INTRODUCTION

Beginning with your first academic experiences, you have recognized differences among teachers—some were great; some put students to sleep. Many years later, with a greater focus on improving your own abilities, you attended training sessions, observed and rated the instructors, and questioned whether or not you would be able to replicate the actions and styles that you felt were most effective. You observed and studied all types of trainers, educators, and facilitators; afterward you said, "I can do that, but I can't do *that*!" The more the instructor seemed like you, the more comfortable and confident you felt in trying out new innovative techniques.

What you experienced was a "style identity crisis." You compared and contrasted your own personal style and abilities with those of the instructor. You wondered if you measured up. You questioned whether you could change to become more dynamic and effective.

The ultimate educator is a risk taker, willing to try out new techniques that push the envelope, and willing to accept the challenge to become the "best of the best." This chapter can help you assess your skills and polish your style so you can become an ultimate educator!

STYLE STEREOTYPES

Before you assess your own style, take a look at some styles you may recognize. Maybe you will see yourself in these pages!

Behind each of the following styles is an assumption that may affect the learners in a negative way and impede their learning. Although the assumptions behind the styles are exaggerated, they reveal the implications of the style and may help you become more aware of the impact of a style that you have adopted or thought was effective.

THE SCHOLARLY PROFESSOR

"Listen to me, take good notes, you learn by paying attention to me. I am the expert—you will be tested on what I say."

The professor uses lecture as the primary method of delivery. Written tests are the most common type of assessment. Contact with students is minimal; he or she arrives just before the session and leaves immediately after. The training is instructor-centered; what the instructor says is important.

The professor style implies that the trainer's approval, not the learners' subsequent performance, is the goal of learning. Students' thoughts and opinions are not important.

THE CLOWN

"I'll make you laugh and entertain you. I have a story and joke for all occasions! You may not learn anything, but you'll like me and have a great time!"

The clown tells jokes and entertaining stories. Training success is measured by "smiles," not performance. The clown is everyone's friend; impression is important. The training is instructor-centered; the instructor wants you to like him/her. The clown is often a very popular trainer; participants are satisfied and may, at first, not notice that actual learning was limited or nonexistent.

The clown style implies that "entertainment" is the goal of training—learning is not important.

THE TECHNO TRAINER

"The technological wizardry will captivate you! With videos, presentation software, and other high-tech gadgets, I will cover everything you need to know. I hope the power doesn't go out!"

The techno-trainer takes a back seat to the technology. The trainer relies on the technology to accomplish the training. Testing is based solely on information delivered by technology. Contact with participants is minimal, and not necessary. Students are not actively involved in the learning process. If the technology fails, the training fails!

The techno style implies that the trainer's role is simply to provide information, not to help participants learn.

THE CHEERLEADER

"I'll fire you up! You'll be inspired, motivated, eager to go out and conquer the world! Give me a "T"; give me an "R"; give me an "A"; give me an "I"; give me an "N"; give me an "E"; give me an "R"—what's that spell? TRAINER!"

The cheerleader relies on high energy and inspirational exercises to move participants to action. Training success is measured by the level of excitement generated by the instructor. Contact with participants is extreme. Learning and subsequent performance are less important than participant excitement (that eventually fades). The trainer depends on diffuse excitement versus directed motivation based on learner desire and need.

The cheerleader style implies that excitement will lead to performance.

THE DRILL INSTRUCTOR

"Do you hear me, trainee? You will listen to me, do what I say, and keep quiet! I don't care what you think or feel; it's what I think and feel that's important! Got that, trainee?"

The drill instructor is in total control of the learning environment—the trainer's goals are the only goals considered. The trainer believes that he/she must "whip" participants into shape. Training success is measured by the participants' ability to replicate the instructor's actions to his or her satisfaction. Repetition is the primary teaching strategy. Participants are made to feel stupid when asking questions or demonstrating performance that is less than satisfactory.

The drill instructor style implies that the participant is a moron, incapable of independent thought or action.

While the above styles were exaggerated, the implications are clear. Do you see your style in these descriptions? What does your style "say" to participants?

