

Spicing up Your Training with Accelerated Learning

Generating Bottom Line Results Through Accelerated Learning



For Executives, Trainers, Facilitators, Meeting Planners, & Conference Organizers

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Why Accelerated Learning

Missing the Mark



In 1996, I launched The Training Oasis, Inc., my training and development company. Over 20 years later, little has changed in the strategies used to deliver content and engage learners. Yes, PowerPoint and projectors have replaced black and white overheads and there are new delivery channels but, fundamentally, the strategies are the same.

Whether it's corporate training, public workshops, or general sessions and breakouts at conferences, the main approach to content delivery is still the "pour and bore" method. I can't take credit for the term. Over 20 years ago, I heard Dave Meier from the Center for Accelerated Learning use it to describe seating participants in rows and boring them with presentations until they are in a comatose state.

For well over a decade, to reduce the amount of time employees are away from work, many companies have scrapped face-to-face classroom training and put most of their eggs in the e-learning basket.

This strategy is flawed for a number of reasons. While it has a chance of working for technical training, computers can't teach people management, interpersonal, and soft skills. Also, technical training usually requires a hands-on practice to ensure skill mastery and proficiency. Unfortunately, ineffective practices have migrated to new technology and platforms.

Often, IT firms and professionals are "prime" in the e-learning development process. Instructional design and adult learning principles are not their areas of expertise. This has resulted in **tedious text-heavy page turners** that miss the mark in terms of producing desired learning outcomes. To save money, many organizations have outsourced e-learning design to low cost foreign suppliers. The cost is low and so is the quality.

The other result of reducing the amount of time employees spend off the job is that, when face-to-face training does take place, it is crammed into increasingly tight timeframes. This leaves little thinking and processing time and creates a challenging learning environment for introverts and analytical learners.

How Accelerated Learning Can Help

Accelerated learning can:

- reduce the amount of time that employees are away from their jobs for training
- streamline training programmes and double their effectiveness
- help employees "hit the ground running" by focusing on results and relevant skills rather than theory
- help participants grasp technical and complex material more easily
- increase retention by creating **vivid and memorable learning experiences**

Since 1996, The Training Oasis, Inc., a Toronto based consulting firm has offered a range of range of accelerated learning, experiential learning, and management development programmes to companies from 9 countries. **Spicing up Your Training** shares best practices gleaned from over 20 years of experience. It includes updated versions of our popular **Spice of the Month E-zine** archives and new content.

Some Quick Definitions

Accelerated Learning: "Accelerated learning (A.L.) is a total system for speeding and enhancing both the design process and learning processes. Based on the latest brain research, it has proven again and again to increase learning effectiveness while saving time and money in the process." [Center for Accelerated Learning](#)

Experiential Learning: "Experiential learning is the process of learning through experience, more specifically defined as "learning through reflection on doing".
[Handbook of Research on Improving Learning and Motivation](#)

E-learning: Electronic learning (e-learning) refers to learning delivered through technology such as computers, the Internet, and apps.

Virtual Learning: Training offered at remote locations via the Internet or video conferencing technology.

Hybrid Learning: In this mixed learning format, some participants engage at face-to-face locations and others participate virtually. This format can be enhanced through the use of pop-up conference rooms where participants can gather at a variety of remote locations.



Why This E-book

Many companies are realizing that e-learning will only get them so far. They are re-thinking the importance of management development initiatives and modifying training to meet the needs of a new generation. Meeting and conference planners are also realizing that the “pour and bore” lecture based approach to content delivery is not meeting the needs of participants. In an effort to reverse the decline in conference attendance and association membership, many are seeking more interactive and effective approaches.

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About Anne Thornley-Brown



President,
The Training Oasis, Inc.

Training Facilitator/OD Consultant
Education: MBA, MSW

Experience: 20+ Years
Global Reach: Companies from 10 countries

Anne Thornley-Brown, founder and President of The Training Oasis, Inc. and Executive Oasis International, has worked with clients in a variety of industries including IT, telecommunications, banking, pharma, the airline industry, transportation, retail, and the entertainment industry.

Anne has designed and facilitated training and workshops for companies from 10 countries in North America (Canada), The Caribbean (Jamaica, Dominica, Barbados), The Middle East (Dubai, Saudi Arabia), and Asia (Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, India). From Singapore and Saudi Arabia to Sudan and South Africa, with the executive retreats and team building sessions that Anne has facilitated, she has worked with companies from 18 countries.

Anne's clients have included Holt Renfrew, Bell Mobility, TELUS Mobility, CIBC, Caribbean Development Bank, National Bank of Dominica, Grant Thornton, Novo Nordisk Canada, Ingram Micro, OCBC Bank – Malaysia, Penang Port - Malaysia, Permodalan Nasional Berhad – Malaysia, IBM, and IKEA.

During 18 tours of Asia, Anne has delivered seminars to over 2000 executives and managers in Asia, participants from a variety of organizations including Petronas, Samsung, Malaysian Airlines, Digi, Mobil/Exxon, Thai Airlines, Proton and Perodua, Bangkok Airways, and Dell Computers have attended her public workshops.

Anne is also a popular blogger. She has written for **Plan Your Meetings by MPI**, **The Huffington Post**, **Event Manager Blog**, **Cvent Blog**, **EventMobi Blog**, and **Elite Meetings**.



About The Training Oasis



With major shifts in the global geo-political landscape, the economy and business climate have entered a time of turbulence and uncertainty. As businesses become increasingly complex, connectivity is decreasing, and silos are becoming more entrenched. Effective cross-functional teamwork is a key driver of corporate success. In the midst of turbulence, even organizations with strong performance need to be alert, on top of their game, agile, and proactive enough to seize opportunities. Organizations need to spot and respond effectively to the trends that will have an impact on their business.

Since 1996, The Training Oasis, Inc., a Toronto training and OD consulting firm, has helped rapidly changing organization:

- Foster innovation.
- Strengthen team cohesion.
- Re-shape their corporate culture.
- Inspire teams that are tired or discouraged.
- Identify and tap into growing markets.
- Break down silos and improve cross-functional teamwork
- Design & execute innovative strategies to stay ahead of the competition.



We'll Bring our Oasis to You

We specialize in the design and facilitation of training, workshops, meetings, and brainstorming services.

We have served clients from 10 countries in North America, Asia, the Caribbean, and the Middle East.

[Partial Client List](#)

Why an Oasis

From time immemorial, weary travellers have wandered through the desert in search of the next oasis to refuel, re-chart their course, and find the strength to continue their journey.



In the same spirit, The Training Oasis, Inc. creates a safe haven for corporate teams to pause, refuel, and pick up tools and strategies to help them on their journey to success. An oasis is the perfect metaphor that represents the energy, solid content and colour that we bring to each and every learning experience.



Oasis = A place of calm and growth in the midst of turbulence.

It also represents the type of corporate culture that organizations need to create to get the best out of employees during these turbulent times.

Executive Oasis International, our sister company, uses accelerated learning to design executive retreats and team building.

<http://www.executiveoasis.com>



The Business Case for Accelerated Learning



When trainers and conference planners hear the expression "accelerated learning", what images come to mind?

- colourful peripherals
- baroque music
- games

It is important to remember that these are only **SOME** of the ingredients that can be used to produce effective learning. Accelerated learning is possible even if no music is playing, no one plays games and a koosh is nowhere in sight.

More Than Fluff



So, if accelerated learning is not just about kooshes, music, and games, what is it?

Accelerated learning = RESULTS of interactive, participant centered learning

Notice the emphasis on **results**. If facilitators use strategies other than presentations, it's not just to add fun and colour to training sessions. It's to produce better results.

What results? Learning that is:

- quicker
- easier
- smoothly transferred to the job
- retained longer

In other words, learning that ***is accelerated***.

The Main Ingredients of Accelerated Learning



What are the ingredients that produce accelerated learning? The main ingredients that produce accelerated learning are:

- solid content that meets a specific business need
- training methods based research into how the brain and senses interact in the learning process
- identifying and catering to diverse learning styles instead of using a cookie cutter or "one size fits" all approach to training

What can your organization do to increase the return on its training investment? Here are a few ideas.

Ensuring Business Results Through Solid Content



The best place to begin is to ensure that training that meets a **specific** business need. In their ground breaking book **Training for Impact**, Dana Gaines Robinson and James C. Robinson, highlighted the importance of initial project meetings at the VP level before commencing training initiatives.

The role of training specialists is facilitate these sessions and ask key questions including:

- What specific business need has prompted the request for training?
- What performance is required at the individual employee, departmental, corporate levels?
- What performance is currently occurring?
- What is the gap between current performance and desired performance?
- What is causing the gap?

If the answer to the last question is not a lack of skill, information, or knowledge, training will not close the gap. Don't throw money at problems that training was never intended to solve. If there is no clear business need, there is no point in offering it. Save your money.



"Flavour of the month" training does not make business sense. In fact, one of the fastest ways to run up any training budget is to empower line managers and directors to select and approve their own training. They'll pick what they like instead of what's effective from the point of view of the bottom line impact of training and sound learning methodology. A better approach is to have a co-signing arrangement in which training managers partner with line managers and make decisions jointly. Politically, this approach is unlikely to be palatable at first but it will make a big difference to the bottom line.

Anne's Anecdotes: From the School of Hard Knocks

Another group used up so much of the budget on a 5 star accommodation where everyone could have their own room, a host bar, and gifts for each participant, that there was little left for facilitation. Again the priorities were clear.

Whole Brain & Multi-Sensory Learning

Research has shown that only 34% of the population could be classified as auditory learners. For this reason, it is important to ensure that the training activities and instructional methods selected cater to the diverse learning styles reflected in each group of participants. Think of it this way, while someone who is right handed **could** write a business case with their left hand, it would take a lot longer to prepare it. The experience would be frustrating and the quality of the document would be poor.

In the same way, when participants are forced to process content through a style that is not a natural fit, it takes a lot longer for them to learn (thereby adding to the length and the cost of training). The experience is stressful and frustrating and it's much more difficult for them to fully master the skills.

How would the approach to training based on whole brain learning and multi-sensory? Space does not make it possible to provide an exhaustive exploration of the differences but the following examples will give an idea of what is possible.

Before Training

Before training, the facilitator would administer a learning styles instrument or a participant profile to uncover the preferred learning styles of participants. Based on the results, they would design the learning activities and a menu of options for participants.

During Training

As participants enter the room, they would observe a change from a traditional training setting. For conservative audiences, training would be reinforced through the use of colourful posters with key learning points. For a creative audience, the facilitator might use a theme to provide rich metaphors and analogies that underscore course content. In addition to posters that convey learning content, the facilitator might decorate the room and place props on the tables to reflect the theme.

At the beginning of the training session, instead of sitting around and waiting for everyone to arrive, participants would complete a brief "session starter" exercise in pairs or trios.

For conservative audiences, it could be a "tough questions" exercise in which participants have an opportunity to identify a specific, "real world" challenge that they want to resolve based on what they learn in the course.

A creative audience might benefit from a short trivia quiz or card game with course related content to measure how much they know about the course material before they begin. The quiz or game could be re-administered at the end of the programme and 30 days after the course to measure learning and retention.



The Misuse of Adult Learning Theory

Participants would be given a choice of left brain (linear, logical) and right brain (creative) exercises for practice and review. For example, half of the participants may decide to work on a case study while the more creative participants may prefer to practice their skills through an improvisation exercise or role play.

While, based on research about the average attention span of adult learners, presentations should be kept to no longer than 15 - 20 minutes, this is often misinterpreted by conference and meeting planners. It has been so poorly applied that, at conferences, it is now common practice to parade a series of talking heads in front of participants. That is not interactive learning.

Interactive learning does not mean changing the topic or speaker. It involves changing the **method** of delivery. In other words, after a brief presentation, throw in a quick energizer and move on to a **meaningful** exercise in groups, pairs, or trios. These exercises should **never** be interaction for the sake of interaction.

The Energizers



To ensure that participants stay alert and remain energized:

- based on research about the ability of music to stimulate the brain, music would be used:
 - during breaks for all groups
 - as a backdrop for group exercises, reading and written exercises for more creative audiences (kinesthetic and visual learners)
- breaks would be more frequent than during a traditional training session (example: 1 five minute break per hour in addition to the regular mid-morning and mid-afternoon breaks)
- energizers would be used during notoriously low energy periods of the day such as the last hour before lunch and around 3:00

Integrating Accelerated Learning Into Your Core Business

For conservative audiences, energizers could be as simple providing an opportunity to stand, stretch or grab a quick coffee re-fill. A more creative audience might benefit from a 2 minute aerobic workout.

The most exciting opportunities for producing bottom line results through accelerated learning can be found in some of the most unexpected places. If used effectively, accelerated learning can enhance your meetings, improve the effectiveness of your project teams, and revolutionize your management practices. Integrating accelerated learning into the fabric of your corporation will help trainers harness the creative potential of your employees and keep your corporation on the cutting edge well into the next millennium. It's not magic...but it will make a difference.



The Bottom Line Impact of Training

Training: A Big Ticket Item

Training can be a very expensive proposition. After factoring in all direct and indirect costs, training can quickly become a big ticket item. Considering how much money companies invest in employee development, it is important to identify strategies for obtaining as high a return as possible on this investment.

To get a complete picture of the impact of training on your company's bottom line, it is necessary to look beyond such direct expenses as seminar prices and the cost of training material to such indirect costs as:

- travel and mileage
- hotel expenses
- meals
- compensation costs (salary and benefit load) for each employee involved in the training
- opportunity cost (for example, while a salesperson is attending a training, how many potential sales are not being closed)

For internal courses that are administered and facilitated by your own employees, it is also important to include compensation costs for the facilitator, administrative support staff and the training management team in order to determine the full value of your investment.

Cause for Concern

What kind of a return is your company getting on its training investment? Unfortunately, the research is not encouraging. With traditional, lecture-based, classroom training, it can be virtually in one ear and out the other.

If the primary method of instruction in your company is lecture and presentation, consider this figure:



- **People remember only 20% of what they hear.**

Studies have also indicated that, if there is no coaching or follow up by the immediate supervisor and no opportunity for skill practice and use within 30 days: Employees forget 80% of what they've learned.

So, what's the bottom line?

- **20% x 20 = 4%**

If employees attend training sessions in which most of the instruction is provided in the form of presentations and if no coaching is provided after the training they'll only retain 4% of what they learned.

- **It is possible that 96% of the money some companies invest in training is literally being tossed away!**

(By the way, even if this information is new to you, some of your trainers have probably known about it for years! Trainers would welcome an opportunity to partner with executives and line managers to have a more significant impact on the business.)

So, why bother with training?

There's a very good reason to invest in training. If it's done well, it can be very profitable. Companies that invest in their executives, managers and employees through training reap the rewards with healthier bottom lines.

Why Bother with
Training?



In a study of 153 large and medium-sized Canadian organizations, the Conference Board of Canada discovered:

"There is a definite relationship between executive development, better leaders and more effective, more profitable organizations.....In spite of this relationship, it is surprising that of the largest Canadian organizations surveyed, only 40 per cent have a formal executive development policy or strategy."

Another conference board study demonstrated a correlation between training expenditures and profitability.

**The Role of Team Leaders
(Managers)**

An important step in increasing the return on your training investment is to prepare the immediate supervisor to coach participants before and after the session. To ensure the effectiveness of training, it is important for managers to:

- meet with any members of their team who will be attending training
- provide feedback, highlighting strengths and areas from improvement
- set specific developmental goals
- help each employee select a specific job-related project for the training
- identify and provide opportunities for participants to use the skills they've acquired through training
- provide post training coaching and follow up.

Training has a bottom line impact. We have explored just a few ideas for ensuring that this impact is positive.



The Pudding: Proving Accelerated Learning Makes a Difference

The Proof of the Pudding



The benefits results of accelerated learning include:

- reducing costs by cutting training time by 20 - 50% without cutting critical content
- making it easier and less frustrating for participants to master and "digest" complex or theoretical content
- improving skill mastery due to more opportunity for practice
- increasing retention (double in many cases) through vivid & memorable learning experiences
- improving transfer of learning to the job by spending more time on application

Consider these two examples.

Company	Subject	Original Length	New Length	Retention 90 Days Later
Eastman Kodak		48 Hours	27 Hours	94%
Bell Atlantic *	Customer Service	6 Weeks	42% less	42%
	Customer Service	4 Weeks	57% less	
	Technical	12 Days	50% less	

* = \$700,000 Annual Saving 300% Decline In Dropout Rate

Source: Maples, Tim Accelerated Learning

These two examples illustrate the fact that, with accelerated learning, it is possible to stretch your training dollars and increase the return on your training investment. With accelerated learning, some of the costs associated with training can be reduced by offering shorter and more effective programmes.

Making a Difference in the Training Room

Accelerated learning can transform the training room and the learning experience. While accelerated learning does shorten the learning experience, a certain amount of time is needed to ensure skill mastery and retention.

Accelerated learning is effective even in a fast-paced world in which:

- competitive pressure is fierce
- your people need to hit the ground running to produce results quickly
- time frames for training are short
- trainers have little preparation time

Think of accelerated learning as a meal. You need solid content, the right ambiance, an appetizer, main course, dessert, and digestive aids for a complete experience.

Based on a model developed by the Center for Accelerated Learning, phases of accelerated learning are:

- **Preparation:** Preparation involves getting the facilitator, learner, and learning environment ready so that learning can happen easily and effectively.
- **Presentation:** Preparation involves getting the facilitator, learner, and learning environment ready so that learning can happen easily and effectively.
- **Practice:** Participants require repetition and practice in order to ensure skill mastery.
- **Performance:** Application and transfer of learning enable participants to use what they have learned and the skills they have acquired when they have returned to work

Three visitors to The Training Oasis, Inc.'s web site have generously agreed to let us share with you the stories they have told us in their own words.



Product Training

The Context

In 1995, my co-worker Arnie Kaber (Director of Training in the North American Field Org) and I (Director of Worldwide Field Training) had to instruct a T3 (train the trainer programme) to 12 system engineers for four major new Sun Microsystems products. The goal was to get the new product information to 10,000+ people worldwide in less than 4 weeks prior to the announce date. The goal was to get them up to speed quickly so they could:

- go back to their field offices
- train other systems engineers

The other systems engineers would then train the internal sales force and external resellers in a cascading effect worldwide.

The Challenges

The materials were not ready for us to use until the Monday morning on which we started the 2-day train the trainer course for the initial 12 systems engineers. So, Arnie and I had not seen the draft documents nor did we have any training materials.

How we Used Accelerated Learning

We copied the drafts and had the participants in effect train themselves for 2 days using accelerated learning:

We copied the drafts and had the participants in effect train themselves for 2 days using accelerated learning:

- Jeopardy-type game to find key features;
- watching a video to note main points
- compiling main points with key features from the drafts
- developing the key messages they would present in the field offices;
- developing product presentations in a competition format
- producing the transparencies they could use in the field

How Accelerated Learning Helped

To this day, those systems engineers involved in that session say it was the best training in which they have ever participated. Many of them still use variations of the techniques we showed them in their current training. An interesting example of how AL can be used with very technical people and product sales information.

