking in circle and criss-cross

Reference:
Widely used exercise. Structured by Frank Baumstark.

Objective of the exercise:
- **Self-awareness**: be present. Be in tune with the group and quickly grasp the changes.
- **Group awareness**: useful for practicing group awareness and team building by concentrating on the behaviour of the others. Practicing concentration on the success of the group and not on promoting your own skills and being clever; practice feeling responsible for the group.

Description of the exercise:

Location:
Enough room and space for the number of participants to move freely, unobstructed space without objects in the way.

Instructions:
The trainees form **a circle** walk around in rounds, one after the other. Then they get different tasks like:

- **Distance**: maintain the same distance from another person all the time (leave no gaps between each person).
- **Speed**: maintain the same speed in the group; vary the speed, go faster/slower.
- **Shape**: The circle should always look like a circle, which means that everyone must be aware not to be left behind, or rushed, so the shape of the circle looks as perfect as possible.
- **Rhythm:** All participants try to keep the same rhythm and leave no gaps between them. Then the trainer instructs the group that one participant, not named or instructed specifically, should change the rhythm of their walking, turn it to running, or even jumping, walking slower or even creating a weird or funny walk. The rest of the group should follow as quickly as possible, which means that they are all aware of their surroundings and the choices of others. Anyone can change the rhythm, or way of walking, but the circle should always be a circle, and everyone needs to be aware of that.
- **Surface**: walk as if the ground is/feels different, e.g. walk on a hot surface (the types of surface change – cold, beach, grass, forest, mud, glue, lava).

The trainer gives directions **to move around the room freely**. The trainees are spread out in the room with enough space to move around, they walk criss-cross the room. Then the trainer gives the trainees different tasks, such as:

- **Space**: try to fill the room evenly, mind that there are no holes.
- **Start and stop**: the trainer instructs the trainees that the group is directed by clapping, the group organizes itself. When one person (not named specifically) claps, all participants stop. Then one person (not named specifically) starts to walk and the other persons continue walking as well. When another person claps everybody stops. Once one person starts to walk, everybody else starts walking again.
  - **Variation**: when there is a clap, one person (or two or three persons) keeps walking nevertheless – the group members need to be aware how many persons are walking, if it is the correct number. If several persons are walking and only two should be moving, they should organise themselves without verbal communication and see who continues walking and who stops.
- **Interaction**:
  - Say hello with your eyes when you meet someone;

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- o Say hello with your eyes when you meet someone expressing a certain feeling (e.g. joy, anger);
- o Wave goodbye when you meet someone;
- o Wave goodbye when you meet someone expressing a certain feeling (e.g. happiness, sadness).
- **Ball:** the trainer introduces balls (one at first, then more) to the group. The trainees should catch the ball and then throw the ball to another person. All the balls should be in movement and not on the floor.
After a few attempts, the trainer raises the awareness that it is important to make eye contact before throwing.

Questions for reflection and feedback, e.g.:
- How did it feel from one task to another? Did you experience any changes?
- Why did your experience change?
- What did you learn about yourselves?
- Where can you apply this knowledge in everyday work situations?

Estimated duration of the exercise:
Up to 10 - 15 minutes.
The time depends on the number of variations the trainer chooses. Each variation may last between 30 and 60 seconds but the time is adjusted to whether most/all trainees perform a given task and the group is in tune.

Transferability of the exercise:
The exercise is useful for other training fields such as (nonverbal) Communication, Decision Making, Team building, Team work or Stress management.

Personal feedback of trainees on this exercise:

Voices from participants:
"A very easily applicable exercise that can become the base of a communication-oriented training. When participants walk in a circle, having to keep the same pace in the beginning, they strengthen their team's sense of communication, and open all their senses to the group's rhythm. When the pace changes, which can happen by one person, the whole group will adjust which means that everyone understands the difference in rhythm, watches the others, receives their signal and in a way responds by changing his/her rhythm, too. If at the same time two people start changing the pace, it might cause some confusion, but again the group will self-balance and choose one of the two suggestions, by non-verbally communicating, of course. The feeling of being able to communicate through pace, rhythm creates a strong bond in the group and enhances our sense of communication".

"Consider the advice of the trainer: "Don't try to be too clever, keep it simple and stay in the rhythm of the group". Once this was reached, the exercise worked very well, but without, the group failed. So it arouses the responsibility for the group. Once you stop concentrating on yourself and focus on the group, the exercise works very well".

"The exercise brings a need of being alert and being present while also having fun in a serious way".

"It was important to do the exercise with the whole brain and body focused whilst enjoying and feeling content. This balance is important in training and life".

"Very stimulating exercise that requires everyone to be alert and present. Sometimes it can easily become just a joke, as people tend to do extreme stuff sometimes, just for fun. Even that, needs to be taken into account, and the group must follow, or propose something new, so as to relax and find some normality. It is hard to be focused on both the pace, the changes and the shape of the circle. That is why this exercise is perfect for the brain".

A2 Walking with closed eyes being led by another person

Reference:
Widely used exercise. Structured by Frank Baumstark.

Objective of the exercise:
 – **Trusting and leadership:** To experience in a very personal and concrete way different aspects of leadership, e.g. to trust anyone but myself, to let go of control, to share responsibility or give it to others.

Description of the exercise:
Location:
A big enough room is needed. The room should be spacious, allowing the trainees to walk freely, not too many objects in the way. There should be some free space, so that participants can move around and don't bump into each other. The room should be familiar to the participants, so that they feel safe.

Further remarks:
Some level of trust is needed to do the exercise. Therefore, we wouldn't recommend doing this exercise at the beginning of the training.
Participants should be fine with touching each other.

Instructions:
The trainer asks the trainees to form pairs and explains that one person in each pair will be leading the other one, while the led person will have their eyes closed. The trainer explains that they can try walking at a changing pace, change directions etc. whenever they are sure that the lead person is ready for the change.

Preparation: To start the exercise the trainee that is the leading one takes the arm of the lead one in his/her hands and "weights" it in his/her hands, trying to loosen it up.

The trainer demonstrates the position that will be the starting point for walking.
The led person closes his/her eyes and stands one step behind the person leading. The member of the pair who is the leader, slowly takes his/her partner's arm and gently puts it on his/her shoulder. It is important that the person with shut eyes, leaves his/her hand with all its weight on the shoulder of their leading partner, so they can both feel connected. They shouldn't speak to each other but communicate in a nonverbal way.

The trainer instructs the pairs to try out the position and whenever they are ready, they can start the walk. The leading person is responsible for the other person and must make sure that they are both safe when moving around the space, not bumping into other pairs performing the exercise, or into an object like chairs, tables or the wall.

The leader walks through the room with different modes, changing rhythm and directions: slowly and with a faster pace, forward and backwards, sideways, stopping and moving on. The more trust is established the more changes in pace can occur, leading even to some kind of dancing.

After a few minutes the trainer gives instructions that the pair should change the roles and the person leading is now in the position of being lead.
   - o **Variation**: When the trainer sees that the pairs are comfortable walking, s/he stops them one by one and encourages them to change. Each person in the pair should get to lead and be led.

At the end of the exercise, the pair reflects about their experiences. They should exchange feedback concentrating on their feelings and emotions (also instructed by the trainer); see reflection questions below.