> (The preceding training styles are adapted from F. Margolis and C. Bell, *Instructing for Results.)*

COMMUNICATION STYLE

Your dominant communication style also affects your training effectiveness. John Bledsoe (1976) outlined four communication styles based on Carl Jung's psychological types: intuitor, thinker, feeler, and sensor (more fully described in the following chart).

Every trainer and participant uses a blend of the four behavioral styles. Despite using a blend or mix, each person relies most heavily on a primary or dominant style. While no style should be considered good or bad, trainers should identify their own style and be able to identify the styles of training participants. With this awareness, you can adjust your style to communicate most effectively with participants.

What is your communication style? Study the following chart and see if you can identify your primary style.

TRAINING STYLES AND CHARACTERISTICS

PRIMARY COMMUNICATING STYLE	TYPICAL TELEPHONE BEHAVIOR	TYPICAL OFFICE DÉCOR OR SURROUNDINGS	TYPICAL STYLE OF DRESS	ASSOCIATED CHARACTERISTICS	
INTUITOR	Wordy but aloof. Impersonal. Goes off on tangents. Not mindful of your time or his/her time.	Imagination in selection of new wave furnishings and décor. Round conference tables, inspiration-pads on walls, offbeat periodicals. Citations for idealistic work, community service and pet causes.	Hard to predict. May be like an absent-minded professor. More into ideas than image. May be too wrapped up in future goals to think about daily appearance. Alternately, may have imaginative self-concept that may reflect in clothes from stunning to outlandish.	**EFFECTIVE** Original Imaginative Creative Broad gauged Charismatic Idealistic Intellectually tenacious Ideological	**INEFFECTIVE** Unrealistic "Far-out" Fantasy Scattered Devious Out-of-touch Dogmatic Impractical
THINKER	Business-like, but lackluster. Little voice inflection. Ticks off specifics. Ordered, measured manner. Sometimes suggests ground-rules for phone conversation, i.e., "Shall we begin with your agenda or mine?"	Correct and nondistracting. Furnishings that are tasteful but conventional. Charts for business use, reports, and reference works nearby. Few touches of informality and color.	Conservative "proper." Unassuming, understated. Dress invariably appropriate to circumstance. Business-like in office; well tailored, correct in nonwork atmosphere. Color-coordinated, but not colorful.	**EFFECTIVE** Effective communicator Deliberate Prudent Weighs alternatives Stabilizing Objective Rational Analytical	**INEFFECTIVE** Verbose Indecisive Over-cautious Over analyzes Nondynamic Controlling Over-serious Rigid
FEELER	Warm and friendly, sometimes seemingly too much so. Does not seem to distinguish between business and personal calls in the sense that he/she is likely to be quite informal. Interjects humor, personal associations, questions about one's well being, etc. Likes to gossip. Talks incessantly. Feels rude if hangs up fast.	Personalizes surroundings; makes office informal and somewhat "homey." Likes warm colors, antiques, big, live plants, mementos, snapshots rather than formal photographs of family. Papers and files, etc., are likely to be messy on the surface, organized underneath in a personal way that only he/she can understand.	Dress is more according to own mood than to suit others' expectations. Likes colorful, informal clothes. Often has sentimental, favorite articles of clothing. Sometimes shows a hankering for old-fashioned touches or "costume" effects.	**EFFECTIVE** Spontaneous Persuasive Empathetic Grasps traditional values Probing Introspective Draws out feelings Loyal	**INEFFECTIVE** Impulsive Manipulative Over personalizes Sentimental Postponing Guilt-ridden Stirs-up conflict Subjective

PRIMARY COMMUNICATING STYLE	TYPICAL TELEPHONE BEHAVIOR	TYPICAL OFFICE DÉCOR OR SURROUNDINGS	TYPICAL STYLE OF DRESS	ASSOCIATED CHARACTERISTICS	
SENSOR	Abrupt. Staccato. Gets to the point; expects others to do the same. Interrupts. Needs to control the conversation.	Generates atmosphere of hard-charging clutter. Mementos, if any, connote action: heads of animals hunted, golf trophies, mounted fish, racing prints. Desk is likely to be big, messy. Too busy to be neat; too action-oriented to be concerned with image unless she/he has a strong thinker back-up style.	Informal, simple, functional clothes are not the order of the day. Wants to be neat but not fancy. Tends to categorize; everyday or dress-up. If sensors see the occasion as being "special," they throw simplicity to the winds; their competitive zeal then rises to the surface and they may "outclass" everyone.	**EFFECTIVE** Pragmatic Assertive Directional results-oriented Objective Competitive Confident	**INEFFECTIVE** Does not see long-range Status-seeking Self-involved Acts first,then thinks Lacks trust in others Domineering, arrogant

