

YES! AND... CREATIVE GORILLA # 14

We owe people who attend our presentations or training courses the right to have a creative presentation or course...

Create Better Training ...

"This is a battle, a war and the casualties could be your hearts and minds"

Robin Williams in the film "Dead Poets Society"



Dead Poets Society

How can you find some inspiration?

This week I facilitated a course for trainees who are not professional trainers but provide training as part of their role. The majority of them train on technical or process topics and to date their delivery has consisted mainly of PowerPoint presentations and talking to the audience, with a few exercises included.

The key challenge I posed the participants was "How might you provide your course (or presentation) without a single PowerPoint slide?"

The most rewarding part of the course for me was to observe people move from a state of scepticism, ("Well, I can see it working on soft subjects but it wouldn't work with my technical topic"), to a state of enthusiasm, keen to try new ways to share information, help people recall it and encourage them to use the knowledge they gain.

One of my inspirations for the course is the film "Dead Poets Society", set in a top American preparatory school in the late 1950's.

Robin Williams as the English teacher avoids the tedium of "chalk and talk" (Didn't they have PowerPoint in the Fifties Daddy?) and rote learning.

He wins over his sceptical pupils by involving their minds, body and emotions in learning, so that they truly understand the message and meaning in every poem. He uses methods that will inspire them to recall the learning throughout their lives.

Watch the film and perceive how he uses the following principles to make his teaching memorable. I have developed these from two sources - the principles of Speed (or Accelerated) Learning (a variety of original sources) and Brain Friendly Learning ([Kaizen Training](#)):

Create a stimulating environment ~ Brighten the walls with pictures and key learning points. Have freedom to move. Play music. Provide natural light. Provide healthy refreshment. Use the outdoors.

Build a great learning climate ~ Establish the climate as relaxed, welcoming and enjoyable. Have fun briefing materials. Relax people. Have them interact and get to know each other. Let them construct the rules. Let them know the destination and the route.

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Engage the participants ~ Get their bodies and minds involved and get them in the right STATE for learning. Get them thinking and doing, building knowledge and creating understanding.

Foster collaboration ~ Have people talk, work and play together. Encourage them to reflect with others.

Inject variety ~ Use a variety of media to appeal to all senses and different intelligences. Use different types of exercises to connect with different learning styles. Vary group sizes. Rotate people around groups.

Involve the real world ~ Make the training as much like their real world as possible. Use real world examples and have them apply learning to their work.

so

If you have a presentation or training course coming up soon, might you make it more memorable and rewarding for the participants? What would be the benefits to them and you of making that effort? For example, if you are launching a new change programme, would it be of benefit if people recalled the purpose of the change, felt more involved and perhaps even inspired to make it happen?

ACTION

Inject one or a few of the principles in to a course or meeting. Perhaps you might play music as people enter the room. Or interview a specialist rather than have them talk. You might even do it without a single slide!

TO CLOSE

At the end of “Dead Poets Society” there is a short but poignant scene just before the character played by Robin Williams leaves the school. The Latin teacher is teaching his pupils Latin nouns - but not in the classroom as usual. He is leading them through the grounds of the college, pointing out features such as the grass, in Latin. A small recognition of the contribution his colleague made.

If you would like an article on applying some creative techniques to different aspects of training (not just delivery), please go to [articles](#) on our web site and download it.

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