



# THE RISK OF EDUCATION FOUNDATIONAL MODULE

## PARTICIPANT HANDBOOK





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# Training For Primary School Teachers In Crisis Contexts

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PARTICIPANT HANDBOOK

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## Handout 0.0 - Skills and Strategies Worksheet

### MODULE 0: The Risk of Education

#### STEP 1: SELF-EVALUATION

Review the skills and strategies you can bring to your classroom that you learned in this module. For each session you will choose one skill or strategy you would like to develop and write it below. It is important to be honest with yourself and open to learning new things about yourself.

**To rate yourself, think of yourself as a water cup, by shading the amount of water it contains:**



Currently do not have this skill. Need to learn or develop.



I use this skill a little. Need to develop more.





Have an average amount of this skill.



I use this skill in the best way possible.

**Complete the rating for each category:**

- 1. Today:** how well do you currently use the skill?
- 2. Goal:** how well would you like to use the skill in the next week?
- 3. Action:** what will you do in the next week to use or practice the skill?
- 4. Practice:** how well did you use the skill when you practiced it in your classroom? (to be completed AFTER you have practiced the skill in your classroom)

Skill/ Strategy	Today	Goal	Action: How will I achieve my goal?	Practice
<b>Example: I will try different levels of collaboration to find what works best for me</b>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I will have an informal conversation with another teacher about a lesson.</li> <li>I will discuss classroom management with a group of teachers at an upcoming staff meeting.</li> </ul>	
<b>1.</b>				
<b>2.</b>				
<b>3.</b>				
<b>4.</b>				



## STEP 2: PLAN

Choose 1-2 of the skills/strategies from the sessions that you would like to develop. Write an action plan of the steps you will take to achieve your goal.

Area for Growth: \_\_\_\_\_

Action Plan:

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Area for Growth: \_\_\_\_\_

Action Plan:

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# Session 1: Education to totality

## Handout 0.1A: Comparison of bringing out and stuffing

Bringing out	Stuffing in
Focuses on correction of the misbehavior	Focuses on corporal punishments
The educator explains reasons for the required form of behaviour	Imposes school rules without explanation
Allowing pupils time to play	Excessive class work without time to play
Guiding pupils towards a personal understanding of the lesson and how it relates to their daily life	Frontal lessons without explanation
Guiding pupils to make own decisions etc	Forcing pupils to do what the teacher wants etc.

## Handout 0.1B: Picture of "The first steps" by Vincent Van Gogh



## Handout 0.1C: Meaning of education

The term; to educate, comes from the Latin word e-ducere, which means "to bring out", or to lead out of the person (the potential inherent in him/her). Not to stuff into but to bring out. (See practice activity on the next page)

There are many recognized attempts to define the term education. In this training, we reflect on the definition by an Austrian theologian Joseph Jungmann, upheld and demonstrated strongly by a renowned Italian educator; Luigi Giussani, that; education is an introduction to total reality. Cited in Luigi Giussani's book, *The Risk of Education* qualifies this definition thus;

### Introduction

Education as introduction provides the conditions for an encounter, a discovery, an experience. The adult is called to participate in the adventure of the young in encountering the reality. In the young there is a natural dynamism the adult has to accompany, to nurture (the youth is not a "tabula rasa")

When facing the reality, we realize that we have infinite desires (from Latin de sidus = about the stars) yearning to be fulfilled. All the desires point to the desire for beauty, love, truth, justice and happiness. Looking at the human experience, we recognize that every human being has the same fundamental desires. This is true for everyone. The bunch of the fundamental desires is the heart. We can speak of Education if the relationship is at the level of the needs of the heart: I communicate to the other how my heart is at play in front of the reality and I provoke the other to the same openness.

### Reality

This is whatever exists. Reality is very important because it is there for me. It makes the person move, because it fascinates, provokes, puts questions. The more I get involved in the "external" reality, the more I understand the interesting reality I am.

### Total

My heart is made for the totality; it cannot be satisfied by something less. Total doesn't mean a sum of things, but the meaning of those very things. Reality is really understood and enjoyed when we discover its meaning, its value.

Education is a journey, a journey done together, whose destination is everlasting Happiness.

# Session 2: Tradition and the present

## Handout 0.2A: Meaning of tradition

“Education is a personal event, but it happens within a human, cultural context. (See practice activity next page) The term tradition, comes from the Latin word Tradere which means “to hand over”, hand down. TRADITION is handing over of... from generation to generation. What is handed down is what we cherish, our heritage: All traditions converge to one common human tradition of; Love, Truth, Justice, Beauty, Happiness & the Infinite. Therefore, there is a common human tradition: the heart. Every tradition (African, Chinese, American, etc.) proposes beauty, love, truth, justice and the Infinite (this is why different traditions can live together) Tradition is an essential factor in Education: it is the first way of introducing the young to reality.

