

4 Provision of Race Related Training

Race relations training in Britain has been provided through a number of different channels, all of which were included in the round of interviews for this study. They can be grouped as follows:

- (i) *Publicly-funded services*
 - Race Relations Employment Advisory Service
 - Industrial Language Training Units
 - Commission for Racial Equality
 - Race Equality Councils
 - Other publicly funded training services
- (ii) *Independents*
 - Independent training consultancies
 - commercial
 - non-profit
 - Independent freelance trainers
- (iii) *Associations*
 - Public sector employers' organisations
 - Professional associations
- (iv) *Labour movement*
 - TUC
 - Individual trade unions
- (v) *In-house*
 - Organisations' own internal training sections

(i) *Publicly funded services*

The Department of Employment's Race Relations Employment Advisory Service provides employers with free advice and training. About twenty-five advisers operate nationwide from a number of locations around the country, each reporting to one of the two regional administrative centres in London and Sheffield. The service aims to make about 1,000 visits to employers (including repeat visits) and provides 800 to 900 briefing seminars per year.

The Industrial Language Training Units were in the past an important element of race training provision in this country, and some were still functioning at the time of our fieldwork, but they no longer exist as a national network of Units. The Manpower Services Commission published an extensive review of the ILT Service in 1985, and subsequently the Units ceased to receive dedicated government funding. Some Local Education Authorities absorbed former ILTU staff and in these areas training provision continues on a reduced scale.

The staff of the Commission for Racial Equality advise employers about their obligations under the Race Relations Act and carry out general promotional work on equal opportunities. They provide a small amount of training for employers and trade unions, and arrange seminars and conferences on equal opportunities employment and on race training itself. Race Equality Councils (formerly Community Relations Councils) arrange local meetings and seminars and some open courses on race equality in employment and service delivery; the extent of their involvement in this kind of work varies considerably from place to place.

There is a small number of other publicly-funded providers of race relations training. They are for the most part in receipt of grants for supplying training to specific sectors such as the police or voluntary organisations.

(ii) Independent trainers and consultancies

The PSI project has concentrated on London, the Midlands and West Yorkshire. Within those areas there are several dozen 'independents'. These are either training consultancies (organised as commercial firms or as non-profit services) or freelance individuals, offering race relations training or equal opportunities training that covers race among other subjects. The supply side of the market changes quite rapidly, but we estimate that in the study areas a 'yellow pages' of race relations training would include about 50 to 60 entries for the independents.

It is important to note that among the independent providers are organisations and individuals with very diverse histories in race training. Some have come into the business through their work in management training and organisational development, while the involvement of others has grown out of their experience in campaigning for the rights of black people and other groups. Some of

the independents specialise in race training while others provide it as part of a longer menu of training services. Some are businesses which aim to turn a commercial profit, while others aim to make only enough money to continue their work. Whatever the background of the trainers, however, we have observed among them a generally high level of commitment to race and sex equality and to the role of training in achieving it. Some continue to work in the field at a cost of personal stress, because the training is often emotionally demanding: even when trainers avoid 'confrontational' methods, participants often find the subject very uncomfortable and in response try to undermine the trainer, sometimes behaving abusively, particularly towards black trainers and women trainers. As a result, we were told, there is some tendency for people to 'burn out' professionally after a few years, as in other stressful occupations.

(iii) Associations

Although their role is often one of promotion and co-ordination rather than direct provision of training, some public sector employers' organisations help to arrange race relations training for their constituent bodies. Some professional associations and institutes are also keen promoters of training and include race relations on their general syllabuses.

(iv) Labour movement

The TUC includes an element on racism and discrimination in its basic courses for shop stewards and staff representatives. The ten-day courses, within which race relations takes up one day, are run through the TUC's regional structure; in the South East region, for example, the courses are run from thirty different centres. There are also three and five day courses on 'Tackling Racism at Work' run at the TUC National Education Centre and at a number of TUC sponsored local centres. Individual trade unions have raised their profile on equal opportunities issues over the last few years, and several now run special race relations courses for lay members and full-time officers.

(v) In-house training

Many large organisations have their own general staff training schemes, often administered by corporate or departmental training sections, and some have taken on race relations as part of their work.