Questions for reflection and feedback:
   − How did you feel when you lead with open eyes?
   − How did you feel with your eyes closed?
   − Did you feel you and your partner communicated clearly? How did you know that the understanding was there?

- Did you feel you could trust your partner? If yes, what did you and s/he do to achieve that? If not – what stopped you? Was it on your side or your partner's side?
- Did the person leading give the time to the partner with closed eyes to understand the changes in direction? Was it important to any of you? Why?
- Were you both thoughtful of each other? Why/why not? What was the reason?
- Did you both work together in harmony? Were there obstacles in your communication process and why? What obstructed the communication?
- Who felt better as the leading person? Why do you think that was?

Estimated duration of the exercise:

Approximately 10-15 minutes (with the change of roles) + time for reflection and feedback. The duration depends on the group and on how many time the participants would like to perform it.

Transferability of the exercise:

The exercise can be performed during training in SMEs companies, to boost the connection between group members, and also show the trust we need to have in colleagues but also in ourselves.
This exercise could also be used to work on the topic of cooperation, as well as on (non)verbal communication. It can be valuable in empathy, mindfulness training as being present here and now and communicating with your partner.

Personal feedback of trainees on this exercise

Voices from participants:

"The questions for feedback and reflection allowed us to obtain important feedback and look into our own selves, proving and showing the way for more efficient communication - first through the bodies and overall in our professional and personal lives".

"The exercise combines the feeling of freedom you experience with your eyes closed, also makes you very sensitive about the other person - which means communication, as you detect the changes in rhythm, direction, speed, and you have to follow. Besides the exercise itself the feedback after it is performed by everyone is crucial".

"The experience of being trusted and having complete trust; you need to be emphatic and totally concentrated on the person you lead; you are responsible for his/her safety and comfort because only then they can experience the freedom of not having any responsibility".
"Useful for leadership trainings to demonstrate the freedom that comes from sharing responsibility or giving it to others; good way to check if we can trust anyone but ourselves. Great experience in letting go of control".

"During this exercise space and possibilities seem endless. It is an amazing new sensation that frees our brain and opens all our senses. The connection between the pair is strong and creates a significant bond".

"Participants will have different experiences in this exercise and can reflect on their needs and preferences: one person feels more comfortable being lead, another prefers to be in the leading role. Furthermore, the issue of distance and closeness can be explored through this exercise. If the person being led is too close to the leader, the leader doesn't have room for manoeuvre and might feel constrained. And also, for the person being lead, some space between him/her and the leader is needed, in order to be able to move in a comfortable way and not to feel restrained".

Recommended sources for self-studies:

Brownlee, D., 2019. *5 Reasons Why Trust Matters On Teams*. [online] Forbes. Available at: https://www.forbes.com/sites/danabrownlee/2019/10/20/5-reasons-why-trust-matters-on-teams/?sh=4dd3ae502d60

A3 Zip Zap Boing

Reference:
Widely used exercise. Structured by Gregor Weber.

Objective of the exercise:

- Strengthening self- and group awareness by concentrating of the behaviour of the others.

Description of the exercise:

Location:
A big enough room is needed so that participants can form a circle.

Instructions:
The group lines up in a circle. Participants form a pistol with their hands and point to the person standing next to them, turn their upper body in their direction and say "Zip". Additionally, eye contact is sought. The next person continues to do the same. So the "Zip" is passed on through the circle from one person to the next.

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Next steps: At any time, a change of direction is possible by saying "Boing" with a defensive gesture. By saying "Zap", a jump through the circle is initiated, to pass it to any person in the circle.

The goal of the exercise is to practice a steady rhythm. To do so, focus and concentration of each person in the circle is necessary. For a group with some experience, the rhythm can be increasingly faster.

Estimated duration of the exercise:
10 minutes.

Transferability of the exercise:
Communication, Team building, Flexibility, Adaptability, Team work.

Personal feedback of trainees on this exercise:

Voices from participants:
"It is difficult at first to concentrate fully on this actually simple exercise. Especially the changes in direction that are possible at any time require a high level of concentration and focus on the essentials".

A4 Stand upright and feel your weight

Reference:
Widely used exercise. Structured by Gregor Weber.

Objective of the exercise:
– to Increase own body and breathing awareness.

Description of the exercise:

Location:
Enough space for each person (and pair) to stand comfortable and not to close to each other.

Instructions:
The trainer describes and shows how to stand upright and breathe deeply. The trainees copy and feel their own body, weight and breath.

The next step is to get together in pairs. One person lifts the hand (and later arm) of the partner and feels the weight of it. Then they gently dropping the arm again. The partner should not control his/her arm or stop breathing in a relaxed way.

Feedback discussion will reveal how people felt differently while doing the exercise, what effects it had and how they can use that in other situations.

Estimated duration of the exercise:
10 - 15 minutes.

Transferability of the exercise:
It could be useful in all contexts where it is helpful to be present and have a strong body language as communication, presentation, discussions, convincing, presenting ideas and innovations.

Personal feedback of trainees on this exercise:

Voices from participants:
"These basic exercises have an effect of relaxation and awareness. It is surprising how different it feels to stand real upright and how this affects the communicative setting while speaking. This is very helpful to feel connected with your own body, understand your thoughts, and what stops you from being actually present. Even though they sound simple, they actually contain a lot of thought/wisdom. They are both relaxing, and make you aware of yourself, enhance a feeling of being present, and also help you understand how others see you and how you see yourself".

B   BASIC: VOICE EXERCISES

Reference:
Widely used exercises. Structured and described by Signe Zurmühlen.

B1 Voice Warm-Up

Objective of the exercise:
- To warm up one's voice and through becoming more articulate to increase the feeling of self-confidence,
- To better control one's voice and improve a clear articulation.

Description of the exercise:
The trainer can use one, two or three parts of this exercise.
The trainer introduces this exercise and encourages the trainees to practice it daily and also before public appearances.

- **Yawning:**

The trainees are encouraged to start yawning. Tell the trainees to just yawn in a really detailed way. With sound, please! And don't forget to use your whole body. Stretch and yawn with sound. This will widen all the spaces which your body needs to create sounds.
Next the trainer introduces variations, saying "start yawning with a sound", when you need to make a sound all parts of your body responsible for sound emission are activated, so use your whole body, stretch and yawn with a sound.

- **Tongue twisters:**

The trainer distributes print outs with tongue twisters explaining that with tongue twisters one can warm up their voice and improve articulation at the same time. S/He encourages everyone to try to speak the tongue twisters as flawlessly as possible. When they become quite good at it, they should increase the speed and to try to say the tongue twisters several times in a row.

Sample of Tongue Twisters:
- How much wood would a woodchuck?
- Chuck if a woodchuck could chuck wood?
- Swan swam over the sea, Swim, swan, swim! Swan swam back again Well swum, swan!
- To begin to toboggan first buy a toboggan, but don't buy too big a toboggan. Too big a toboggan is too big a toboggan to buy to begin to toboggan.
- She saw Sharif's shoes on the sofa. But was she so sure those were Sharif's shoes she saw?
- I saw Susie sitting in a shoe shine shop.
- Where she sits she shines, and where she shines she sits.
- The thirty-three thieves thought that they thrilled
- the throne throughout Thursday.
- Three witches watch three swatch watches.
- Which witch watches which swatch watch?
- One-one was a race horse.
- Two-two was one too.
- One-one won one race.
- Two-two won one too.
- A skunk sat on a stump and thunk the stump stunk,
- But the stump thunk the skunk stunk.