(Adapted from *Training Magazine*, March 1978)

As the above table illustrates, it can be fun to stereotype and exaggerate descriptions of training and communicating styles. However, it is important to become and remain aware of how your style may affect your students' learning process. The next section explores specific skills that constitute the trainer's repertoire and gives you an opportunity to assess your skills and develop a plan of improvement.

TRAINER SKILL ASSESSMENT

What makes a good trainer? "Train the trainer" literature looks at this question in a variety of different ways from "presage and process variables" to "stand-up skills." Some experts focus on what instructors must *do* to provide effective instruction. Other experts look at leadership, presenting, facilitating, and other "stand up" *skills* important for successful instruction. This section begins with a look at what differentiates a "successful" trainer from the pack and finishes with an examination of specific skills for effective instruction.

SUCCESSFUL INSTRUCTORS

C Students fully understand what is expected of them.

C Objectives are clearly stated.

C Instruction is based on learner needs and wants.

C Students are given the opportunity to practice.

C Students are given immediate feedback.

C Students are treated with respect.

C Students are the most important people in the classroom.

C Students are valued.

Frank O'Meara (1996) provides ten rules for novice trainers to assist them in getting off on the right foot as trainers. His rules are also a reminder to veteran trainers to keep their attention focused where it belongs—on the learners. These rules will not make you an instant successful trainer, but may help you avoid some training pitfalls.

1. *Change your shoes*. Imagine yourself as a member of your audience, see the subject from your learners' point of view.

2. *Get your act together*. Know your stuff.

3. *Loosen up*. Hang loose and smile.

4. *Un-complicate it*. Express your ideas in the simplest possible language.

5. *Put it on ice*. Motivate your participants to make them feel it is their program.

6. *Vary your pitch*. Be comfortable with several different teaching techniques so as to maintain and renew interest and participation during the day.

7. *Let George do it*. Until they tell you, show you, and do it themselves, they have not acquired the knowledge or mastered the skill you want them to learn.

8. *Play it again, Sam*. Repetition is the mother of learning.

9. *Accentuate the positive*. Be patient and positive in trying to ensure each individual's comprehension and proficiency.

10. *Get a receipt*. The point of your training session is to make sure participants know what they are supposed to know.

Bruce Klatt (1999) writes that while most people think of "delivery skills" such as presenting, leadership, and facilitating as the most important factors to consider when assessing trainers, they are not as important as a trainer's background, experience, attitude, and development. He asserts that the basics of workshop leader success are:

C Be technically competent in your field.

C Bring who you are to what you do as a workshop leader.

C Be informed and care about your participants.

C Continuously develop yourself and your workshop or training program.

Also writing about workshop leadership, Garry Mitchell (1993) says like it or not, the trainer/educator is the authority figure during the session. The learners give you this power. He states that the trainer must assume it; you have no choice!

Mitchell lists ten leadership roles critical to successful instruction:

1. Setting the agenda and keeping track of time.

2. Maintaining training objectives.

3. Protecting the rights of all participants.

4. Listening.

5. Summarizing the material.

6. Reviewing.

7. Focusing the attention of the group.

8. Handling challenges to your authority.

9. Involving silent members.

10. Providing a modus operandi (be decisive, never apologize, avoid confrontation, move in and solve problems as soon as they become apparent).

How many of the behaviors of successful instructors do you demonstrate in your training sessions? Recognizing the actions "successful" instructors take to deliver effective training is helpful as you look to add to your bag of training tricks. Some specific instructor skills and behaviors important for effective teaching are identified in the following section.