### “Tradition is an explanatory hypothesis of reality”

Every person grows in a tradition, a cultural environment that communicates knowledge, values, rules and habits; all the traditions are positive, because their value is the attempt to answer the deepest questions of the heart of man; tradition offers a meaning, an explanatory hypothesis of reality; tradition is different from traditionalism – the blind, uncritical, piecemeal acceptance of what was done or believed in the past; tradition is the starting point given by nature to a child for approaching and understanding reality; tradition as explanatory hypothesis of reality is the only condition of giving certainty to the learner; the effects of rejecting tradition are uncertainty, indifference, alienation, lack of commitment to reality and skepticism.

The emphasis put on tradition is never the negation of the uniqueness of the individual, but, on the contrary, is the condition for its affirmation: only in link with his/her own tradition can a child develop as a full personality; the link with a tradition does not mean its passive acceptance, but its understanding up to the point of affirming it in a different way and renewing it (novelty always blossoms from tradition).

### Effects of rejecting tradition

Teen age is generally the time when the conflict with one's origin and belonging blows up; only the patient and bold presence of educators assures the possibility of coherence to the research of the teenagers and fashions a generation of people with unitary and strong personalities. The absence of the educator to offer this coherent path only generates persons that are uncertain about their identity. Other possible consequences could be: fear, indifference, alienation, skepticism and lack of commitment to life.

# Session 3: The role of a master (authority)

## Handout 0.3A: The perfume

As she stood in front of her 5th grade class on the very first day of the school, she told the children an untruth. Like most teachers, she looked at her students and said she loved them all the same. However, that was impossible, because there in the front row, slumped in the seat, was a little boy named Teddy Stoddard.

Mrs. Thompson had watched Teddy the year before and noticed that he did not play well with the other children, that his clothes were messy, and that he constantly needed a bath. In addition, Teddy could be unpleasant.

It got the point where Mrs. Thompson would actually take delight in marking his papers with a broad red pen, marking bold Xs and then putting a big "F" at the top of his papers. At the school where Mrs. Thompson taught, she was required to review each student past records and she put Teddy's off until the last. However, when she reviewed his file, she was in for a surprise.

Teddy's first grade teacher wrote, "Teddy is a bright child with a ready laugh. He does his work neatly and has good manners. He is a joy to be around."

His second grade teacher wrote, "Teddy is an excellent student, well-liked by his classmates, but he is troubled because his mother has a terminal illness and life at home must be a struggle."

His third grade teacher wrote, "Teddy's mother's death has been hard on him. He tries to do his best, but his father doesn't show much interest and his home life will soon affect him if some steps are not taken."

His fourth grade teacher wrote, "Teddy is withdrawn and doesn't show much interest in school. He doesn't have many friends and he sometimes sleeps in class."

By now Mrs. Thompson realized the problem and she was ashamed of herself.

She felt even worse when her students brought her Christmas presents, wrapped beautifully in bright ribbons and papers, except for Teddy's, whose present was clumsy and wrapped in heavy brown paper.

Mrs. Thompson took pains to open it in the middle of the other presents.

Some of the children started to laugh when she found the rhinestone bracelet with some of the stones missing and a bottle of perfume that was only one quarter full.

But she stifled the children's laughter when she exclaimed how pretty the bracelet was, putting it on, and dabbing some of the perfume on her wrist.

Teddy Stoddard stayed on after school that day just long to say, "Mrs. Thompson, today you smelled just like my mom used to."

After the children left, she cried for a long time.

On that very day, she quit teaching reading, writing and arithmetic. Instead, she began to teach children.



Mrs. Thompson paid particular attention to Teddy. As she worked with him, his mind seemed to come alive. The more she encouraged him, the faster he responded.

By the end of the year Teddy had become one of the smartest children in class. And, despite her lie that she loved all the children the same, Teddy became one of her “pets”.

A year later, she found a note under her door, from Teddy, telling her that she was still the best teacher he had ever had in his life.

Six years went by before she got another letter from Teddy. He then wrote that he had finished high school, third in his class, and she was still the best teacher he ever had in his whole life.

Four years after that, she received another note saying that while things had been tough at times, he still stayed in school, had stuck with it and would soon graduate with the highest honours. He assured Mrs. Thompson that she was still the best and most favourite teacher he had ever had in his whole life.

Then four more years passed and yet another letter came. This time he explained that after he got his bachelor’s degree, he decided to go a little further. The letter explained that she was still the best and most favourite teacher he had ever had in his whole life. But now the name was a little longer... The letter was signed, Theodore F. Stoddard, MD.

The story does not end here. There was yet another letter that spring. Teddy said that he met this girl who he was going to marry. He explained that his father had died a couple of years ago and he was wondering if Mrs. Thompson would agree to sit at the wedding in the place that is usually reserved to the mother of the groom.

Of course, Mrs. Thompson did. And she wore that bracelet, the one with several rhinestones missing. Moreover, she also remembered to wear the perfume that Teddy’s mother wore on the last Christmas they spent together.

They hugged each other, and Dr. Stoddard whispered in Mrs. Thompson ear, “Thank you, Mrs. Thompson, for believing in me. Thank you so much for making me feel important and showing me that I could make a difference.”

