



Slow Food®

SLOW FOOD EDUCATION MANUAL



The educator devises and organizes the educational **context** so that the setting is a suitable environment for the training activity (teaching materials, technical equipment, signs, classroom arrangement, etc.)

The educator welcomes the participants warmly, creating a classroom atmosphere conducive to learning. They make the participants feel comfortable, in an informal context, managing the classroom and dealing with the topics precisely and punctually. They propose fun and enjoyable activities, using entertainment and active teaching techniques to promote socialization (group games, presentation games, simulations, etc.).

The educator defines the “rules of the game” with the participants, sharing with them the timings, objectives and methods so that everyone is aware of them. The “classroom pact” is thus entered into, an assumption of a commitment by all involved.

The educator gathers initial **expectations**, asks for feedback during the activity, paying attention to their own and the participants’ **verbal and non-verbal language**. They use techniques and methods that allow the participants to experience the learning activities in a way that goes beyond a mere transmission of content. They leave space for discussion, encouraging questions and the recounting of personal experiences, neither criticizing nor praising, asking questions to everyone present to allow everyone to express themselves and decentralize the group from the figure of the educator.

The educator respects the natural **rhythm** of the learning, alternating transmission of knowledge with experiential, listening and discussion phases. They leave time for everyone to understand, process and discuss the content. They must be aware that an active and participatory teaching style requires more time, so it is essential that they define the timings of their involvement, but also be ready to readapt them to the contextual conditions.

The educator uses a method focused on **doing** and **experience** because it is important to proceed by induction and not by deduction, in other words starting from practice to arrive at the theory. To allow the participants to try out their own abilities, practical experiences are organized (comparative tastings, sensory games, label reading, kitchen exercises, etc.).

The educator assists in the discovery of **different disciplines**, providing cues and information to help better understand the food system and the world.

The educator should promote an understanding of the **local area** and its stakeholders, involving local producers and others involved in virtuous businesses and activities, presenting alternative buying systems and encouraging the **exchange** of knowledge and practices that go beyond the classroom (dinners, visits to farms, exchange of seeds of local varieties, etc.).

The educator gives information and suggests tools useful for orientation within a complex system. The educator is a **facilitator**.

Other suggestions:

- The educator **collects information on the participants** (their ages, jobs, levels of participation in community life...) to better adjust their teaching to them.
- The educator **organizes the content of their lessons**, considering the available time; they select the most important topics and use the redundancy principle when providing training. They should be fully aware that building a trustworthy relationship is the real driving force of a training activity (importance of relationship: 80%; importance of contents: 20%).
- The educator is **100% responsible for the effectiveness** of their own communication strategy.
- The educator **actually seeks their own “secret ingredient”**, their hallmark, the episodes from their lives that are worth remembering, strong and genuine motivations: anything helps if it can prove what is being told and shared during the class.
- The educator **structures their contribution like a story**: with a beginning, a central core and a conclusion, where the “taste” should linger (this is done by wrapping up, gathering feedback, pushing the participants to take action).
- The educator **knows they are going to be assessed**, even before the class starts.
- The educator **makes sure that everybody** is at ease, any time, especially at the outset (comfort, temperature, light, vision, personal issues, physical needs, tiredness...).
- The educator **calls everybody by their names**, so that they feel recognized: a name really symbolizes an individual's true identity.
- The educator does not just give information, on the contrary, they must **be sensitive and carefully consider the emotional dynamics** that can be triggered by a certain classroom situation. In fact, participants have different “ways of learning”, progressing at several levels: intellectually, practically and emotionally.
- The educator is **aware of their emotions and gets ready to handle them**; fear is something natural, for instance: it must be recognized, accepted and used! Lack of fear is not natural: the educator is not almighty!
- The educator **should win the participants' attention** (it is not mandatory!), and this should be kept alive till the end, by building a fruitful relationship and arousing curiosity, keeping in mind that participants have priority.
- The educator **also plans some moments to decompress**, process and even “decant” the content, with breaks if need be.
- The educator **keeps their body language in high regard**: they look in the eye with some sensitivity (neither too long, nor too quickly), smile all the time, keep their adequate “distance” from the people they are talking to (neither too close, nor too far away) and adjusts their approach accordingly.



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