TRAINER SKILLS

Caldwell and Marcel (1985) surveyed trainers to identify the behaviors or characteristics that they considered essential to effective teaching. The survey results were organized into trainer evaluation forms for "presage" and "process" variables.

Presage variables are the characteristics that an instructor brings to the teaching situation. They influence the learning process but are not as much a part of the instructor's performance as process variables. Assess yourself on presage variables, i.e. what do you bring to your training sessions?

C Knowledge of subject matter.

C Good speaking ability.

C Enthusiasm, positive attitude.

C Well prepared, good organization.

C Depth of understanding.

C Poise, confidence.

Process variables. Behaviors that are evident and easily observed in the actual presentation of a lesson are *process variables*. Assess yourself on process variables:

C Keeps control of class (does not allow students to get off the subject; adapts instruction to the level of the class; flexible, etc.).

C Gives feedback and positive reinforcement.

C Is fair and impartial (nonjudgmental, open, accepting, etc.).

C Communicates at the students' level (using language and examples appropriate to the level of the class.).

C Involves students in the lesson (through questions, problem solving, simulations, etc.).

C Shows interest in each learner.

C Is an attentive and responsive listener.

C Has clear objectives.

Richard Miller (1974) summarized student surveys on the characteristics of effective teaching. The results of eight surveys are listed below to serve as yardsticks to measure your teaching behaviors.

CHARACTERISTICS OF GOOD TEACHING

BOUSFIELD	CLINTON	DESHPANDE	FRENCH
Fairness Mastery of subject Interesting presentation of material Well organized material Cleanness of exposition Interest to students Helpfulness Ability to direct discussion Sincerity Keenness of intellect	Knowledge of subject Pleasing personality Neatness in appearance and work Fairness Kind and sympathetic Keen sense of humor Interest in profession Interesting presentation Alertness and broad-mindedness Knowledge of methods	Motivation Rapport Structure Clarity Content mastery Overload (too much work) Evaluation procedure Use of teaching aids Instructional skills Teaching styles	Interprets ideas clearly Develops student interest Develops skills of thinking Broadens interests Stresses important materials Good pedagogical methods Motivates to do best work Knowledge of subject Conveys new viewpoints Clear explanation
61 Students, University of Connecticut	177 students, Oregon State University	674 students rating 32 engineering teachers	Students at University of Washington

GADZELLA	PERRY	POGUE	HILDEBRAND
Knowledge of subject Interest in subject Well prepared Uses appropriate vocabulary	Well prepared for class Sincere in interest in subject Knowledge of subject Effective teaching methods Tests for understanding Fair in evaluation Effective communication Encourages independent thought Course organized logically Motivates students	Knowledge of subject Fair evaluator Explains clearly	Dynamic and energetic person Explains clearly Interesting presentation Enjoys teaching Interest in students Friendly toward students Encourages class discussion Discusses other points of view
443 students, Washington State University	1,493 students, faculty, and alumni, University of Toledo	307 students, Philander-Smith College	138 students, University of California, Davis

The above information should be utilized to take a critical look at your style, skills, and abilities. The next two trainer assessment tools can help you get feedback on your training strengths and weaknesses. Next time you conduct a training session, distribute the evaluation forms to observers. The feedback you receive will help you polish your instructional skills.

The first assessment tool encompasses most aspects of a trainer's performance. Eight areas of skill can be assessed: content, design, methods, leadership, participation, adult learning, visuals, and time. Some of the skills are physical, others involve process, and others relate to workshop design. (See Appendix D.1, *Trainer's Performance Assessment*.)

The second tool assesses your lesson delivery in several key areas including checking for student understanding, participation, time management, lesson objectives, and others. This assessment tool is used during the Practicum section of this training. (See Appendix D.2, *Instructor Assessment Lesson Delivery*.)

THE ULTIMATE EDUCATOR HAS ULTIMATE STYLE!

This chapter has reviewed various instructor styles. You have had a chance to read what the experts say about successful instructors. You have reviewed student ideas of effective teaching and considered your own skills and abilities. Now it is time to contract for change . . . use the *Instructor Assessment Lesson Delivery* form (Appendix D.2) to identify your strengths and weaknesses and develop a plan for improvement.

CHAPTER 4   REFERENCES

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