

What Makes a Good Trainer?

A successful training experience depends on the quality of instruction and the commitment of the trainer. Here are some key characteristics of a good instructor:

1. **Know Your Trainee** – A strong working relationship between you and your trainee is essential. You need to know what motivated them to enter this profession. You need to be aware of their learning style. You need to know what they expect from you.
2. **Lead by Example** – As a trainer, you need a strong sense of purpose and high standards in everything you do. If you cut corners, then your trainee will do the same.
3. **Know Your Subject** - You need to be more knowledgeable about every aspect of hearing instrument dispensing than your trainee, and always be striving to learn more. A successful trainer should possess and maintain contemporary technical knowledge and skills. Any lack of knowledge or skill will be quickly detected and your relationship with your trainee will suffer.
4. **Be Patient** – Be respectful of your trainee’s efforts. Failure is always part of the learning process. Demonstrate proper technique, encourage practice, check their work, and maintain a good level of cooperation.
5. **Communicate** – The manner in which you communicate with your trainee is paramount to their learning experience. Set a good example through your relationships and ability to communicate with the other stakeholders in your organization who support your efforts, your business, and provide recognition for the importance of the work you do and the training you’re providing. Encourage your trainee to provide feedback regarding each learning experience as you give them open and candid feedback about their knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Communication also involves active listening, that is, paying attention to body language and other non-verbal cues.
6. **Be Enthusiastic** – Enthusiasm can be infectious (in a very good way!) and sets the tone for positive learning activity.
7. **Enjoy the Training Experience** – Have fun and allow a little humor to create a good learning atmosphere.
8. **Be an Inspiration to your Trainee** – Be honest in your dealings with patients/clients, staff, and others. Show compassion and fairness to all. Always take the high road when conflict arises.

Be passionate about teaching and passionate about learning. Foster your trainee to exercise good problem solving and research skills. It’s important for a professional to be able to state a question and to know how to find the answer using available resources. The development of this skill will serve a hearing aid specialist for a lifetime. Coach your trainee on organizational skills and in time management. Your perspective, advice, and encouragement will help your trainee reflect on his/her own competencies as they are developing.