Reported by: **Kat Barclay**
Strategic Visions International
Kailua-Kona, HI



Platinum Concierge Fine Dining Programme

One of my most successful experiences was in finding a way to help concierges learn and retain the locations and descriptions of 50 fine dining establishments.

The Context

As part of the American Express Platinum Concierge Fine Dining Programme, card members are given special access to more than 200 of the top restaurants in the United States and Canada. The concierge staff had to be thoroughly familiar with these restaurants so that when card members called looking for, say an Italian restaurant in Chicago, the concierge should be able to suggest Spiaggia without having to look through any guides.

The Challenges

This is a skill that is normally developed over time. However, access to top restaurants is one of the most popular services offered by the program. We had to get the concierge trainees up to speed concerning the most popular cities (Chicago, New York, San Francisco and New Orleans) before they got on the phones for the first time.

We had only two weeks to train these people on every facet of a very detail oriented job and much of that time was taken up by teaching of the proprietary database. So, anything that could improve the speed and retention of this program was welcome. The Fine Dining Programme was the one area of particular need.

How we Used Accelerated Learning

I borrowed from a similar program used elsewhere at American Express and set up a "restaurant" of our own. I assembled a collection of blue plates. On each plate I put either the name of one of the restaurants or its description, (including information about the chef, decor and cuisine). During the exercise, the trainees trade off being the customer (card member) or waiters.

Each "waitress or waiter" approach a "customer" and greet them by saying "Thank you for calling American Express, my name is _____. How may I assist you today?" The "customer" would then "order" either the name of the restaurant or the description of the restaurant. The "server" would then confirm the order and go to the "kitchen" - a table laden with the paper plates - and select the correct matching restaurant or description. The plate was then taken back to the "customer" and verified for correctness by asking "What else can I help you with today?" This gave the "customer" the opportunity to let the "server" know if the selection was correct. If not, the process was repeated until the correct selection was made. At that point, the "server" would say, "Thank you for calling American Express."

How Accelerated Learning Helped

Accelerated learning made it possible for us to use a creative approach to what would otherwise have been just tedious, rote memorization. It provided a natural setting for the participants to become comfortable with some other required behaviour for each call (i.e. the greeting, confirming, clarifying and the signoff). It relieved the stress so much that people relaxed, had fun and didn't realize just how much they were learning. Retention of the information was greatly enhanced to the extent that the new concierges became the source of information for some concierges who had been on the job much longer.

Reported by: Suzann Look



Supervisory Training for Blue Collar Workers

The Context	I was engaged to teach a supervision program to a utilities company in Sydney, Australia. Credit for the course was gained via a written test and those who passed were then eligible for a pay raise for skills gained. (Other criteria also applied before the pay raise occurred but the test was a crucial hurdle for most people.)
The Challenges	The audience was about 80% blue collar field staff with little formal education. In the course of about four years about 300 people would be required to complete the program.
How we Used Accelerated Learning	The program made strong use of stories and imagery. Many of the principles were anchored using memory devices such as icons, mnemonics, and regular review.
How Accelerated Learning Helped	<p>We achieved a pass rate of close to 100%. There were some failures due to literacy problems. When they were then given an oral quiz, however, all but about two passed that test.</p> <p>One or two people also failed outright because they didn't even hand in their test paper and would not do so even weeks after the program. (Your guess is as good as mine.)</p> <p>The program was so successful that the organization asked me to make the test more difficult because they were having budget problems with all of the people who were achieving the pay raise. (I declined, saying: "How about if I just don't train them so well?", and I was not asked again.)</p>
Reported by:	Kevin Lohan Endeavour Training and Development Sydney, Australia

Accelerated learning isn't just for the training room anymore. Organizations can use accelerated learning to help build and shape a unique and powerful corporate culture.

Accelerated learning can be diffused throughout the corporation to:

- address critical business issues
- shape a thriving corporate culture as you grow.
- foster innovation to give you a competitive edge.
- keep the entrepreneurial spirit alive.
- build an effective team.
- produce measurable, bottom line results.



Our sister company, Executive Oasis International, specializes in these areas.

Robert F. Latham, former President and C.E.O. of Bell Cellular (now Bell Mobility), and his executive team shaped a unique corporate culture.

At Bell Cellular, he used a domino to underscore the impact that each employee could have on corporate culture by living and breathing the corporate values and passing them on to other employees by their example and influence.

At orientation, each employee was given a domino as a reminder of his or her role in transforming the vision of a corporate culture consistent with the company's core values into a reality.

After reading the issue of Spice of the Month in which he was mentioned, Robert F. Latham, who is now President of Orbcomm Global Services, sent us this update:

From the School of
Hard Knocks

Sure-fire Strategies for Shaping Orbcomm's Corporate Culture

"Anne:

Very nice to hear from you.....I was with Tim McChesney (former V.P, Bell Cellular) last night and told him about your web site...we were both commenting on the culture we had all developed at Cellular.....I still have the weekly "Breakfast with Bob" at ORBCOMM.....we ask people to answer the King or Queen for a day scenario...what would you do if you were the King or Queen for the day to make ORBCOMM a better place to work. We still use the Domino idea also.....Domino's Pizza was part of the launch party and we give out the doubles to recognize great customer servicewe also have a monthly town hall meeting to talk to all employees on what is going on ...different themes in different months.....people clearly are the most important asset....."

Robert F. Latham, President, Orbcomm Global Services



Clearnet Communications Inc. (now TELUS Mobility), one of The Training Oasis, Inc.'s earliest clients, used a number of strategies to shape a unique corporate culture.

Championing Corporate Values at Clearnet

Before it was bought out by TELUS, Clearnet Communications Inc. reinforced one of their corporate values, balance, through a dream fund. Each employee was given a fund each year to encourage and foster balance. Some employees used their dream fund for massages and facials. Others signed up for courses related to a hobby or personal interest they've longed to pursue. Still others use the money towards a vacation or for a weekend getaway.

Clearnet took the whole notion of balance a step further. Recognizing the fact that their employees needed to relax and re-energize themselves in order to be productive, they created a unique space called "Planet Balance". It had a cappuccino machine, vending machines, and even a dart salon.

With a large Generation X contingent in their workforce, Clearnet found an excellent way to move what accelerated learning teaches us about how the brain is stimulated through energizers, play, and activity from the training room and build it into the daily work environment.

These are just a few examples of how accelerated learning can make a difference in the training room and, where it really counts, in your day to day business.



The Main Course: Demonstrating Your Value to Senior Management

The Raw Material



Effective training must always begin with solid content that addresses a clear and specific business need. In other words, it is important to start with the right raw material.

Unfortunately, training is often viewed as a "nice to do" frill rather than a key contributor to the bottom line.

To change this perception, trainers need to step back, re-assess their focus and identify strategies to demonstrate their value to senior management. This involves clearly examining the tools in the trainer's toolkit and determining how to re-deploy them to address critical business issues.

It is a well-known fact. During turbulent and uncertain times, training is often one of the first areas to be cut. The situation has been no different in the aftermath of the dot com meltdown, the horrific events of September 11, the Iraq war, and the SARS crisis. Our economy has been on a roller coaster and companies have been reeling from the impact. So how can trainers demonstrate their value in this turbulent environment?

A few of the skills that will stand trainers in good stead when their organizations are experiencing turbulence include:

- facilitation skills
- effective meetings management
- brainstorming techniques
- just in time training
- individual coaching

Identifying Key Business Challenges

To demonstrate your value to senior management, it is important for trainers and facilitators need to put themselves in the shoes of CEOs. Pinpoint the key business issues that are keeping them awake at night.

