

ORGANISING THE RESOURCES

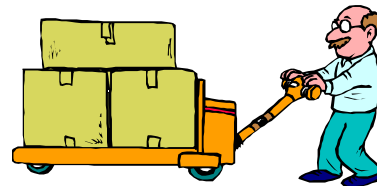
After you have read through and familiarised yourself with the program, planned activities and learning materials, you need to consider what you will need to support your learning activities.

If you are working in an organisation with fixed infrastructure, you may have the luxury of having a whiteboard, a blackboard and an overhead projector in each classroom or group training area. However, given that such resources are temptations to the light fingered, expensive equipment such as laptops and data projectors are generally kept in a central store and have to be booked in advance. Make sure you do this in good time to ensure that you can have the equipment you need when you need it.

Larger organisations may have specific rooms which have audio-visual resources hard wired into the structure. In such circumstances, advanced planning is also required to ensure that you can get the venue you require for specific activities.

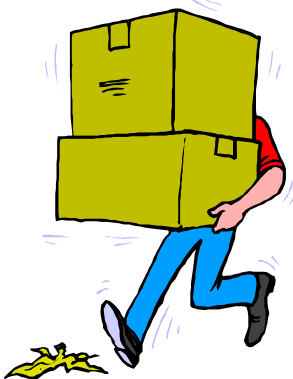
Whether you work in a small organisation or a large one, there are some things a trainer or facilitator should always carry with them as a basic trainer kit:

- Chalk (some older buildings still use blackboards)
- Whiteboard markers (not the permanent kind that requires solvent)
- Board duster and whiteboard cleaning block
- Butcher paper
- Coloured marker pens or coloured pencils
- OHP pens
- Blank OHP transparencies
- Masking tape
- Bluetac or Yellowtac
- Scrap paper or cheap lined pads for group work notes
- Extra pens and pencils for the learners who forget to bring stationery



This might sound like a lot to carry about, but it does avoid the embarrassment of turning up for a class and finding that somebody else has 'borrowed' the essential basic supplies and forgotten to return them or replace them.

Add to this your required consumables or any light equipment you might need to provide and you will often need to use some kind of wheeled device to assist you. This can range from airport style luggage bags right up to small hand trolleys.



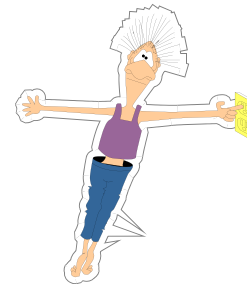
For your own safety always remember the manual handling rules when moving yourself and your training kits to and between venues:

- Never carry boxes so that you cannot see over them – this is a sure recipe for disaster
- Be sensible when carrying awkward loads as these can throw your balance and hurt your back
- Never twist when lifting or carrying or this will hurt your back
- Never extend your back forward more than 45 degrees when lifting and keep your back straight
- Test the weight before you lift equipment or boxes and always ask for help or use a trolley for large loads
- Take more than one trip instead of struggling with an assortment of odd shaped items

CHECKING THE TRAINING ENVIRONMENT

The environment must be checked to ensure that everything required is provided. You will have given the participants, and the workplace, a list of resource requirements, and you need to check that these are all there before you start. It is wise to arrive at least 10 minutes early so that you can deal with any last minute hitches. Most importantly, do a check of all the equipment.

- Is it all assembled and connected properly?
- Does it work?
- Are there any frayed or loose electrical leads?
- Do you know how to operate it?



There should be no safety risks involved in the assessment process or the learning methodologies, other than those which are a normal part of the working environment.

Having said that, **all** work environments should be regarded as hazardous and the site in which the assessment is going to be conducted should be checked in advance to ensure that there are no hidden dangers that can pose a risk to the people present in group activities.

Training sites are notorious for having:

- Random and loose boxes in inconvenient places
- Trailing cords which are a trip hazard (especially when audiovisual equipment is used)
- Damaged or inappropriate chairs and tables

You may have checked the main classroom, but have you checked any other areas where small groups may go to perform set tasks?

Many RTOs have a standard training site checklist and a safety checklist, and you could easily develop your own assessment environment checklists to suit the particular circumstances. An extract of a checklist developed as a training site checklist, which can do double duty, is shown below.

General Purpose	Trainee capacity	Room set up	Comments
Workshop Area (verify environmental conditions)		Workbenches/tables	
		Tool/Equipment tidies	
<input type="checkbox"/> Lighting		Consumables	
<input type="checkbox"/> Temperature Control		Instruction manuals/job cards	
<input type="checkbox"/> Ventilation		Machines/Equipment	
<input type="checkbox"/> OH&S		Protective clothing	
		Safety glasses	
		Cleaning kits	
		Handwashing facilities	
		Individual tables and chairs	
		Waste disposal	
		Machine guards/Tagging	

If you are using a leased training venue, you should ideally check out the site and the facilities before you make an agreement to hire the rooms. What sounds like paradise over the phone can prove to be a substandard building with many unsuitable features. It is too late to change venue after the participants have turned up.