- Betty Better bought some butter. But she said: This butter's bitter! If I put it in my boughter, it will make my boughter bitter! So she bought some better butter. Better than the bitter butter. To make the bitter butter better.
- Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers. Did Peter Piper pick a peck of pickled peppers? If Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers, where's the peck of pickled peppers Peter Piper picked?

- **Cork**:

The trainer distributes corks (from wine bottles, disinfect them before!) to trainees. Instruct the participants to take the cork between the teeth and try to say their tongue twister. They should try to pronounce the words as clearly as possible. Next, s/he encourages them to try again without the cork. They should be able to notice that their pronunciation is much clearer and more precise.

Equipment:
- tongue twisters printed out x the number of trainees,
- corks – the number reflecting the number of trainees + 2.

Estimated duration of the exercise:
Approx. 15 -30 minutes.

Questions for reflection and feedback:
- Did you experience any changes when moving from one task to another?
- In what situations and work contexts could these exercises be helpful to you?

Transferability of the exercise:
Good voice control and clear articulation are essential for clear communication and necessary for everyone who speaks in front of an audience, be it lectures, courses or negotiations so it can be used during public speaking courses, individual preparation for meetings, making speeches etc.

It is useful in all situations when voice is needed: presentation, negotiation, convincing, selling, innovation discussion, short, in all communication purposes.

Personal feedback of trainees on this exercise:

Voices from participants:
"It was amazing to me how clearly you articulate automatically after trying to make yourself understood with a cork between your teeth. I will definitely use this exercise in preparation for my next lecture in front of a larger audience".

"Tongue twisters are always fun but also reveal the importance of the rhythm, as if you got in rhythm and in tune with the words, things become much easier".

"It's a good and very simple exercise to warm up your voice. You need nor further material as everyone always has his material with him/her. So you can do it almost everywhere".

B2 Keep the tone and increase the loudness of the voice

Objective of the exercise:
- To improve group awareness.

Description of the exercise:
The trainer instructs a group (at least 3 persons) to start singing in one tone. S/He starts and sets the tone, and the trainees are to follow.

S/He explains that the idea is to try to connect to other trainees around by being aware of one's own breath and the breathing pattern of others. The trainer instructs that the tone should always stay at the same level and that the trainees should try to "compensate" their partners.

In the next round one of the trainees can set the tone.

Estimated duration of the exercise:
10 minutes maximum.

Transferability of the exercise:
Presentation skills, stress management.

Questions for reflection and feedback:
- How was it for you?
- Was it easy/difficult?
- What made it easy/difficult?
- What tactics did you use to follow the tone?
- What do you think allowed the group to sing in one tone at last?
- What kind of learning can you derive from that experience that you can apply to group work?

Personal feedback of trainees on this exercise:

Voices from participants:
"This is one of the voice exercises that I consider valuable for team building processes. It is an exhilarating feeling that a group adjusts itself almost intuitively to a pitch, volume or harmony without guidance. Both the self-confident singing of a tone and the constant readiness to pay attention to the group and to deviate from their own tone or pitch or their own selected volume in order to serve the group sound is required here".

"This exercise can be hard for people who are not musically trained, or are a bit tone deaf, like myself, so the important thing here is to accept everyone in the group, and try to assist them in order to achieve harmony. It also shows on a more practical level, that maybe we are not all effective in some aspects, but through cooperation we may become better and learn".

"After these vocal exercises, you immediately notice that the vocal range is expanding and that has to do with the relaxation of the entire vocal muscles, I assume. You do these exercises again and again for free as part of your voice training and as a warm-up exercise".

Recommended sources for self-studies:
Haas, M., & Mortensen, M. (2016). The Secrets of Great Teamwork: Collaboration has become more complex, but success still depends on the fundamentals. *Harvard Business Review*.

B3 Further voice exercises
Well known exercises for voice and singing training.

For acting not only our body is important, but also the voice. Below a few simple exercises are presented to warm up the voice.

Breath:
Put your hands on your belly and breathe in. Try to let the breath flow as deeply as possible. Try to breathe into your hands.
Inhale, pause briefly and exhale again.
Repeat the exercise 4 - 8 times.

The next small exercise is important for articulation and voice support. Say the letters P, T, K in quick succession.
Now put your hand on your diaphragm, which is the big muscle near your belly. Feel the movement on your hand. Try to use the pressure from the diaphragm.

Elevator:
This exercise will help stabilize the range of the voice.
Imagine your voice is an elevator and someone wants to take it from the first floor to the top floor. Use the letter „M" for this.
There are elevators that are very unstable and wobbly, you know, where you wonder if you're going to get there in one piece.
And there are these new, modern elevators that go up safely and naturally. Try to be that kind of elevator!
Up and back down again, repeat the exercise 3 - 6 times.

Whop:
This exercise aims to combine sound and vocal support.
Imagine you have a ball in your hand and you force it onto the floor so that it bounces against the wall on the opposite side. Take the force from the diaphragm and say the word „whop" while doing it.
Use the pressure from your diaphragm!
Can you feel the belly move?

Vocal fold massage:
In this exercise it is very important that a person is completely relaxed.
Stand completely relaxed and release all tension in your body. Feel your facial muscles and let them go.
Now quietly let a "www" fall out of your body, without any effort or pressure. Try the same with a soft "sssssss", followed by a "jjjjjjjjj".
If that works without any effort at all, let's try small arcs:
"Wwww-Wwww-Wwww"; "Ssss-Ssss-Ssss"; "Jjjjjj-Jjjjjj-Jjjjj" .
Don't build up pressure, just let the sound come.
Reference: Ien Svea Bäumler.

The Sandwich:
This exercise is like a massage for the voice.
Imagine you are eating a very, very tasty sandwich. The sandwich is so delicious that you can't hide it anymore. Say "mhmmm" and feel how delicious the sandwich is.

The crumbs:
That was a delicious sandwich! But wait, what's that? Uh oh: you've got crumbs in your teeth.
Search inside of your mouth for crumbs with your tongue. Try to reach every little corner and make sure there are no more crumbs in your mouth.

The race car:
Whew! Now you're relieved. So much so that you let your lips flutter for a moment in relaxation! Oh, this sound reminds you of something: You used to make this sound as a child, when you played race car or moped.
Flutter your lips with a sound and change the pitch.

B4 Voice Emotions/Voice Colours

Training context: Awareness, Self-Awareness, Communication

Introduction:
When you talk to other people (employees, customer managers), it is very important that you are aware of how things you say will come across to your counterpart. Shouting angrily at someone when you want to praise him/her will probably not convey the intended message, the same way than trying to explain to someone while laughing that you are dissatisfied with his/her work.

How you say something can be just as important as **what** you say.
And that's why it is important to be able to consciously control the own voice.

Emotions:
We all have different voices and that's a good thing, because that's how we know who we are talking to, even if we can't see the other person.
Our voices are as individual as our fingerprints. This is because we all have different bodies and therefore different sound spaces, vocal cords, mouths and tongues to form sounds and tones. With our voice we can show others not only who we are, but also how we feel, what situation we are in.
That's why take a little excursion into the world of voice emotions or voice colours. For this we will have a look at the most important or main emotions, such as:

- Joyful,
- Anxious,
- Angry,
- Disgusted,
- Sad,
- In love,
- Excited,
- Ashamed,

- self-confident,
- Insecure.