This is particularly evident in the local authority sector, where in some cases staff have been appointed specially to organise equal opportunities training. Also common is the ‘topping-up’ of in-house training programmes by the use of outside trainers. This happens in two distinct ways: first by the supplementing of ‘bulk’ training by the addition of race relations and other equal opportunities modules; and secondly by the use of outsiders to instruct in-house trainers, who in turn carry out the main programme within the organisation.

As large organisations move through different stages of equal opportunities development and attempt to give training to staff in greater numbers and at lower levels, so buying in training becomes economically less efficient than running a programme with their own trainers. The training of in-house trainers seems to be a growing part of the equal opportunities scene. A number of the independents mentioned this aspect of their work, some of them claiming to be the only pioneers in field – probably because the work is relatively new and there has not been a significant discussion of it in the literature.

Training courses on the market

It is a good idea to distinguish between two types of course:

- (i) Courses for staff of a single organisation, tailored to that organisation.
- (ii) Courses open to people from more than one organisation.

(i) Courses tailored to a single organisation

Most of the trainers (both publicly-funded and independent) offer these courses, which make up the bulk of the training discussed in our interviews. The degree of tailoring varies a great deal. It is rare that an organisation will buy in a course that takes no account of their particular circumstances and problems, but sometimes trainers make only minor amendments to courses they ran previously.

The variety hidden behind the term ‘courses’ should not be underestimated. They range from short information sessions on the law and the concept of indirect discrimination through to programmes of workshops stretching over many months and involving organisational development, personal development and training for skills, knowledge and beliefs; from seminars for senior managers through to instruction sessions on job duties for manual staff; from courses on personnel practice through to courses on equality in service

delivery. Within this diversity it is very hard to judge where the centre of gravity lies – that is to say in what form the largest volume of race relations training has taken place – but our work suggests that courses in fair recruitment and selection take precedence, followed by courses or workshops on equality of service delivery. Recruitment and selection training tends to be used by employers as a formal way of introducing equal opportunities development to their workforce.

The most common length of the discrete courses on recruitment and selection, or on awareness, is two to three days, although one-day courses are not uncommon. Many trainers prefer to run longer courses because they feel they are more effective, and for obvious commercial reasons, and some employers take up courses of five days. Courses extending beyond a week are rare, although some of those we heard about were broken up into sections over several months adding to more than a week in total. Most outside trainers have a preference for running courses away from the employer's premises, partly for practical reasons, to avoid trainees being called away to the telephone or to attend to crises, and partly to assist trainees in thinking in new ways about their work. These two reasons are not as distinct as they might seem at first: reluctant trainees tend to use a work crisis as an excuse to duck out of challenging parts of a course, and it was suggested to us that people even arrange for radio-page bleeps to sound at convenient times. Off-site training is not always practicable, however, and in many cases has the disadvantage of adding to the cost of a course.

(ii) Open courses

A number of bodies run publicly advertised open courses and seminars on race relations and equal opportunities issues (for example the Industrial Society, the Royal Institute of Public Administration (RIPA), the CRE, and some of the independents). While open courses do not possess the same scope for diversity as courses within organisations, they do vary a good deal, between concerns with employment and service delivery, between different sectors, and over the extent to which they emphasise the role of the individual in establishing equality practices.

Training and equal opportunities consultancy

Most of the providers (both the independents and the publicly-funded trainers) feel that it is important to combine their equal opportunities training with other organisational development work and other staff development work. Nearly all trainers hold the view that training can only be part of a general strategy to improve the equality performance of an employer or a service, and they seek to contribute in other ways to that strategy. In many cases the course planning merges into a phase of general equal opportunities consultancy; most trainers are not only interested in the extra work, but are also committed to a successful equal opportunities outcome. They do not want the training to be an isolated event. Sometimes clients have to be talked out of regarding training as their main (or in extreme cases their only) equal opportunities measure.

Course design and assessing training needs

The starting point of both training and consultancy is the 'needs assessment', much discussed in the literature but in practice a stage that is often reduced to a discussion and exchange of information between a trainer and a manager in the client organisation. Trainers differ in what they offer, however, and what clients expect to happen also varies, so it is worth outlining the range of preliminary assessments of training requirements that were described in our interviews.

In principle most trainers like to spend some time studying an organisation, to identify the specific problems and options, before recommending a training course and other measures. The aims are to identify particular impediments to equality in the formal and informal functioning of the organisation, and the points at which discrimination can occur by design or by default, and to determine which of these are accessible by training and which can be tackled by other policies; one trainer said the point is to 'get under the skin' of an organisation. In some cases this assessment is possible, where an employer accepts the value of the exercise (and the implied challenge to managerial prerogative) and resources are available to fund the work. The publicly-funded training services have to convince employers of the first point, but do not have to persuade them to pay the full cost, so they have in general undertaken more substantial needs assessment exercises than the independents, who need to recoup the full cost from

the client. Trainers explained to us that most organisations do not have the level of commitment required to put money ‘up front’ for equal opportunities and that firms in the private sector are particularly reluctant. Some trainers insist, however, on a minimum consultation before training, and some are successful in mounting substantial needs assessment exercises within companies, involving discussions with managers, staff and customers over a period of weeks. Market position is of some importance here: trainers in greater demand and with a firmer reputation seem to be in a better position to convince employers of the value of preliminary research and consultation, while others report that they usually have to compromise. All resist going in cold without any consultation.

Typically, trainers have an initial meeting with a representative of the client, usually a manager or personnel officer, to discuss the basic objectives of the training and possible approaches, and for the trainer to learn about the organisation. The trainer will probably take away written materials on the structure, functioning and history of the organisation and the department or section where the training is to take place. Another meeting will take place after a more detailed training plan has been developed, and there might be one or two other meetings with key managers or staff; in rare cases the trainers meet all the trainees in advance. In this way an agreed course is worked out. Although this process is better described as tailoring courses to organisations than as comprehensive assessment of needs, it is often the case that clients are persuaded to drop the training they originally had in mind and to adopt another course instead.

It is worth noting that even the minimal pre-course tailoring is not practicable on the open courses, which take trainees from a number of organisations. Some open courses are aimed at particular sectors and particular types of occupation, but they cannot account in advance for the specific organisational setting in the same way as a course designed for a particular workplace.

Costs

(i) Courses and consultancy within an organisation

RREAS make no charges for their services. The CRE and the RECs have no fixed charging policy and often carry out training for nominal fees. When the ILT Service was operational, its charges varied between Units and between clients.

Most of the independents explained that they charge a daily rate per trainer. Many said that the actual rate is negotiable and depends on the type of client: profit-making organisations are charged higher rates than public sector organisations, which in turn pay more than charities, community-based organisations and campaigning bodies. It should be noted that there is more than one argument behind this scaling of charges. One is that some non-profit organisations have little money, and without a discount they simply would not be able to afford the training; another is that private sector organisations can afford more than public sector organisations (one might question whether that assumption holds invariably). A proportion of trainers are also politically more sympathetic to the equal opportunities efforts of public-sector and voluntary organisations than they are to the efforts of firms in the private sector. Some trainers work only in the public and voluntary sectors by choice; others find themselves in the same position because of the smaller take-up of race relations training in the private sector.

For the majority of trainers, daily rates per trainer in the public sector were in 1988 between £200 and £300; a small number, however, started at £500 or more per trainer. The top (commercial) end of the scale was, for the majority of trainers, less than £600 per day. This means that an 'average' course using two trainers and lasting three days could have cost anywhere between £1,200 and £3,600 – but would most often be around £1,500 to £2,000. The additional costs of pre-course consultancy and needs assessment are harder to establish, because trainers are more vague about them, but the pattern seems to be for a lower charge rate for pre-course work. This is perhaps because it is less in demand – clients usually try to avoid buying much time other than actual training days. Although trainers stress the importance of preparatory work, many employers seem to be unconvinced and prefer to spend their money on what they see as a more tangible product. For this reason, and because the client's demands vary considerably with the size of the organisation, it is impossible to give a figure for an average package of consultancy plus training.

Several informants said that they had on occasions provided training for no charge for organisations that were particularly deserving and poor, and when seeking to open up new areas of business.

(ii) Open courses

For these there is a charge per trainee, and again there is a wide range, from under £40 per day to over £150 per day (1988 prices).

The implications of different funding arrangements

The way in which trainers are funded is one of the influences on their patterns of work and their approaches to 'training principles'. The fact that organisations are comparatively reluctant to pay for extensive consultancy in the run-up to training means that publicly funded and grant funded trainers (such as RREAS and the ILTUs, but also other trainers who have institutional backing) have had greater flexibility than independent trainers in dealing with clients. Background funding permits a greater input of non-training hours. Thus trainers with background funding tend to carry out more overall equal opportunities consultancy as a pre-requisite to training, and more extensive follow-up. In this way, funding does affect the type of training a client receives.

The involvement of institutions

There is no professional body or other organisation that keeps an up-to-date comprehensive register of race relations training providers. Consequently people who are seeking training have to rely on a variety of formal and informal sources of information. Useful advice has been disseminated by the CRE in its two-volume guide to race relations training, and other bodies have given direct or indirect encouragement to employers to take up training, but none have provided the tools to begin a proper search for trainers. The Local Government Training Board produced a non-evaluative register of trainers, but it is now out of date. The National Health Service Training Authority produced a register of trainers more recently. However, the most common starting point for organisations seems to be a set of enquiries among professional contacts.

People starting their search for a provider of race relations training sometimes contact the CRE, PSI or another national organisation associated in some way with race relations. The present arrangements (or, rather, lack of arrangements) for providing lists of potential trainers cannot be fair or efficient. The institutions involved with race relations ought arguably to take on an explicit role in this respect, because de facto they already have one, like it or not. Potential clients

also have difficulties in establishing criteria for selecting trainers, and need to be advised of what questions to ask, not just of the trainers, but of themselves: sometimes organisations do not have a clear idea about what they want from training before they embark on a selection process.

Networks and individuals

It would be wrong to visualise the independent sector of training provision as being made up of consultancies, with permanent full-time staff, operating independently of and in competition with individual freelance trainers. The reality is much more complicated, and is better characterised as a set of partially interlocking networks rather than a field of discrete competitors. This is not to deny that there are professional rivalries as in any other business, nor to suggest that all freelance trainers have connections with others; there is in fact a robust atmosphere of competitive professional pride among trainers (fed by the very public debates over training principles) but it co-exists with a degree of functional collaboration. The consultancies tend to employ people who at other times do freelance work or who have permanent part-time jobs elsewhere. ‘Training associate’ was a term used repeatedly in our interviews, referring to trainers who work together on a semi-permanent basis or who can be brought in for specific courses or sessions. Arrangements like these mean that the commercial and employment structures of training provision are more fluid than they might at first appear, especially as professional collaborations and alliances tend to shift over time. Freelance trainers who do not have professional links with others complain of isolation, however, since there are no formal professional structures. Periodically there are attempts to establish more formal networks and forums for equal opportunities trainers, but these have not developed enough momentum – or resources – to overcome the barriers created by the ‘training debate’, and trainers still seek to differentiate themselves publicly in terms of training principle and commitment to race equality.

Marketing

As regards marketing their product, the consensus among the independent trainers is that standard advertising methods (such as newspapers and magazines) have little effect. Most business comes

by recommendation or by repeat orders. Some commented that mail shots to potential customers do generate some work, and some business comes from telephoning likely clients.

Selecting trainers

Finding an outside trainer is at present largely a matter of asking professional contacts or consulting trainers already known. Most of the clients we have spoken to found their trainers through informal contacts of this sort. Over half, however, considered more than one provider before taking them on. Several, in both the public sector and the private sector, adopted a fairly formal procedure for selection from the group of trainers they contacted, although we have seen little evidence of selection of trainers by simple competitive tender. Organisations do pick and choose, but more often through a process of discussion with trainers over what they will provide than through a crude assessment of value for money. Some organisations now scrutinise trainers on an on-going basis and maintain an approved list, from which trainers are taken on for specific tasks.

Client informants made few comments about the importance of costs for their choice of trainer. In the end, for large organisations at least, race relations training at a senior staff level is not an expensive purchase: two to three thousand pounds for three days' intensive training for over a dozen professional staff is relatively good value, and employers can therefore afford to choose the course they want on the basis of perceived quality rather than price. In the private sector, our client informants suggested that the financial arguments about equal opportunities training centred on its contribution to saving money later, rather than worries about its cost; the training has to be justified in terms of its contribution to better uses of human resources, better marketing, or, in some cases, avoidance of the expense of industrial tribunals and formal investigations. This is not to say that costs are irrelevant: some commented that one factor that made RREAS attractive was the fact that their services are free. Independent trainers complained that clients often want training (like any other product or service) for low costs, and some clients even assume at first that it is always free.

