

Some useful stuff for Trainers

If you find these bite-size snippets of information related to the training cycle useful, you will probably love Trainer Routes®. It's a package I've put together to grow today's trainer, including 40 different questions and activities.

If you'd then like to buy a pack, drop me an e-mail at:

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Training Needs Analysis: Repertory Grid technique

'What *is* the repertory grid technique??'

This must have been one of the most frequent questions I was asked at my stand at Olympia's HRD 2002 exhibition. The question arose from one of my posters, which had samples of the questions you can find in the Trainer Routes package, to test trainer's knowledge and identify areas for development.

I was introduced to this training needs analysis tool many years ago on an internal consultancy course, but it was a long time before I plucked up the courage to use it. Having found out how useful it was, however, I became a firm believer and promote it to fellow trainers whenever I can!

Repertory grid can be used for training purposes, to identify key areas for evaluation of performers or functions. It can be used when the elements against which performance is measured have not yet been defined, or need redefining. It can help you to

- Identify training needs
- Evaluate the success of training courses
- Explore managers' opinions of the training function
- Examine the marketing of training products and services

Some useful detailed explanations and examples of the technique can be found on the internet – try a search and see what you learn.

Design: Useful quotations for training

How, if at all, do you use quotations in your training design and delivery? Here are some suggestions...

- **In your joining instructions or invitation letters to learners.** This can be a great start to creating interest and introducing a theme.
- **As laminated wall posters,** for display throughout your training event. Peripherals such as this will add stimulation and encourage learners to explore their learning space.
- **Within your learners' course materials.** One quotation on a single page in a workbook or set of handouts can be more meaningful and memorable to your learners than paragraphs of text.

- **On flipcharts.** On longer training programmes, try introducing a 'quote for the day' theme, as a 'big picture' introduction to your programme for the day.
- **As flashcards.** Quotations related to course content can be used during learning reviews, to help learners make links between the generic quotation and their specific learning. They have then created their own 'hook' or 'anchor', which will be re-activated whenever they hear or read that particular quote!
- **As 'learning mementos'.** How about having a selection of quotations relevant to the course content, available on brightly coloured cards, at the end of your course? Learners can select their favourite and take it back to their desk, as a reminder of their learning.
- **As 'memory joggers' when sending out evaluation questionnaires.** If the quotations were meaningful at the time, they should spur your learners into responding to your evaluation questionnaires!

Delivery: Walking the Talk

One time, a woman came to Gandhi and asked him to tell her overweight son to stop eating sugar.
"Madam," he replied, "come back in three weeks' time."
Surprised at this request, she nevertheless returned with her son three weeks later.
Gandhi looked at the boy and said, "Stop eating sugar."
When the boy had left the room, the mother turned to Gandhi and asked why he hadn't said this three weeks ago.
Gandhi replied, "Madam, three weeks ago I myself was eating sugar."

*(from "The Magic of Metaphor, by Nick Owen
- primary source: Christina Hall)*

Stories like the one above are a great way of introducing sessions, changing the state of your learners and making powerful points.

If you like the story of Gandhi and the sugar, and are tempted to use metaphor in more of your training delivery, I would recommend "The Magic of Metaphor" by Nick Owen. The above tale is just one of "77 stories for Teachers, Trainers and Thinkers" and is a joy to dip in to, whenever you need a source of inspiration or some time to reflect. I have no vested interest in making this recommendation, other than a subversive wish to plant excellent storytellers in every training room in the land... You can buy Nick's book through amazon's website.

Evaluation: Or is it?

Another question I get from lots of trainers is about the difference between validation and evaluation (I must stop putting posters up that raise these questions!). Although it might appear to be a play on words, the difference between the two is quite important.

When we **validate** our training, we are checking whether our training has achieved its original objectives. When we **evaluate**, however, we are measuring whether the training has actually had any cost / value benefit to the organisation.