We recognize these emotions quickly by facial expressions, posture, movements. But do we also recognize them only by their voice?

We have built a small "box" here, so that you can no longer see someone, but only hear them.

And we take a completely neutral sentence: **"The man is walking with the dog on the street."**

Who wants to go into the box and say this sentence in one of our emotions: A volunteer chooses an emotion (which he doesn't tell) and goes into the box. Then the volunteer says the sentence "The man is walking with the dog in the street" in your emotion.

What does it depend on how our voice works?

How can we consciously create and control such an emotion?

For this, below are the most important factors that have an impact on the effect of the voice:

- Pitch,
- Speed,
- Volume,
- Rhythm/melody,
- Special characteristics.

Someone who is very self-confident, for example, usually speaks very slowly, loudly, deeply and fluently.

Someone who is anxious or nervous, on the other hand, tends to speak high, softly and haltingly. Choose an emotion again and fill in the following worksheets:

- Who would like to tell us about their emotions now?
- What could it have been?
- What are the characteristics you wrote down? Do the others agree?

Situations:

What situation is your character in?

The situation has a big impact on your voice. For example, if one's character is in a hurry and stressed, he will speak differently than if he is totally relaxed or bored.

Think about a situation your character is in.

Possible situations:
- The person is running late and trying to catch a bus;
- The person is lying in the sun by the pool;

- The person is about to give an important speech;
- The person just found out that their house burned down.

Now ask another volunteer to tell about the sentence in one of the emotions and in one situation. What emotion was involved here?
What situation might he/she have been in?
What is the resolution?

Homework:
When you get back home, pay attention to what emotions actors convey in movies and how they do it. Or listen more closely to politicians, celebrities and colleagues!

C   IMPROVISATION EXERCISES

C1 Talking Gibberish
Gibberish is also called jibber-jabber or gobbledygook, and is speech that is (or appears to be) nonsense. It may include speech sounds that are not actual words, or language games and specialized jargon that seems nonsensical to outsiders.

Reference:
Widely used exercise. Structured and described by Signe Zurmühlen.

Objective of the exercise:
- To improve nonverbal communication skills by sending content without meaningful words,
- To express contents and emotions without words,
- To communicate with all means possible, besides actual words.

Description of the exercise:
1. Trainees are told to create a gibberish language by walking around in the room and trying different sorts of tones for the gibberish until they find a gibberish language, which feels good for them and does not resemble a national or other language. They should use sounds, humming, noises, anything they can imagine besides actual words.
2. Smalltalk in Gibberish: Talk in pairs or in small groups using only gibberish, your made-up language, your body and facial expressions, everything but actual words.
3. Telling jokes in Gibberish.
4. Scene play in Gibberish.

Estimated duration of the exercise:
5-10 minutes for each part above (1- 4) up to 60 minutes for the whole series (depending on the number of trainees).

Transferability of the exercise:
This exercise is suitable in every communication situation in which nonverbal communication is an important factor.
Even though this exercise in the beginning seems like a total lack of communication, it actually functions as the ultimate one. By talking gibberish in groups, the participants are called to use every nonverbal/ text/ normal language means they have to send their signal to the other person.
If you ban words, the whole body, facial expressions, ways to show feelings, gestures, pantomime comes in to show that communication has so many different elements. The participants can pair up in teams of two, and only through Gibberish try to make their partner understand what they want. Establishing a subject, simple in the beginning and maybe more complicated as the exercise progresses, they will sharpen their communication skills.

Examples of subjects:
   – I want to leave early from the office.
   – I did not manage to finish my tasks.
   – Can you help me as my computer is stuck?
   – Do you want to meet after work?
   – I am very happy as my project is going well.

Personal feedback of trainees on this exercise:
Voices from participants:
"Sometimes it is hard to come up with a language that does not sound similar to your native language, or fall in the trap of mimicking accents. It requires creativity and letting go of being too serious or pretentious, like going back to your childhood, where most kids had languages like that, or used them between them for fun. It is fun but also difficult, it looks like a game, but enables the trainee to be creative and use all their expressive tools and means. Nevertheless, it really is fun afterwards and it shows how you can use your body language and expressions to communicate and send your signal to the other person even if you say "nothing meaningful". It is also great to listen to the different gibberish styles of different people".

 "I found Gibberish a bit hard in the beginning, as I felt really self-aware and a bit embarrassed, I was not very creative in this exercise, I think, but it shows how you can use

your body language and expressions to communicate, and send your signal to the other person. It was also great to listen to the different gibberish styles of everyone. I really enjoyed the tongue twisters, as your brain should be very present but your body too, so you succeed. They are always fun but also reveal the importance of the rhythm, as if you got in rhythm and in tune with the words, things became much easier."

C2 "Yes and …" (Magic/Mighty Fox)

Reference:
Widely used exercise. Structured by Frank Baumstark.

Objective of the exercise:
To practice:
- reacting spontaneously on the answer of the communication partner,
- accepting the offer of your partners and building on their comment to make it bigger, not to stick on the own topic,
- active listening,
- thinking in an alternative way without falling into counter-opinion.

Description of the exercise:
The trainer announces an improvisation exercise as follows:
- The trainees come to the "stage" in twos. Their goal will be to have a conversation where every player starts a sentence with "Yes, and…".
- After the first round the trainer may encourage the trainees by making comments such as "Accept your partner's offers", "Make her/his/yours bigger", "Take it as it comes", "Be open", "Don't stick to your story", "Go with the flow".
- A group of up to 6 participants have the task of conducting a conversation in alternation by contributing each one sentence in the row.
- The topic of conversation can be free or chosen at random by cards with a topic written on it: topics in the field of gossip-talk, science, sport, politics etc.

As an alternative the exercise can be extended:
- Two trainees get a note with a theme each. The challenge is that everyone gets a different keyword and they don't get to know the other one. The Keywords could be "lemon tree", "you are in love with your partner", "nothing", "you have a hangover", "you don't believe what the other person is saying" etc. After a quick look at the note, the person should play a scene.

Estimated duration of the exercise:

10 minutes for one run.
In total, approx. 20 minutes (depending on the number of trainees).

Transferability of the exercise:
It can be applied for:
- all challenging communication settings when spontaneous reactions are needed like negotiations, conflicts, developing ideas, change management, innovation,
- improving spontaneity and reaction to group communication,
- a teamwork exercise.

Personal feedback of trainees on this exercise:
During this exercise, people often notice that they are spinning a story in their head and preparing for their next part. This is of little use, however, because the next participant, who spins the story further, can give the story a completely different turn and their own anticipation of the story is irrelevant. That can reveal how important it is to be open and present in communication situations. Ss the story can have many twists and turns it is relevant how ready and prepared we need to be in order to adjust.
Participants learn that insisting on one's own story is a hindrance to the overall outcome and that openness to the ideas of others and linking to these is beneficial.
It encourages spontaneous response. So the exercise stimulates group awareness.

Voices from participants:
"During this exercise, I noticed that you are spinning a story in your head and preparing for your part. This is of little use, however, because the next participant, who spins the story further, can give the story a completely different turn and their own anticipation of the story was irrelevant. That shows me how important openness is in communication. An exercise that showed us how open and present we should be in order to create a story. How many twists and turns the story can have, and how ready and prepared we need to be in order to adjust."