Several of the consumers have experience of more than one outside training provider. Some work with more than one simultaneously, while others have changed because they required a different sort of

training, or because they were unhappy with the work of the previous provider.

The training effort

The content of the training we heard about in the interviews is extremely varied, as is the degree of integration into mainstream training. Although we tend to talk about 'courses' as if they are always discrete events, the race relations training is sometimes embedded in training programmes with a wider coverage, even if it is handled with the assistance of trainers brought in specially.

In the organisations we visited, the main areas of concern of the courses have been: general equal opportunities concepts and strategies of change; awareness of racism and discrimination; fair recruitment and selection; personnel policy and practice; ethnic monitoring principles and procedures; and equality in public service delivery. Most of the courses have been a mixture of several of these elements, although some are run as single-subject courses – for example, recruitment and selection courses. Common to most courses, irrespective of their other content, is an attempt to give people a conceptual framework and language to deal with the ideas of racism, discrimination and equality of opportunity – to clear the ambiguities and prejudices about these terms. Without this, the lack of a common language and a clear set of terms describing the different causes of inequality leads to misunderstandings, which prevent the discussion of equal opportunities developing very far.

Most of the race relations training on employment issues has been among managers, supervisors and personnel staff. Training with a service delivery emphasis has more often also taken in staff with other responsibilities, including 'front line' staff such as social workers and counter staff. Most courses mix grades of staff, although trainers are wary of the breadth of grades being too wide, for several reasons. First, the aims and design of a course will depend on the jobs of the participants, and it is confusing and unproductive to try to cover too many functions in an organisation at once; secondly, trainees need to have some common experience for the group tasks and discussions to work properly; and thirdly, senior staff can intimidate others, with or without intent, if the gap is too wide.

In-house training staff are commonly given race relations training, either to ensure that the equal opportunities stance of the organisation

is reflected in (or at least not contradicted by) the style and substance of mainstream training, or to leave them equipped to take over from outside trainers and continue the programme of race relations training. Passing on the baton from outside trainers to in-house trainers is more common among the larger employers, including local authorities, where buying in training in bulk would be very expensive.

What is available?

One important concern of organisations seeking race relations or equal opportunity training is the actual content of the courses available from outside trainers. At this point it is vital that we do not ask the wrong questions: one unfortunate legacy of the racism awareness debate is that people tend to look at race relations training as if it were a single entity, one that some courses do successfully and others do unsuccessfully. But the array of available courses for race relations training does not represent a plethora of different approaches to the same objective, from which we need to choose the ones that work and reject those that fail; rather, it reflects the variety of aims which training is employed to pursue. Any answer to the question ‘what is the best way of going about race relations training?’ is bound to be unsatisfactory because ‘race relations training’ is a term that embraces many activities, all of which are useful in specific circumstances but not in others. This is perhaps the most important way in which much of the literature on equal opportunities training has failed to reflect what actually happens in the field.

The market offers training to meet many different needs: management of organisational change, awareness of the needs of ethnic minority clients, equality pitfalls in interviewing and selection, details of the Race Relations Act and other legislation, general equal opportunities action programmes, and many other aspects of equality and race relations, designed for trainees at many different levels in organisations that are at different stages of policy development. Trainers tend to offer a range of services but also have their own specialisms. Therefore once an organisation is sure of what its training aims are, there should be few difficult issues to resolve in selecting training providers – few, that is to say, exclusive to this subject area. It is in the assessment of the aims that the difficulties lie: in other words, you can probably find the training your organisation needs, but you might first have to work to identify that need.

Trainers differ in the extent to which they stress the distinctiveness of race equality as opposed to other equality issues. Some feel that treating race discrimination as just one example of discrimination against oppressed groups is the best way to start people thinking about racism. They argue that trainees are better able to accept the general principles behind measures to ensure equality when the case is broadly put. Pointing out together the discrimination against people with disabilities, against women and against minority ethnic groups overcomes the defensiveness about race often felt by white trainees and helps them avoid feelings that black people are being preferred by 'reverse discrimination'. This is a practical argument for dealing with all the 'isms' together; others say that the broad equal opportunities approach is also better in principle, because equality-centred thinking should be comprehensive in its approach to disadvantaged groups, and that there is little point in overhauling an organisation's policy and practice towards one group then moving on to another. Others argue to the contrary that covering race issues in a general course on equality cannot succeed unless the special nature of racism is addressed; that is not to say that other forms of discrimination are less important, but that racism cannot be understood by simple analogy to discrimination against women and disabled people. They argue that dealing with racial discrimination as one of several pitfalls of inequality leaves unfinished business – particularly with regard to the trainees' own feelings on the matter.