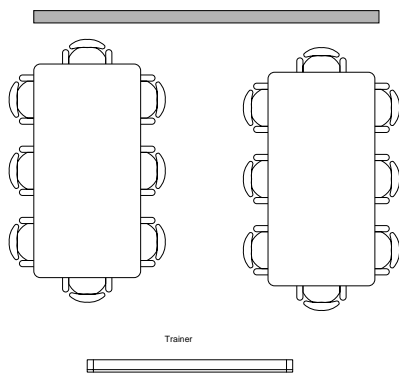
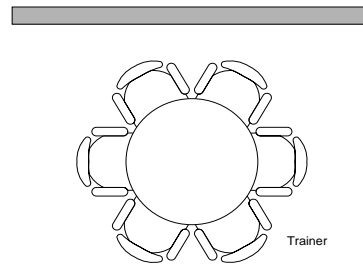
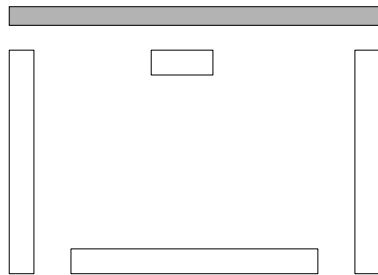
Training outdoors may have its own considerations:

- Environmental hazards and inclement weather (have a contingency plan)
- UV radiation and heat stroke
- Special safety considerations such as using electrical tools in the wet
- No place to plug and play!

The way your training space is set up can directly affect the way that people learn. If your training space is set up to traditional 'face the blackboard' mode, you will reinforce the 'back to school' perception and this can dis-empower the learner.



The following arrangements are examples of room arrangements that provide more flexibility and encourage active participation.



Some venues provide small rectangular or round tables which can be moved to suit the activity. The more you can integrate the trainer into the picture, the higher the degree of participant involvement.

If you are leasing a venue, it is important to visit the site beforehand and discuss room arrangements to suit your purpose.

You may come up with some more inventive ways to arrange a room so that seating arrangements do not form a barrier to learning.

You can always ask your learners to contribute to the layout that suits their needs best!

The challenge in using leased training rooms

A low cost venue we have been offered is set up for University lectures (everyone faces the front and sits in plastic chairs with attached mini tables). While this might work for 'talk and chalk' teaching, it is not useful for VET group training activities:

- The chairs are designed for adolescents, not larger framed and mature adults
- There is no way to provide broad table space for group based activities
- There is limited flexibility for room arrangements to encourage active participation – the restricting table tops are a challenge

Using such a venue means taking our own folding tables and chairs. It is more convenient to use a commercial conference centre that allows more flexibility in choices of tables and layouts.

Another challenge was arriving at another venue to find the second arrangement shown above with students crammed into seats in rows with little space between them. We spent the first fifteen minutes stacking tables at the back so that we could run group learning activities.

PROFILING THE LEARNER

True TNA is about building a complete profile of a learner in order to make objective decisions about how best to accommodate their needs within the larger framework of group or workplace training.

In order to do this, you need to gather as much information as possible about the 'why' of the motivation for learning, expectations, skills gaps as well as the 'how much and where'.

You do this in several ways:

- Informal discussions with new learners to gain information about their backgrounds and their reason for wanting to enrol
- Identification of special learning needs in pre-enrolment processes
- Formal interviews pre-enrolment or pre training
- Pre-training assessment of learning styles
- Pre-training assessment of communication and LL&N skills levels, including computer literacy
- Diagnostic testing on a case-by-case basis where preliminary findings indicate that the individual needs assistance beyond that which it is your power to provide.



The pre-enrolment or pre-training discussion or interview can gather a great deal of information about a learner. If this is to be conducted in the workplace, ask the employer or work supervisor if you are able to conduct this away from the 'shop floor'. This is essential to preserve the privacy of the individual and to ensure that you have an uninterrupted and private space.

The interview should aim to collect a range of basic information:

- Motivation levels and goals for undertaking the training (is it something they want to do or something they have to do?)
- Reasons for wishing to enrol
- Years and level of education or training previously attained
- Information about their current job or career and their career aspirations
- Whether they have any learning difficulties, LL&N or disabilities that might require adjustments to learning strategies
- Their preferred learning styles
- Where and how the learning is to be undertaken

Sometimes this will occur when you are on 'phone duty' to take incoming enquiries. It is useful to have several things to hand when you take the call:

- The information folder or prospectus about the course or program
- Details of costs, venues, times and facilitating trainers
- Information about support services which are available for special needs
- A script or form that helps you capture all the required information

REMEMBER TO DOCUMENT ALL THE OUTCOMES OF THE INTERVIEW!

This information need not always be solicited verbally. Some organisations gather this information through pre-training questionnaires or individual TNAs designed to be completed by the applicant. How well the client copes with reading your information kits or form filling can be a vital clue to LL&N or learning difficulties they have not disclosed.

If every applicant is asked the same questions, there can be no question of discrimination.