C3 Typewriter

Reference:
Widely used exercise.

Objective of the exercise:
- To find the best solution to assist the group and create a full sentence,
- To practice concentration on the team's success,
- To learn giving up on promoting your own ideas (also self-image and personal objectives) when the group result is at stake.

Description of the exercise:

The trainees stay in a circle and one after the other says/adds only one word, each after the other in order to create a coherent phrase respectively meaningful sentences. The simpler version of this exercise is that the participants add their word, as their position in the circle. At the end of each sentence the person finishing the sentence has to say "Period". At the beginning of the exercise the trainer takes the initiative and says "Period". Immediately another trainee is expected to start a sentence. The goal is to construct sentences without any pauses.

To make it a bit more difficult, the participants could use a small ball and throw it to anyone in the circle to continue the phrase. It is better though to start with the more basic version, and then proceed to the more complex one.

Tips for trainers:
- Keep it simple. Try not to be smart, and overcomplicate the sentence you want to make, as usually it leads to confusion and not success.
- Try with basic small sentences, such as:
  o The apple is red.
  o My brother is big.
  o I like the ocean.
  o The leaf turns brown.

- Having established the flow of the group through these small sentences, you can then gradually, when the team feels more secure, enrich and creatively proceed to more complicated phrases, keeping always in mind that they must make sense.

Expected outcome will come from feedback discussion:
- When did it really start to work?
- What principles have you discovered that helped the group to succeed?
- Did anyone have to give up their personal goals?
- What were they?
- How did it go then?
- What did you change in your behavior that influenced the success of the group?

Estimated duration of the exercise:

10 – 15 minutes.

Transferability of the exercise:
An exercise that is extremely applicable to all kinds of trainings, enhancing not only communication but also team building and teamwork, the ability to be quick in mind/adaptability, flexibility – exactly as it happens in a communication process.

The point of the exercise is not to try to outsmart anyone as it happens often when we daily discuss with people, but actually put your ego or your prefixed ideas aside, and build on the words already offered. Of course, when we say a word in this exercise in our own brain we have an idea on what sentence we want to create, but when the next person adds another word, we see that what we had in mind might totally change. That is why we need to be flexible, think quickly and with our words enable the next person to actually find a meaningful word to add, and not make their life difficult. Starting with smaller sentences going to more complex ones, progressively the communication of the group gets stronger, and the goal more easily achievable.

Personal feedback of trainees on this exercise:
Getting rid of scenarios, concentrating on the team's success, being open minded to ideas; making short sentences simplifies the communication process and helps to get to the point. Very useful exercise to show how we have to quickly adapt, how we should not hold to our initial idea, if the group changes the direction of the sentence we are trying to create, teaches us how to try to propose something to enable the process, and help the next person. Sharpening for the brain, and perfect for team communication and building.

Voices from participants:
"During this exercise, I noticed that you are spinning a story in your head and preparing for your part. This is of little use, however, because the next participant, who spins the story further, can give the story a completely different turn and their own anticipation of the story was irrelevant. That shows me how important openness is in communication."

"An exercise that showed us how open and present we should be in order to create a story. How many twists and turned the story can have, and how ready and prepared we need to be in order to adjust."

C4 "Mission impossible" - People in one scene have different missions

In this improvisation exercise several participants play together in one scene, while each person has a different mission to accomplish.

Reference:
Developed by Frank Baumstark, Gregor Weber and Signe Zurmühlen.

Objective of the exercise:
- To practice cooperation and assertiveness:

Description of the exercise:
Setting: minimum 2, maximum 4 – 5 participants.

Preparation:
For this exercise you will need pieces of paper, on which different missions per participant are written (e.g. "to fall in love with another person", "to act a drunk person", "to avoid meeting another person", "to celebrate your birthday", "to leave your partner").

Implementation:
Before the scene starts, each participant gets one piece of paper and reads the instruction. On the piece of paper, a mission is given, which s/he should accomplish during the scene. The players only know their own mission. They don't have time to prepare, the scene starts immediately. The players start to interact with each other and try to accomplish their mission.
After some time (e.g., 5 minutes, depending on the dynamic) the trainer stops the scene, and the participants reflect on their experience.

Estimated duration of the exercise:
For each scene 5 to 10 minutes, depending on the dynamic in the scene and how much time is available. At least 2 or 3 different scenes should be played, to make the dynamics visible.

Transferability of the exercise:
In this exercise, the aim is to assert your own mission.
It is a contrary exercise to the "magic fox" exercise, where the aim is to very consciously cooperate and take up suggestions and ideas from the other participant(s).

Personal feedback of trainees on this exercise:
Participants react differently during the scene. Some try to assert their mission until the end of the scene, while others go with the flow and are drawn into the missions of other players. Topics for reflection are how each person reacts. There are moments of keeping the balance between asserting your mission, but still being able to connect and play with the others and attending to their ways and needs, in order not to lose the connection and playing together in one scene.

C5 Machine building

Reference:
Structured by Gregor Weber.

Objective of the exercise:
- To practice group awareness,
- To keep pace with the rhythm and speed of the group in order to a group movement.

Description of the exercise:
Each participant choses a movement with hands (and body), which fits to the next person in the row and looks like acting like a machine.
In the process, one person starts, the others join in one after the other and expand the machine.

Estimated duration of the exercise:
About 10 minutes each round.

Transferability of the exercise:
Useful in all team building processes that focus on anticipation, integration and perception processes.

Personal feedback of trainees on this exercise:
The exercise illustrates how each person could build value for the whole organisation.

C6 Improvisation scenes based on randomly selected sounds

Objective of the exercise:
To react audibly and to vary quickly.

Description of the exercise:
The exercise leader gives a tone, at the beginning s(h)e can point to the next person who takes over with a new tone, either in the same pitch, lower or higher. Then the length of time the tones are held can be varied, later the handover is dropped and whoever reacts fastest takes over.

Estimated duration of the exercise:

About 10 -15 minutes.

Impact of the exercise:
The exercise helps rely more on the ear again and not just the eye. It supports to recognise how does someone say something and what mood resonates.

C7 Tell a story based on a picture and answer questions from the audience

Reference:
Standard exercise in improvisation theater training.

Objective of the exercise:
To practice responsiveness, improvisation, and creativity.

Description of the exercise:
The trainer has several pictures, e.g. interesting postcards. One person takes one of the cards as a template for the story to be told in front of the group. Then questions can be asked by the audience that are related to the story. The storyteller must answer the question and then connect back to his or her story.

Estimated duration of the exercise:
15 - 20 minutes.

Impact of the exercise:
The exercise promotes attention and adaptation skills, multiple thinking, out of the box thinking.

C8 Choose an animal and move like that animal

This basic pantomime exercise helps recognise movement characteristics, increase mental and physical imagination, creativity and transfer of personality traits to another level.

Objective of the exercise:
To practice observation skills through the reduction to essentials.

Description of the exercise:

The participants are given a few minutes to think about an animal, to try it on briefly or even to ask another question. Then, with or without music (music helps here at first), you can have half the group improvise together, first everyone should find and establish their character, then contact is made and the other group is observed. Afterwards the group changes and a short feedback round is made.

Estimated duration of the exercise:
30 minutes.

Impact of the exercise:
The exercise enables a person to put oneself in the physicality and state of mind of something foreign, and to present special characteristics in a different body language.