Content of typical courses

Having stressed the variety of training available, we should point out that for each training objective there is a surprising degree of convergence of course content. Trainers may argue about principles, but these generally affect choices of aims and objectives, and they are less divided over what should go into, say, an actual course on bias-free interviewing, or a policy development workshop for senior managers. To illustrate this, a typical programme is shown below for each of three types of training: recruitment and selection, company equal opportunities policy, and general anti-discrimination and equal opportunity practices for service providers. As a rule, less attention should be paid to course titles than to their stated programmes, since titles are prone to vary with fashion and even with differing regional acceptability of terms such as 'anti-racism': one trainer told us that

course titles were consciously toned down outside the capital to account for this.

Example Programme 1: Recruitment and Selection

This is a course for line managers with responsibility for recruitment and promotion, held within an organisation that has an equal opportunity policy and programme. The aim is to make the policy clear in respect of recruitment and selection, to give trainees an understanding of the problems of direct and indirect discrimination, and to give them guidelines for ensuring their own practices are fair and seen to be fair.

(Two Day Programme)

1. Equality Policy and Procedure -
The company equality programme. (Introduction and discussion).
2. Indirect Discrimination -
How selection procedures affect people's chances. (Group exercise and discussion).
3. Fair Recruitment Procedures -
Preparing job descriptions and person specifications. (Small group exercises and discussion).
4. Fair Selection Part 1 -
Shortlisting. (Group exercise).
5. Fair Selection Part 2 -
Interviewing skills. (Group exercise, small group exercise, and role play).
6. Summary -
Review of course. (Small group reports and discussion).

Example Programme 2: Company Equal Opportunity Policy

This is an in-house introductory course for all managerial and personnel staff in a company with an established equal opportunity policy with ethnic record keeping, monitoring and targets. It is part of junior management training and the induction of senior managers new to the company. The aims

are to make clear the company commitment to equal opportunities and to demonstrate its practical implications.

(One Day Programme)

1. Discrimination and the Law -
The Sex Discrimination Act and the Race Relations Act. (Lecture and discussion).
2. Company Policy -
Implications of the law for the company. The Codes of Practice. (Group exercise and discussion).
3. Good and Bad Practice -
Operating the policy. (Small group exercises).
4. Meeting Goals and Targets-
Equal opportunities as part of the company's corporate planning. (Group and individual exercises).

Example Programme 3: Anti-discrimination and Equal Opportunity Practices for Service Provision

This is an open course for people working in public, voluntary and charitable service provision. The aims are to introduce the concepts of racism, discrimination and mono-culturalism, showing how they can affect the delivery of services and the staffing of organisations, and to suggest ways that organisations can change.

(One Day Programme)

1. Introduction -
Trainees' expectations and concerns. (Individual exercise and group discussion).
2. The Influence of Culture -
Awareness of the influence of cultural assumptions on trainees' behaviour. (Small group exercises).
3. Defining Terms -
What is racism? What is discrimination? (Group exercise and discussion).
4. Example: Racial Disadvantage in Employment -
How does it come about? (Small group exercises and discussion).

5. Equal Opportunities in Action -

Ways of avoiding discrimination and fighting racism in practice. Equal opportunities policies. (Small group exercises and discussion).

Training methods

Most race relations and equal opportunities training is now based on a mixture of methods, with an emphasis on the value of group work and self-discovery. This is in line with a general trend in staff training methods, irrespective of the subject matter. Courses tend to be based on groups of eight to fifteen trainees, most commonly with two trainers. Workshops and discussions are used extensively, and the didactic chalk-and-talk methods are out of fashion. The newer methods do not make a course into a non-directed free-for-all, because they are strategically designed to bring trainees to desired conclusions and move them through the course syllabus. The degree of guidance varies and, depending on the skills of the trainer, the trainees' arrival at successive stages of the learning process can seem natural or it can be something of a battle. However, the dependence of group training methods on the skills and experience of the trainer is not special to race and equal opportunities training.

