

# Developing RSEs to deliver trainings

## Discussion Session

### Developing people (RSEs) to become better trainers

**Session chair:** Jeremy Cohen, Imperial College London

**Session scribe:** Hannah Williams, UKHSA

Attendees:

Colin

Sarah

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- 1) What makes a good trainer?
    - Experienced in different techniques of explaining complex ideas
    - Identifying when someone needs help
    - Empathy - also helps to have been in someone else's position
    - Consideration of the pig picture - building on examples
    - Someone who is willing to accept and act on feedback.
    - Patience
    - Want practitioners and experts to teach, but balanced with understanding what the learner requires
    - Wanting to teach / enjoying teaching - i.e. someone who doesn't want to do teaching and needs to as part of their role may not enjoy it.
    - Not showing/telling all of your knowledge
    - Self motivated
    - Being able to manage problems e.g. presenting calmly in the face of problems and unknowns
    - Transferable knowledge - e.g. being able to pick up a new package and teach it
  - 2) What approaches to training can require improvement?
    - Knowing the level of your students - imparting all knowledge
    - (Need to be) Open to feedback and self-improvement (if you're not, this can result in a poor training experience for the learners).
    - Use of jargon - easy to slip into, some words field specific
    - Use of "simple", "just", "obvious", "let's do this quickly"
    - Improving opportunities to observe other instructors

- Voice projection, microphone checks & recognising when people can't hear - use of drama training for "performance" incl vocal projection, presence, engagement, body language
- Awareness of flaws e.g. clocking time warnings
- Making use of helpers, moderators, organisers e.g. asking a helper to interrupt the instructor for a break time

### 3) What approaches can we take to address the above points?

- Joint organisation training - share resources - running courses that are run jointly across multiple institutions
- Observe more instructors
- Peer observations - UCL piloting a scheme for observing colleagues who instruct
- Buddy/mentors (slightly different to observations)
- Learning about potential logistical issues from experienced instructors (e.g. are there enough extension cables? Does the AV/projector work? ...)
- FTraining events like today's workshop to share experiences
- More opportunity to learn about the knowledge of teaching & learning (not specifically code)
- Recommended book - Programmers Brain [The Programmer's Brain \(manning.com\)](http://manning.com)
- Pre-assessing learners level in a more detailed way (not assuming that they know their own level wrt 'beginner', 'intermediate', etc)
- PGCTHE training (large time commitment)

### 4) What concrete actions can we take to try and develop RSEs to become better trainers.

- Pairing up RSEs across institutions to be instructors/helpers at each others' remote workshops;
- Promote cross-Group exchange of best practices etc (plus, give less-experienced instructors the chance to get some mentorship)
- Facilitate cross-institution teaching (incl global)
- Provide cross-institutional training opportunities
- Advertise training to get newly trained instructors
- Exchanges between carpentries and code refinery

### Formal v informal teaching

- Increases rigour
- Don't fulfil the aims/passable without attending training

### Other comments:

- Awareness of being forced into teaching
- Forced to use institutional training platforms