C9 Acting out scenes based on an object in groups of two

Objective of the exercise:
- To promote uncoordinated communication with the partner,
- To foster creativity and responsiveness.

Description of the exercise:
An ordinary everyday object becomes something new, special or even repulsive the way one person talks about it. The partner picks up the story and reacts spontaneously.

Estimated duration of the exercise:
15 - 20 minutes.

Impact of the exercise:
The exercise helps one break up structures, be open, surprised and do not impose restrictions on yourself.

C10 Telling stories with gestures made by someone else

Reference:
Keith Johnstone.

Objective of the exercise:
- To transfer performance and reaction ability,
- To train parallel processes.

Description of the exercise:
Two partners become one, they sit behind each other. The person sitting in front holds their hands together behind their back and the partner sitting in the back extends their arms under the armpits of the person sitting in front. The person in front tells a story, the person in the back makes gestures to it.

Estimated duration of the exercise:
20 minutes.

Impact of the exercise:
The exercise helps involve teammates, be open, accept the unexpected and react spontaneously in the front of unforeseen actions.

C11 The fairy tale

Reference:
Structured by Frank Baumstark and Signe Zurmühlen.

Objective of the exercise:
To practice combining imagination with logic and status work in a given format.

Description of the exercise:
One person tells a fairy tale in front of the group. It is recommended to make some notes beforehand so that you don't get too lost and find an ending. It starts with: Once upon a time. . .
If it works well, it can be developed further by the exercise leader pointing to person B at some point while person A is telling the story, now B has to continue.

Estimated duration of the exercise:
35 - 45 minutes.

Impact of the exercise:
The exercise helps do not stick too much to the everyday and play with imagination. This storytelling exercise can be the basis for gestural work, tension arcs as well as work on known text material.

C12 Conversation with a friend, feedback

Reference:
Developed by Frank Baumstark, Gregor Weber and Signe Zurmühlen.

Objective of the exercise:
To develop empathy, to practice creativity, imagination and feedback.

Description of the exercise:
Pairs are formed, which start a fictitious conversation without preparation, which must remain lively.
Tip: it is better not to start talking about everyday topics, it is often easier to talk about problems or even the opposite.

Estimated duration of the exercise:
20 - 25 minutes.

Impact of the exercise:
The exercise helps listening attentively, being able to react quickly without any previous knowledge, being able to adjust to someone without having the possibility to prepare.

C13 Storytelling and repetition

Reference:
Structured by Frank Baumstark,

Objective of the exercise:
To learn to creatively develop and repeat coherent lines in a given format.

Description of the exercise:
Someone tells a story, and another person tells that story again, ideally in the same way.

Estimated duration of the exercise:
25 - 30 minutes.

Impact of the exercise:
The exercise help practice perception and reproduction of what is heard? What stands out? what is left out? Was the story and the physicality correct?

D   SHORT SCENES / BASIC ACTING

D1 "Schmidt Scenes"

Reference:
Keith Johnstone.

Objective of the exercise:
-   To get awareness of one's status,
-   To practice status communication,
-   To practice increasing empathy.

Description of the exercise:
This exercise is a role-play.
–   The trainer explains that the trainees will take rounds playing the Chief and Mr. Schmidt.
–   He asks for the 1st volunteer to play the role of the Chief. The „actor" is asked to set the scene.
–   Next he asks the 1st Schmidt actor to play the part.
–   Feedback round follows.
–   Actors in the pair change parts.
–   Feedback round follows.

Then another pair follows.

Notice: The trainer should make sure to ask the Chief if s(h)e wants to change roles.

Suggestion for alternative approach:
In the following rounds the same Chief can be approached by several Schmidts (one at a time), to experience different approaches and to test various reactions.
The trainer can ask the trainees to play the scene in different status settings: high/low, h/h, l/h, l/l.

Equipment:
-   SCHMIDT scene scenario printed out (equal to the number of participants),
-   2 chairs,

- a desk/table,
- room big enough to allow different types of arrangements.

SCHMIDT scene(s) scenario to be printed out:

Knocking
Chief: "Come in! Oh Schmidt, it's you. You know why I sent for you?"
Schmidt: "No!"
Chief pushes newspaper to Schmidt: "Schmidt looks at it".
Schmidt: "I was hoping this wouldn't come to your attention."
Chief: "You know we can't employ anyone with a criminal record."
Schmidt: "Can't you reconsider?"
Chief: "Goodbye – Schmidt!"
Schmidt: "I never wanted your shitty job anyway!"

Feedback discussion:
Feedback discussion can refer to what's typical for each status; how they feel in each role; what worked out and what did not.

Expected outcome will come from feedback discussion:

To the Chief:
- What objective did you have?
- What outcome did you plan to achieve? Were you successful? Why/why not?
- Did you expect this reaction from the employee?
- Was your approach most effective?
- Which reaction would be least harmful to both parties?
- What should the leader do to achieve this outcome?

To Schmidt:
- What behaviour of the Chief was helpful? What was not?
- How did you feel in that situation?

Estimated duration of the exercise:
Each round (couple) lasts about 10 minutes, depending on the actors.

Impact of the exercise:

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- The Schmidt scene helps stimulate innovative thinking and seeking new solutions;
- It promotes communication, creativity, empathy, flexibility;
- It fosters self-awareness of different roles and status.

Transferability of the exercise:

The exercise can be easily applicable to trainings on the subject of communication, as it clearly shows how many different feelings/thoughts/dynamics can exist during such a short and simple dialogue. Trainees can perform these exercises choosing different feelings, different goals they want to achieve each time, and they will realise in themselves the ways of communication they use every time. Under the instruction of the trainer, they can be called to detect the differences in the body language each time they perform the scene, the difference in their voice tone, their speed when they move, how their body reacts, which leads to self-awareness and proves how clear signals lead to more efficient communication. A great exercise not only for the people performing but also for everyone who is watching it and can comment as feedback.

Voices from participants:

"The Schmidt scenes were a true revelation, if you haven't done such an exercise before. Not only because we all understand the importance of the subtext in a simple dialogue, but because we can check ourselves, and the choices we make on stage and life. What is our first approach when we are asked to perform this scene? Where does our mind first take us? Do we play the clever one? The sexy one? Do we prefer to be the boss or the employee? How many different stories were created during that day was stunning. What do we do when we suddenly have to improvise? Do we listen to our partner on stage, and also in life? Very useful exercise, that besides our acting abilities or lack of - it is not important but reveals the complexity of communication, life and self".

"It showed me how important even small activities are for all employees".

"I was surprised with the power of this, superficially small, exercise. So much can be derived from it. The feedback can go along the lines: how did you build your strategy, were you able to perform what you planned, if you changed your strategy - what influenced it, did you follow the other person or lead, who was a good listener - how do we know that? - etc."

Recommended sources for self-studies:

- "Schmidt scenes" by Keith Johnston applying dramaturgical effects like up/down Status, increasing and diminishing exercises.

- Avolio, B. J., Waldman, D. A., & Einstein, W. O. (1988). Transformational leadership in a management simulation game: Impacting the bottom line. Group & Organization Studies, 13: 59-80.
- Landry, L., 2019. 8 Essential Leadership Communication Skills | HBS Online - Harvard Business School Online. [online] Business Insights - Blog. Available at: https://online.hbs.edu/blog/post/leadership-communication.