Mrs. Thompson, with tears in her eyes, whispered back, “Teddy, you have it all wrong. You were the one who taught me that I could make a difference. I didn’t know how to teach till I met you.’

You could have a Teddy standing in front of you and yet not realize it.

## Handout 0.3B: The meaning of authority

"Since tradition is an explanatory hypothesis of reality, it implies the need for someone in whom this hypothesis is reflected; someone in whom the true tradition is deeply rooted. The term "Authority" is from the Latin word, Auctoritas, which means "one who causes growth".

Education happens within a relationship, so there is need of a person who helps us to be introduced to the reality through sharing life experiences. An authority is the location of the most conscious expression of tradition and an authority proposes to me a way (a hypothesis) of living reality that is fascinating and that helps me discover what really corresponds to me, causing my growth.

"Every child and every adolescent will encounter the bearer of what we have called an explanatory hypothesis. This is unavoidable, and it begins in the family, for the initial hypothesis is the view of the world we receive from our parents or from those to whom, our parents have entrusted our education" (Luigi Giussani):



# Session 4: Critical Truth Seeking

## Handout 0.4A: Meaning of Critical Truth Seeking (Personal Verification)

If tradition is a hypothesis and not an explanation of the reality, it means that it has to become “personal”. The term “to verify” comes from two Latin words: Verus = “true” and Facere = “to make”. Hence, to verify is to make true this is humanly made possible through a comparison of the proposal with the heart. It is necessary to stimulate / provoke the adolescent to personally compare what is given by tradition with his own heart. The heart makes this comparison objective and infallible. The comparison is not with my ideas, my sentiments, my thoughts... but with what is truest in me.

Verification is important because true education must be an education in criticism. The word “criticism” comes from the Greek word Kritikós: skilled in judging, critic. Otherwise from Krinein, meaning to sieve, separate or sift. The word “criticism” is linked to the word “problem”. Derived from Latin Proballo: meaning to put something in front of our eyes, to look intently at something.

Criticism is not related to the word “doubt”. The young must verify the traditional contents being offered to him; this can be done only if he himself takes the initiative: no one else can do it for him. This is what takes to conviction

“I’m not here so that you can take my ideas as your own; I’m here to teach you a true method that you can use to judge the things that i will tell you.” (Luigi Giussani- 1922- 2005)

# Session 5: Education to Freedom

## Handout 0.5A: The Mystery of Man's Freedom by Charles Peguy

Man must love these creatures as they are.  
When you love a being you love it as it is.  
There is only I being perfect  
This is also why, perhaps,  
I know what perfection is  
And demand a lesser perfection from these people.  
I know, I know how hard it is  
And how often as they labour through their trials  
I wish, I am tempted to put my hand under their belly  
To sustain them in my large hand  
As a father teaches his son to swim  
In the river current  
And is divided between two sentiments  
For on the one hand if he sustains him always and he sustains him too much  
The child will stick to him and will not learn how to swim  
But even if he does not sustain him at the right moment  
This child will swallow a bad mouthful  
This is how I am as I teach them to swim through their trials  
I too am divided between these two sentiments  
For, if I sustain them always and I sustain them too much  
They will never know how to swim by themselves  
But if I weren't to sustain them at the right moment  
These poor children might perhaps swallow a bad mouthful  
Such is the difficulty, this great it is  
And such is the very duplicity, the double face of the problem  
On the one hand they'll have to make their salvation by themselves  
It is the rule  
And it is formal. Otherwise it would not be interesting. They would not be men.  
Now I want them to be manly. Let them be men and earn for themselves  
Their knight spurs.  
On the other hand, they must not swallow a bad mouthful  
Having plunged in the ingratitude of sin  
Such is the mystery of man's freedom, says God.

## Handout 0.5B: Education to Freedom

The purpose of education is to fashion a new human being free from mental slavery, and from the tendency to conform. We feel free when something satisfies us. To satisfy is a verb from Latin 'Satis facere' that means "to fulfill". Freedom is to satisfy the desires of the heart: desires for beauty, love, truth, justice, happiness. The heart is done for the Infinite and nothing less can satisfy it.

Freedom is the capacity to recognize and pursue what corresponds to the heart. The figure of a Master, of an authority is necessary. Freedom is to be linked, to belong.

### Conditions:

- Awareness of who I'm and my destiny: of the nature of the human being, of what he is and he longs for and of his dignity.
- Self-governance: a kind of self-determination guided by autonomy and independence of heart.
- Authoritative companionship: a master who testifies true freedom in his life

### Risk for the educator

- The increasing autonomy of the adolescent is a "risk" for the educator's intelligence and heart and even for his pride.
- It is a risk because the adolescent can either take up the proposal or rubbish it.

### The risk for the learner

- To confront the proposal of the educator with his heart and use it in facing the reality
- It is here that the learner develops his freedom and his personality.
- With this understanding of freedom, the educator will gradually detach himself from his student.
- This is the beginning of a new journey: the time has come for the mature, deep camaraderie that binds those who live the same experience of the world. This is the time when former pupil and former teacher work together side by side for a destiny that unites everyone









