

Teach It Quick and Make It Stick!
Ten Tips from Sharon Bowman's Train-the-Trainer Workshop.
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“So what did you learn?” You pause, think, and reply, “Oh, a ton of things!”

A couple of weeks ago you attended Sharon Bowman's fast-paced, high-energy, hands-on seminar “Teach It Quick and Make It Stick!” During the workshop, you collected so many new training ideas that it might have seemed a daunting task to put it all to use. You probably needed some “incubation time” to let all the new information sink in for awhile.

With that incubation time in mind, here are a few training tips to remind you of some of the concepts covered during the workshop - and some simple “how-tos” as you begin to use these ideas in your own presentations, meetings, and training.

TIP #1: Take it one step at a time. If you're not used to involving your learners a lot as you lecture, choose one idea or activity you learned during the workshop, and include it in your lecture until you, and your learners, feel comfortable with it. Make changes in your training one activity at a time.

TIP #2: Explain the “why” behind the “what.” Telling your learners the rationale behind the new instructional strategies and learning activities will help with their “buy-in.” They will be more willing to try new things once they understand why you are asking them to do

something instead of just listening to your lecture.

TIP #3: Vary your training strategies. It goes without saying – and sometimes we need a gentle push as we move out of our own favorite ways of teaching and learning and stretch to accommodate other learning styles.

The next time you lecture, promise yourself to include something auditory (like a “Pair-Share” where learners pair up and talk for a minute or two about what they just heard), something visual (cartoons, posters, photos, doodles, or clipart relating to the topic), and something kinesthetic (having your learners DO something with the information you just taught them).

TIP #4: Remember the ten-minute rule. Because of TV, we are used to having our information divided up into 7 – 10 minute chunks. So remember to stop talking after about ten minutes and have your learners talk for a minute or two about what they heard. The “Neighbor-Nudge” (aka “Pair-Share” mentioned above) is a quick, easy way to involve learners. Or do a “Numbered-Shout-Out” where, as a group, they have to shout out a certain number of

facts they've learned about the topic.

Can't remember to stop every ten minutes to involve your learners? Then aim for every twenty minutes at first. And set a timer or have a friend in the group hold up a time sign to remind you to stop talking.

TIP #5: Use connections to create safety. Whenever threat is part of a learning experience (i.e. fear, humiliation, ridicule, any physical or psychological danger), the ability to learn decreases while the need to survive increases.



Connecting your learners to each other, to you, and to the topic in friendly, comfortable ways helps everyone become a part of the “learning community.” And when folks feel safe, connected, and included, they are more willing to learn new things, to ask questions, to take risks, to make mistakes.

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Set time aside for learners to talk with each other, to work together in structured groups, and to have fun while they learn. These elements are crucial in creating a safe learning environment.

TIP #6: Balance active and passive ways of learning. Active and passive refer to the body, not the brain. If the folks in your training have been sitting for awhile, have them stand while they do a review, answer questions, or participate in a discussion.

TIP #7: Check for understanding often. Use a koosh ball tossed around the room, signals (thumbs up for yes, down for no), or mini-quizzes (verbal or written) to make sure your learners understand what they've heard.

TIP #8: Use graphic organizers. Help your learners increase their recall of important information by creating a special note-taking page for them beforehand. It can be simple columns with headings like "Facts, Questions, Ahas!" Or it can be a "Mind Map," i.e. using geometric shapes to link facts and subtopics to the topic.

TIP #9: It's about process, not perfection. Sure, your training plan looks great on paper, but throw a few dozen learners into

the mix, and you can never really predict how a workshop or presentation is going to go. So remind yourself that the acts of teaching and learning can get muddled and messy, learners being what they are. It's okay to make mistakes, to back up, to pick up the pieces, to make changes mid-lesson. And it's absolutely okay to ask your learners to take some responsibility for their part in it all.



TIP #10: We teach who we are. Besides the curriculum we have to cover, we are also teaching how to be human. Underlying every teaching/training decision we make are our own values and beliefs about teaching, learning, our own self-worth and the worth of our learners. We do, indeed, make a powerful difference in the lives of our learners!

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Author and traveling teacher Sharon Bowman helps educators and business people “teach it quick and make it stick,” - fine-tuning their information-delivery skills and turning their passive listeners into active learners.

Sharon is the author of six popular teaching, training, and motivation books, including: “*Preventing Death by Lecture*,” “*Presenting with Pizzazz*,” “*How To Give It So They Get It*,” and “*Shake, Rattle, and Roll*.” She is a member of the National Speakers Association and the director of The Lake Tahoe Trainers Group.

She is also the “Trainer’s Coach,” helping individual teachers and trainers polish existing lessons and training programs, and creating new ones that reach all learners.

For more information about Sharon Bowman and her books and training, log onto www.Bowperson.com, or email her at SBowperson@aol.com.

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