D2 "King's/Queen's Game"

Reference:
Keith Johnstone.

Objective of the exercise:
- To increase awareness and skills in verbal and nonverbal communication,
- To become aware of the infinite number of tactics that can be used to exercise influence.

Description of the exercise:
The trainer explains the task saying: "One of you will be the Queen/King and the rest will be servants trying to please his/her majesty so that you can stay alive. You will be approaching the queen/king one by one trying to please him/her. If the King/Queen is dissatisfied, he/she snaps his/her fingers and the Servant dies. Then the next servant can give it a try."
This can go ad infinitum or when the Winner appears. The "Winner" is the servant who stays alive the longest time.

After the winner has been announced, the trainer offers another volunteer to perform the role of the Queen/King.

Option: when everyone is "dead" or nobody has any idea to go forward, the trainer can ask if any of the servants would like to have a second chance and encourage them to approach the King/Queen for the second time.

Equipment:
1 chair/armchair.

Expected outcome will come from the feedback discussion:
Ask the "actors" the following questions:

To the Queen/King actor:
- How did you feel performing the role?

- What did you like/what did you not like?
- What strategies of the servants worked? Why?
- How would you approach yourself if you were a servant? What would convince you?
- Now, that you have found out something about yourself – where can you use this information in your work (life)?

To the Servant actors:
- How did you choose your strategies? On what grounds did you make your choices?
- Out of the approaches accepted, which ones worked well?
- How did you feel facing the king's/queen's reactions?
- Are there any work situations you can compare this experience to?
- How do you deal with status differences at work?
- What are the lessons learned that can be applied in "real life"?

Estimated duration of the exercise:
Approximately 3-5 minutes for each person approaching. 20 minutes as a whole scene.

Impact of the exercise:
It is an exercise in awareness of roles and how the own behaviour changes with the role.
The starting point for every innovation are needs and expectations. The trainees practice how we can reach out to someone's needs, so this exercise can be used in sales trainings, negotiation skills trainings.

Personal feedback of trainees on this exercise:
"I found this exercise unsuitable at the beginning, but then I understood how one's own perception of status controls thinking and communication behavior. This is certainly important for all those who limit their status-related behavior and encounter difficulties. This applies both to the status of the management level, but also to the perception of the supposedly inferior status."

"It made me realize how important the knowledge about others' needs and expectations in communication are."

"This exercise was indeed a bit weird, because when you really don't know someone, and you have no clue what they would want, or consider valuable, or interesting, it becomes a bit chaotic in a way. Also it shows the great change we all experience when we are in a position of status. Even in a game, we can become much stricter and consider ourselves important, and just decline everything, send people away easily, which I think should be the feedback to take home with us. How power can change us even in a game."

D3 The weekly market

Reference:
Structured and described by Signe Zurmühlen.

Objective of the exercise:
To experience convincing someone. What does posture, facial expressions, how do I approach someone mean?

Description of the exercise:
The Trainer describes the situation of a market: "It is market in .....(e.g. Cologne)".
A group of equal number of participants is divided into group A and group B. Group A are the so-called sellers, group B the potential market visitors and buyers.
Everyone gets a budget - some play money.
The As choose an imaginary product and try to sell it to the Bs at the market. They are allowed to use any type of conversation to reach the goal to sell the product they offer. The Bs just want to have a look at the market and not spend any money. But they can buy something if an A convinces them.
After 5-10 minutes, they count which of the As made the most "money".
The trainer is expected to initiate a short feedback round asking the following questions:

- Who was convincing?
- Why?
- What techniques were used?

Now, As and Bs switch roles. Everyone keeps their play money, and the play starts again with changed roles.
The trainer initiates the second feedback round asking:
- Who was convincing now?
- Did anything change?

Estimated duration of the exercise:
One session lasts 25-20 minutes.

Impact of the exercise:
This exercise helps practice communication, competition, assertiveness and decisiveness.

4.   DEVELOPMENT OF A SCENE - FITTING ONE'S TRAINING NEEDS

What is a scene?
A scene is a scenic representation of an action or interaction on stage, script-based or improvised. The scene serves as the core of the theater-based training to clarify facts that are the subject of the training and are therefore embedded in a curriculum of a training course.

This exercise serves to develop scenes for the specific needs of a training in advance.

Reference:
Worksheet "Storyboard" prepared by Signe Zurmühlen.

Objective of the exercise:
- To get more self-confident and skilled in challenging situations by practicing it in scenes,
- To receive feedback on one's effect and behaviour, hints or suggestions to act even better.

Description of the exercise:
To improve self-awareness and camera work, the trainees should at first write a plot and storyboard for a challenging situation, e.g. an upcoming presentation or video call. For this, the trainees should define:

- What is the topic of the scene?
- Who are the characters?
- What do the characters want in the scene?
- What kind of relationship do the characters have to one another?
- Where are we?
- What do the characters do physically in the beginning of the scene?
- What is the plot of the scene?
- What is the main conflict in the scene?
- How does the scene start?
- When does the conflict start? And how?
- Is there a turning point?
- How does the scene end?
- Do you have a solution in the end? Or a question?
- What do you want to reach by telling this story?
- What is the timeline of the scene? What happens when?

After that, it is also known what kind of stage props are needed for the scene. To play the scene, a quiet, undisturbed room/space is needed.

After this preparation, the individual scenes on prepared topics are played. Ideally, they are recorded by camera, so that they can be looked at together afterwards. Then, the feedback from the group and the trainer is very essential. It helps the trainee to reflect about the way they behave and the impression they produce. Ideally, the scenes are then played again, so that the trainees can build in the suggestions to improve further.

For the video feedback, a camera, microphone and a possibility to look together on the recorded scene (e.g. large monitor, beamer, sound system) is needed.

Estimated duration of the exercise:
The duration is very much depending on the number of trainees and length of the scenes. It is helpful to give the scenes a time limit, e.g. 5 minutes. If video feedback is possible, it should be taken into account that everyone sees the scene again and giving feedback afterwards which needs a lot of time.

Transferability of the exercise:
Every challenging situation can be prepared and "exercised" by doing it in a safe training environment and getting individual feedback to improve by supporting people.

Personal feedback of trainers on this exercise:
To translate it to everyday life, it shows that everyone should be defining the challenging scene in every detail which is harder than one might think. Moreover, one should be open to feedback and criticism which sometimes is hard. All the scenes show in a way the personalities and the way the trainees perceive things and the choices they make on scene and in real life. So this can be a very helpful and impressive individual overall learning and revealing experience.

Recommended sources for self-studies
Johnstone, Keith, 2018: Impro: Improvisation and the Theatre, Bloomsbury, 2018
Johnstone, Keith, 2014: Impro for storytellers, Bloomsbury, 2014
Stengl, I.; Strauch, T., 1996: Stimme und Person, Klett-Cotta, 1996

5.   GENERAL "REFLECTION OF THE DAY"

Reflection and Feedback as an important part of the training program!

The introduction of theater-based methods and exercises into a training curriculum aims at enhancing "learning" by participants. This is possible through the creation of a diverse set of situations with direct action, creating immediate experience, sensations, emotions, "heureka moments", related to the objectives of the training. This type of learning can be seen as a specific expression of the concept of "experiential learning" (Raelin 2008).

