

CARMINE RODI FALANGA

Trainer



Country: Italy - Czech Republic

Contact information:

Email: carmine.rod@gmail.com

SALTO link: <https://www.salto-youth.net/tools/toy/carmine-rod-falanga.786/>

My personal blog: <https://carminerodi.wordpress.com/>

Education: Master degree in Business Administration in 2002; numerous trainings for trainers since then, most notably the SALTO Training for Trainers in 2004-05 and the Guide Training by the School of Lost Borders (USA) in 2014.

Fields/topics you work in: Personal development, games, storytelling, journalism and social media

Experience as a trainer: I worked (2002-2011) as responsible for youth projects for the Eurodesk information centre in Viterbo, Italy. I was in charge of activities with schools, young people and municipalities at the local, regional and national level.

Parallel to that, I have 12 years of experience as a freelance trainer using non-formal education and experiential learning methods.

In this time I was responsible for organising and personally delivering 100+ residential full-time training courses, plus several many other shorter initiatives.

I work often, but not only, in the context of the European programme Erasmus+.

I am regularly cooperating with the Italian NGO "Cooperativa Sociale Muovimente", which I co-founded.

WHY DID YOU BECOME A TRAINER?

There is not a clear answer to this question. I know I always wanted to work in a job that involves communication, contact with people and the transmission of ideas and enthusiasm.

I have a background in journalism too, having worked for 6 years for two local newspapers in Italy.

I will answer the question "HOW" later in the interview. As to the "WHY", I can sum it up like this: "To reach out to people and have a positive impact on lives, and society, putting to good use the gifts that I have: creativity, enthusiasm, and a passion for stories of all kinds".

WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE PART ABOUT BEING A TRAINER?

IT IS: having the possibility to develop learning tools based on my life passions,

storytelling and games, and to apply them with the people I work with. After a good session or workshop, bringing new ideas or experiences to a group, the satisfaction and the impact is visible on people's faces. The vibes are palpable in the air, it's inebriating. That gives me the feeling that I am doing something relevant, that I am doing my part.

IT IS NOT: having to travel very often, at uncomfortable times, having always a suitcase ready and sleeping sometimes in 3-4 different places during the course of a week.

DO YOU CONSIDER YOURSELF AN ENVIRONMENTALLY-FRIENDLY TRAINER?

Yes but with limits. Travelling is the worst part (again). I know the carbon footprint of all my mobility – and of the people that I support – is probably irredeemable. I try to have a light impact in any other area of my life. Examples: by using public transport rather than car, reducing the

consumption of meat food products, not buying more than I need and avoiding wastes, being responsible with separating waste and composting basically everywhere I go.

HOW DID YOU BECOME A TRAINER?

It was not planned, my career path is somewhat of a happy accident and still is largely an experimental process (not without mistakes!).

After my degree, I was looking for a position that would give me opportunities in that sense. I found it in European Youth Work. I loved it so much that I started to look for opportunities to be more involved in it. So I started to find trainings. Then I started to find trainings for trainers. And slowly and gradually, I became a trainer.

I created the opportunities for a strong start. I was already working in delivering workshops and facilitating training courses, during my university years. Then at my position as Eurodesk officer in Viterbo, I was delivering regularly lectures, presentations and workshops to a wide and diverse



audience of young (and not only) people. This would happen 2-3 times a week, sometimes more, for 9 years. In the meantime I started to work as youth leader and organiser of European youth mobility projects, and with EVS volunteers.

In this way I could put thousands of hours of direct experience “under my belt”. There is no other source of experience than direct practice, and it's the only way I can recommend. Start working, no matter how (and no matter how well paid, if at all), and work hard.

I could share experiences with some excellent colleagues (and others, less excellent) and learn from all of them. I have been in critical situations and emergencies, and learned how to manage all sorts of challenging groups. I guess it's the 10 thousand hours that define experience in any given job.

WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES OF BEING A TRAINER?

I never stop learning, innovating and exploring. There is never a moment when I sit and think “ok this is it, I will be doing this for the rest of my life now”. I am always reading, learning, finding inspiration wherever I can, from all sorts of sources.

I am always planning the events that will happen in the next 3, 6, sometimes 12 months. This means I have to think with a long term perspective, while focusing on the highest intensity of the jobs I am currently doing.

And to work with people sometimes can be very hard. In order to transmit motivation and passion (not to mention, sometimes,



information too) my energy has to be at the top, including physical, mental and spiritual condition. This means I try to take care of myself, to sleep and eat regularly, drink and party in moderation, exercise. Age of course also matters here.

I try to be honest with myself and to have a relaxed attitude but working with groups means to be constantly judged and evaluated, and sometimes not very kindly. This also creates a constant pressure.

DO YOU HAVE SOME TIPS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WHO WANT TO BECOME TRAINERS?

I said it before, in question number 4. Start doing it, don't wait for the big opportunity to come. Don't expect to make a lot of money, especially at the beginning. And work, work, work.

Once you will have thousands of hours behind you, you will not need to define yourself "an expert": it will be self-evident. Don't feel depressed or defeated after mistakes or bad experiences, rest assured you will make many (of both). They will hurt: learn how to learn from them. Always stay humble.

Find a specialty field that will define you, and learn everything you can about it. Specialise. People will remember you more if you bring something unique (or rare) to their learning experiences. There are many trainers who can do a "good enough job" in everything they do.

But you will be able to provide a memorable experience if you become "one of the best" at something.

And always, always cultivate and preserve what gives you the enthusiasm and motivation to be in this field. If you take passion away from it, there is nothing left.

This is not a job, it's a profession or a life choice.

HOW DO YOU PREPARE FOR FACILITATING A TRAINING COURSE?

Literally everywhere. I am a sponge, I absorb stories, inspiration, games from every possible source. I dive deep into reading, books by experts or online sources, I watch hours of videos on a topic. Youtube is a gold mine, but searching can take a while (there is also a big amount of rubbish online, of course).

As I said before, I try to spend the 1-2 days before a training course getting "in good shape", which means physically, but also mentally and spiritually. I take time for myself, I spend time with the people I love, I do something nice like a good dinner out, or going to cinema. All at the same time while getting immersed in the topic of the training, preparing material, some sessions – especially if the topic is experimental or not entirely familiar.

The project "Meet your Trainer" was created by Youth and Environment Europe for young people who would like to become trainers in non-formal educational field.



www.yeenet.eu

Funders:

