NAVIGATING YOUR WAY TO EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTION

IN OTHER WORDS...

HOW TO ENHANCE YOUR SKILLS IN PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTING ENGAGING AND EFFECTIVE TRAINING SESSIONS
Before you begin, it's always important to know where you are going...

What knowledge do you want your students to leave with today?

*Who Cares (why is this important)?*

What skills do you want our students to leave with today?

*Who Cares (why is this important)?*

How are you going to be able to tell whether they know and/or are able to do this stuff when they leave?
Four Levels of Proficiency in any Skill

(1) Unconscious Incompetence - the level of wanna-be's. At this level, you suck at skill X, say dispatching, and you're not smart enough to know how bad you suck at it. Students here often have a false sense of competence, (e.g., flying Harriers doesn't look that hard). Teachers need to make students conscious of what this skill is realistically about while preserving their motivation in learning it. Giving them detailed lessons before they're ready to commit to learning the skill will probably cause them to tune out, burn out and drop out after a few lessons. Your teaching focus here should be on fueling interest while delivering a little, basic content. This is the lowest level.

(2) Conscious Incompetence - the beginner's level. You suck at skill X but you're smart enough to know how bad you suck at it. Often accompanied by an overactive sense of humility (e.g., I could never be good at rescue knot tying). This humility on steroids is a defense mechanism that wants to protect the student's self esteem. It kicks in whenever the student tries to learn a new skill. It predicts (correctly) the impending "feel stupid while learning" phase. For teachers, this is the time to build and reinforce basic skills. Making students expert in even basic skills builds real confidence for learning future skills that won't be so dramatically rewarding. Teaching focus here should be on mastering concrete basic skills and building interest for more advanced skills.

(3) Conscious Competence - The amateur's level. You do skill X passably (C+ to B+) level, but you only have confidence in yourself when you are actively concentrating on every step of what you're doing (e.g., Wait, I know my phonetic alphabet...ok, Alpha, Bravo...). This is a stressful and uncertain state for everyone involved - kinda like a first real date. Unfortunately, many students stop learning at this level because it takes all their concentration just to be passable. Students think that since their 100% effort only yields 75% expertise, they will never get any better at this skill. Too bad, that. This is where the trainer needs to start working with individual trainees, not groups. Trainers should work themselves out of the dance and let the student and the knowledge do the Jitterbug together without a chaperone.

(4) Unconscious Competence - The level of the expert. You are passable or better at skill x, and you can usually just "turn it on" and do it without thinking actively about it. Students go through a paradigm shift to get to this level. Their relationship with the skill changes in kind, not just in degree. Like getting a motorboat "on plane," the students reach a point where, mysteriously, the amount of energy they expend drops off sharply without warning, while their proficiency keeps inching upward. Their expertise at skill x approaches 100% while their conscious effort keeps slowly dropping. At this point, there shouldn't be much difference between trainer and trainee in skill x. All the teacher can do is point the way to expert level books, classes or people in skill x. Students should be able to hear the grasshopper at their feet.
Once You’ve Decided Where You’re Going, You Gotta Lay Out Exactly How to Get There . . .

• Specifically, how will you get this knowledge from your mind to their’s?
  (How would you like to have this information taught to you?)

• What specific activities will your students do to make this knowledge practical?
  (The more fun they have, the more they’ll want to learn.)

• How can you tell objectively whether your plans are working or not?
TITLE

Objectives (What do you want students to know/be able to do): 

Associated Training Standards:

Materials/Equipment Needed:
Procedure (What will you say/do? What is your timeline for the session?):

Evaluation Plans (How will you know whether your objectives have been met?):

Safety Precautions/Plans (What are the potential risks? How will you minimize them?):

Appendixes (handouts, overhead transparencies, etc)
Pre-Training Self-Check

*If I follow my lesson plans, will there be...*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Rationale and outline presented</th>
<th>yes</th>
<th>no</th>
<th>???</th>
<th>n/a</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Purpose/objectives clear from the beginning of the session</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>???</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Importance/relevance of topic indicated</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>???</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Technique that provoked a response from the audience used during the first few minutes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>???</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Demonstration activity(ies) used</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>???</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Questions raised throughout presentation that resulted in responses from the audience</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>???</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Visual materials used effectively</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>???</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Kept interest of group by presenting new information or perspective</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>???</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Kept within time limits, but still covered the &quot;promised&quot; topics</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>???</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Objectives (as stated) achieved</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>???</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
JEWELS

Let's face it. Teaching is for hams. We love the attention, the power of knowledge, the throngs of young initiates gazing at us with what - in the best moments - borders on guru-like devotion. Trouble is, too often we don’t teach the way we want to teach. We teach the way we were taught - often badly. Sometimes, we fail to plan classes. We dribble trivia. We ramble. What's a good-hearted ham to do? Well, below are the 8 shiniest jewels I've ever found about teaching well. They won't direct your details, but they can adjust your attitude. They weren't test-tube born in the ivory tower of academic theory. They were hand-forged in the fire of real experience. They are the mantras of many good teachers and trainers. Let them fill all the corners of your day.

People your ideas.

Whoever is doing most of the talking is doing most of the learning.

Always make a one-page written plan for your course, so you'll have something to deviate from midway through class.

People do things they love to do, and will tap limitless sources of energy to learn, only if they love what they're learning.

People don’t learn by listening to you talk. People learn by doing.

"Covering content" is the greatest obstacle to understanding.

- Howard Gardner, Ph.D.
Harvard University

If it's stupid and it works, it isn't stupid.

- Sgt. Major Alan Farrell, Ph.D.
20th Special Forces Group

Good judgment comes from experience.
Experience comes from bad judgment.

- Cowboy proverb