Experiential learning postulates the value of a "complete learning cycle", including "concrete experience" (1), followed by "reflective observation" (2), "abstract conceptualisation" (3) and "active experimentation" (4), leading to the start of a new cycle with different attitude and abilities. Steps (1) and (2) can typically be completed in a training course and lead to the identification for a procedure of steps (3) and (4) to transfer the gained insights to the different situation within the company, including efforts to change existing procedures or structures to reach an evolutionary target (steps 3 and 4).

This concept is realized in the curriculum by including rounds of reflection by the participants in a short form for every exercise (see respective sections in the previous chapters) and by a final "reflection of the day", in which important outcomes related to the overall objective of the course are shared, collected and evaluated.

Reflections of the different days during the LTTA proved to be of high value for (1) the understanding of the overall concept of the training course and the interdependence of different elements and (2) the development of a clear picture of how to transfer personal experiences as participants into targeted training modules for the respective environments and companies "at home". They included the following exemplary recollections and findings:

- Importance to develop simple and clear options to translate personal experience into instructive videos that succeed in communicating the value of an exercise.

- Somebody-oriented metaphors and experiences can be translated easily into processes and structures found in companies and, being a focus of THENOVA, change and innovation processes. Examples: focusing, flexibility, being out of breath, losing contact to the ground, being thrown off balance.

- Many games and exercises offer experience of shame or blame when mistakes and breaks occur, something often happening when companies try new ways. It was an important experience to develop a mistake-tolerant attitude, even have extra fun when "mistakes" occur. In reflection, they often produce the most valuable learning.

- Communication becomes clear and cooperation becomes easier when communicated elements like sentences and stories ("bytes") become shorter. A typical feedback from the director: "Be more stupid! Keep it simple!"

- The power of body activation to generate energy in an entire group was clearly seen as a potential to support difficult and complex internal processes ("Always warm yourself up!"). The value of "breath" was discussed in the context of the agility of a company (suggestion from the director: "Don't stop breathing!").

- Many similarities between exercises and everyday processes were discovered that might find further use in scenes and transformative acting. Example: throwing a ball without looking at a person is similar to sending an email.

- Reflection itself was soon identified as "harvesting the fruits of a day's work" and as being indispensable if corporate learning should occur.

- When more complex scenes were included it became clear, that the risk of misunderstanding and not complying with a company's expectations was rising. A summary from the reflection: "Start with a company / group that is somewhat familiar with this experience. Don't enter a new market with a new product."

- Don't stop an exercise and go on without actual success (and learning) for the group. If you run into a dead-end road, stop, reflect, develop alternatives with a higher success probability.

- Find methods to make reflection rounds precise and quick. Not everybody is able to stay attentive and "harvest" even low hanging fruits.

- In a final reflection, suitability of the different types of exercises for different types of companies and situation was reflected. Would exercises have to be selected? A special attention was given to "body" exercises. On the one hand, participants experienced the high and immediate value and transferability into pictures for company situations and processes ("What would be the body of a company? Who would incorporate which part?), on the other hand, working with the body can put a high stress on participants and groups not used to "letting loose". All participants agreed that professional instructors (actors!) should be included to ensure the necessary awareness and safe environment for everybody.

Reference:

Joe Raelin (2008): Work-based Learning: Bridging knowledge and action in the workplace. John Wiley & Sons.

6.   STRUCTURE OF THE LTTA

Overview of the Transnational Learning, Teaching or Training activities (LTTA)

The LTTA was integral part of the THENOVA project and served for different purposes:

- First, this activity aimed at enabling selected participants from THENOVA partner institutions to design and implement their own training sessions for SME staff using a big variety of theatre-based methods. Thus, this activity can also be named "train-the-trainer".
- Second, the LTTA allowed for the validation of the theatre-based training program for SME trainers.

In other words, during the LTTA all the exercises and feedback rounds, which were described in the present document, were practiced in the safe environment with 12 participants (SME trainers) who were guided by the professional artists (trainers) from the network Rhenania (Cologne, Germany), namely:
- Signe Zurmühlen,
- Gregor Weber,
- Frank Baumstark.

The relevant outcomes of the LTTA were:
- LTTA participants/trainers obtained practical skills to develop their own theater-based training sessions;
- The quality, viability and innovativeness of the present training program for SME trainers designed by THENOVA partners was confirmed and therefore could be recommended for further adaptation and (re)use.

LTTA overall framework:
- Duration: 5 days (from 09:00 am to 05:00 pm);
- Delivery mode: face-to-face;
- Venue: Cologne (Germany), Kunsthaus Rhenania and Theater Metropol.

Below the structure of the 5-day LTTA is presented, which might be useful for educational providers interested in including the training for SMEs trainers to their portfolios:

Morning, 9:00 – 12:30 h

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Topic of the day: communication	**Topic of the day: Self-Motivation**	**Topic of the day: Self-Awareness and camera work**	**Topic of the day: Innovation Management**	**Topic of the day: Team Building**
Introduction	welcome	welcome	welcome	welcome
exercises on basic body awareness *(Chapter 3, Exercises A)*	exercises on basic body awareness *(Chapter 3, Exercises A)*	Voice exercises *(Chapter 3, Exercises B)*	exercises on voice and group awareness *(Chapter 3, Exercises B)*	Selection of favourite exercises
exercises on group awareness *(Chapter 3, Exercises A)*	exercises on group awareness *(Chapter 3, Exercises A)*	Impro scenes based on randomly selected notes *(Chapter 3, Exercises C)*	Impro: play scenes based on an object in groups of two *(Chapter 3, Exercises C)*	Voice exercises *(Chapter 3, Exercises B)*
Basic voice exercises *(Chapter 3, Exercises B)*	Basic voice exercises *(Chapter 3, Exercises B)*	Impro: telling a story based on a picture and answer questions of the audience *(Chapter 3, Exercises C)*	Impro: story telling with gestures done by someone else *(Chapter 3, Exercises C)*	The weekly market *(Chapter 3, Exercises D)*
Feedback on exercises *(Chapter 5)*	Talking in Gibberish *(Chapter 3, Exercises C)*	Impro: choose one animal and move like this animal *(Chapter 3, Exercises C)*	Impro theatre on the topic Self Motivation done by a participant	Impro: The fairy tale *(Chapter 3, Exercises C)*
	The King's/Queen's Game			Parallel event: Blind Date Experience

	(Chapter 4)			

Lunch break

Afternoon, 14:00 – 17:00 h

Discussion & reflection	Discussion/reflection: How do the exercises support the project objectives *(Chapter 5)*	Playing of the scenes on prepared topics: Communication Self-Motivation Self-Awareness Innovation Management Team Building and feedback *(Chapter 4)*	Improvement and further development of the scenes: writing of the plot and story board and playing of the scenes on prepared topics, feedback *(Chapter 4)*	Improvement of the scenes: writing of the plot and story board and recording of the scenes in different takes *(Chapter 4)*
playing scenes improvisation based on "Schmidt scenes" *(Chapter D)*	Impro: storytelling and repetition *(Chapter 3, Exercises C)*	Feedback on the exercises and the day *(Chapter 5)*		
Group Awareness exercise "Machine Building" *(Chapter C)*	Impro theatre: talk with a friend *(Chapter 3, Exercises C)*			
Feedback on the exercises and the day *(Chapter 5)*	Feedback on the exercises and the day *(Chapter 5)*			