# Training the Botanical Trainers 2017

## Workshop on the good, the bad and the ugly

Participants were asked to work in their table groups and identify from their collective experiences, examples of good and bad feedback/experiences as tutors, examples of good and bad feedback/experience they had received as students or participants.

### Tutors

#### Good

Student went off and found a new species

Students always very enthusiastic about my experience as a school teacher

Great feedback and thanked for teaching something in a really interesting and enjoyable way

Excellent group who seemed genuinely interested in learning and gaining new skills

Outdoor and indoor facilities on same day can vary according to weather

Being approachable

Flexible when problems arise (though cake and tea are non-negotiable)

Getting to know students

Learning names

Class are relaxed, able to contribute, and comfortable

Be honest about your own limitations – don’t make it up

Cover what you intended to cover

It works

Good timing/pacing

Know site well/well prepared

Perspective of class mood/energy levels and skill levels

Good summing up/recap

In control

Students feel they have achieved their objectives of learning

Well planned and researched topics

Answering all/most questions

Well pitched levels of topics

Avoiding feedback being a mechanical exercise

Balancing subjective and objective feedback

Outcomes/review form

Match teaching to pre-course info

Giving credence to feedback

Following up and improving programmes as a result

Showing the above, and closing the circle

The eureka moment

When group dynamics work

Getting progress feedback during course

Sympathetic to individual students skills/needs/abilities

Know your site

Know your students

Seeing participants progress afterwards, eg recording and training

Pre course information from students eg dyslexia/physical needs

#### Bad

Working very long hours for very little pay (less than kitchen staff)

Linear habitats with a big group (strung out/Chinese Whispers) – need a backstop

It rained

Not knowing health conditions beforehand

Tutor error in course material kept causing problems

Students arriving late, others leaving early

Skewed perception of feedback from stakeholders

Too big a group

Unsuitable/inappropriate clothing

People who ask all the questions often get more attention but can give you a lower score

Those who complain about no tea breaks etc

Tell them at start there is so much to cover in the day that there’s no time for a break, but make on if they need one

A very wide range of abilities/backgrounds

Part of a big group that had 3 leaders and more than one minibus expected a tutor to take them on an individual excursion

Expecting to get through more material and having to rush a lot at the end

People who complain about no handouts even though courses I do depend on what might be in flower that day

No light-housing

Technology not working or unfamiliar

The group leader seemed disorganized, had not reccied the site and gave out incoherent mumbled information

Not seeing FSC feedback forms

Self-centred person kept interrupting and broke flow of lecture

Student unable to cope with field trip demands

Unexpected occurrences, fire alarm, weather etc

Not explaining something as well as you would have liked

Students not at level you expected

Memory failure

Tech failure

Students talking when they should be listening

Students disruptive or not willing to participate

One student takes too much tutor time/questions

Forgetting a handout

Host’s errors

Not keeping up energy or enthusiasm

Consultants time

Poor timing

Insufficient or poor resources

Poor venue/light/noise

Not adapting to various learning styles

Powerpoint paralysis

Don’t allow group to get too spread out, especially in relation to First Aid kit

Start talking before everyone has caught up

### Students

#### Good

Outdoor and indoor facilities on same day can vary according to weather

Eureka moment!

Timely feedback

Assess course participants and modify content to suit situation

Structure makes complicated subjects more manageable

Proper planning – don’t try to teach everything

Teach less better rather than bits of everything

Getting feedback on day of course

Well-structured course

Good handouts and course materials

Well-timed delivery

Number of species limited to what could be found in students’ areas

Facilities match the demands of course/students

Enthusiasm – keep people interested

Student participation improves the learning experience

Diction/articulation

Outstanding inspirational tutors can teach students to think – and become outstanding inspirational tutors!

New skills

Positive experience

Value for money

Tutor spending extra time to help out with individual questions

Having a second person as a back up/safety supervisor for difficult field trips

Tea and biscuits at end of day

Wonderful field site and enthusiasm of leader

Learning outcomes understood by trainers and participants

Providing a range of resources for different learning styles

Vary type of teaching eg lab and field

Being taught by an expert in their field who could communicate their knowledge at my level (not above my head)

Learned a lot, felt it was a productive day

Trainer enthusiasm/passion for subject

Little nuggets of information

Discouragement by playing 20 questions

Teacher was excellent at delivery

Forward planning, ie prepare downloads if needed

Teacher uses different techniques to reinforce message

Show/tell/handout

Props are useful

Approachable teacher happy to discuss

#### Bad

Tutors who won’t repeat things

Bad timing

Poor delivery/speed/rushed

IT issues

Relevance/quality of teaching resources

Never get beyond car park

Not engaged – doing course because someone thinks it’s a good idea

Too big a group

Tutor who is H & S hazard themselves

Students not feeling valued as no effort put in

Poor structure to course

Feeling pressured as out of comfort zone

Over-promising, under-delivering

Not taking students’ concerns or disclosures about medical conditions seriously, or accommodating them.

Confusion

Language used – overwhelmed

Not fully understood

Level of knowledge

Couldn’t answer questions

No, or misleading pre-course information

Not gathering groups together before introducing a plant

Sinking to the LCD?

(Synching to the projector?)

Tutors not knowing when to stop – slides at 1.00am is too late!

Several members of course caught in quicksand

Run out of time – programme too ambitious

Course title misleading ‘Difficult’ was ambiguous and much too easy for half the students

300 students on one field trips to look at heather, sub-group leader was a PhD student who didn’t even know what heather was

Not all able to see/hear

Too large a group

Pace too fast/too much material

Too much jargon, not explained

Confused delivery

Planning is poor, leading to time wasting

Being taught a lot that I already knew but not covering what I had expected and wanted because teacher had to lower level of teaching because other students were not on the right level course

Disorganised information delivered with lack of preparation

H&S nightmare student