Different courses are run for different levels of staff. This is true for the form of training as well as the substance. Just as the more senior staff tend to have broader, more policy-oriented training than others, so they also tend to receive it in less formal ways: seminar-type work is more common at this level than it is for intermediate and junior staff. No courses at any level are predominantly lecture-based.

Many of the trainers use video films to trigger some of the discussions, but they play down the importance of the content of particular videos. The films are used for keeping up the momentum of courses and introducing ideas in a different way. One trainer said he was keen to ensure that videos amplify points already under discussion, and do not 'slip into mere entertainment'. Consumers of equal opportunities training seem to give a higher value to videos, however. We were often told by training managers, personnel managers and equal opportunities managers that particular videos had a profound effect on trainees' personal understanding of prejudice and discrimination. The trainers we spoke to mentioned a wide variety of videos: some are special training films, while others are recordings of

relevant television programmes. Some of the training films are commercially available while others are produced by the trainers themselves. Some employers produce their own audio-visual materials for internal use.

Some of the equal opportunities training in large organisations, particularly in the finance sector, is currently provided by distance-learning methods (videos, computer-based learning packages, and interactive videos) which are commonly used for their general staff training programmes. It remains to be seen how far these methods will be taken up elsewhere, and how effective they are, either as a component of a wider equal opportunities training strategy or as the main form of an organisation's training.

Collections of written training materials are built up by individual trainers and agencies, who tend to be constantly looking out for new exercises, examples and case-studies. Written materials are often developed from the trainers' experiences in their client organisations: each organisation brings up new equal opportunities problems, which can be used anonymously as practical case studies for future courses. Several trainers said that these examples from personal experience are much more useful than material borrowed from other trainers or taken from training books, although some said they do compare and share materials.

As in the case of the videos, trainers play down the importance of the substantive content of written material, saying that they are just props to facilitate processes that are essentially interpersonal. This relaxed approach to the importance of the content does, however, seem to conflict with a reluctance of some trainers to reveal their materials, and frequent references to people pirating others' materials. But their proprietary concerns over materials are also founded on a genuine worry about the misuse of their tools, for there is a fear among trainers that some of their clients (or potential clients) would, if they had access to the materials, try to take on the training themselves, without having the required skills and experience. Those fears are probably justified: we were told about client organisations saving money by buying in one training course but from then on using the same programme and materials to train other staff themselves.

Most of the trainers we spoke to felt that courses are more effective if an ethnic minority trainer is involved. Some said this was because minority trainers helped to dispel stereotypes about black leadership

and stopped white trainees from appealing to the assumed prejudices of the trainer. Others said that it was not simply the presence of the minority trainer that is useful, but rather the substantive input that a black trainer can make: a minority perspective is important to a successful course. However, many spoke of the pitfalls of setting minority trainers the impossible task of representing black people to the course: if trainees treat them as ethnic experts then an 'us and them' approach will prevail and the course will fail.

Bad behaviour

All the trainers said they sometimes encounter difficulties with course participants. The sensitivity of the subject matter means that individuals and groups can feel threatened and respond disruptively, by verbally attacking the trainers, by becoming abusive or sarcastic, or by refusing to participate, becoming quieter and less co-operative as the course develops. A majority of trainers said that they usually let the other participants deal with individual disrupters, because most people want to be on the courses and are interested in the issues. Where people cannot not be talked into co-operation, trainers take differing approaches: some just ignore the 'quiet resigners' but insist that trainees who are positively disruptive should leave the course, while other trainers continue with only those willing to participate actively. A majority, however, said that the willing trainees are their priority, and that it is a waste of effort to spend time trying to win over people with firmly racist views who want to disrupt the course.

Adverse reactions are more problematical when they come from several trainees or a whole group. Often a trainer is dealing with people who know each other and work together, and at difficult points they can rebel together. To keep things going trainers say they need to be firm but not inhumane; the firmness is required because the 'rebellion' often takes the form of challenging the credentials of the trainers, particularly black and women trainers, and can be personally probing and quite unpleasant. One trainer said that at the beginning of each course she gives the participants a prediction that they will try to undermine the trainers at some point. A common problem is that trainees try to play one trainer off against another, especially if they are a multi-racial team; trainers said it was vital to be on guard for this and avoid showing any friction – even if they do have a disagreement. In general, however, trainers do not complain that disruptions and

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challenges add up to more than minor irritations, and despite being personally fatiguing they do not present substantive obstacles to achieving training objectives.