- Key Business Issue Facing (Insert Name of Company)
- Name of Company's Performance (with respect to this specific challenge)
- Causes
- Industry Trends
- Models for Success
- Suggested Action Steps

Bright Idea

Broadening Your Scope

Expand the value of your department by providing services other than courses. Offer your facilitation services to your senior management team and other the leadership teams of key departments as they grapple with the issues that have an impact on your organization's ability to remain viable. Assign each member of your learning and development team to work with a particular department, attend their management team meetings and enhance their effectiveness.



Fostering Innovation Through Cross-functional SWAT Teams

When organizations face intense pressure in the marketplace, it is not the time for business as usual. Invariably, company challenges can't be resolved in isolation by any single department. It is critical to move beyond traditional silos. Assemble SWAT teams and assign one issue to each team. Ensure that there is representation from all departments that have an

impact on addressing each critical business issue. Representation should not be restricted to members of the leadership team. Instead, frontline employees with director customer, supplier and business partner contacts can add tremendous value to the team. Each team should report to a specific senior management team leader.

Focus on solid content, the meat and potatoes of business success. Each team should be assigned the responsibility of analyzing a specific business challenge, brainstorming, exploring alternatives and generating a number of action plans for consideration by senior management. Meetings should be held weekly with tasks and action items assigned in between meetings. Your role should be as a facilitator to help the teams gel, improve the effectiveness of their meetings, provide energizers (one energizer kit for each team would be ideal), and facilitate brainstorming sessions. If your training team lacks the skill set to perform this role, engage an external facilitator to train your trainers and help jumpstart the process. I have seen this approach work effectively in telecommunications, transportation and IT organizations.

Another opportunity to add value is by assigning the trainers within your department to work as an internal consultant to the various project teams that have been deployed throughout your organization. A project teams can get bogged down if its members possess a vast storehouse of technical knowledge but little expertise in conducting effective meetings, problem solving, brainstorming solutions, and conflict management. The repertoire of skills that trainers use on a daily basis to facilitate effective learning and development sessions can be of great benefit to your organization's project teams.

In a tough economic climate, the worst strategy that any training team can adopt is business



Enhancing the Effectiveness of Project Teams

Just in Time



Training Delivery

as usual. By continuing to offer the standard course catalogue in the same manner as when the economy was flourishing, don't be surprised when layoff notices arrive. It's not business as usual. Every part of your organization must re-examine what they are doing in light of current realities. It may be necessary to re-invent yourself.

Scrutinize your current course offerings. Put on hold any programmes that do not contribute directly to the bottom line and helping your company compete more effectively in a tough market. This should free up some time and resources to implement some of the strategies we have already identified. Cut down on standard classroom training and instead offer targeted coaching sessions to members of your sales and customer service teams who have direct interface with customers. Assist your sales team with brainstorming as it identifies new targets. Coach them as they develop and deliver specific sales presentations or prepare proposals. Help them refine their cold calling skills. Bring in motivational speakers to re-energize your sales team so that they won't become discouraged as they get pummeled in the marketplace. Offer coaching to leaders from all areas of your organization to help them communicate difficult news more effectively, manage change and foster a spirit of optimism in the company.

Talk Back

The strategies that we have described should help your team re-position itself as a strategic partner in your organization's effort to do business more effectively. They might just save your bacon.

We would like to hear from our subscribers and visitors. If you have any comments or questions about any of these strategies, please send us a tweet [@trainingoasis](https://twitter.com/trainingoasis). We are also interested in hearing from individuals who have used these strategies. What worked? What didn't work? What were some of the key lessons learned?



Overcoming Resistance & Winning Support for Accelerated Learning in Your World

Senior Management

1. Develop a summary of data to highlight the benefits of accelerated learning.
2. Work with your team leader to distribute it to senior management.
3. Benchmark with other organizations and create a summary of best practices for circulation to senior management.
4. Complete mini surveys of participant reactions to specific learning activities.
5. Compile the results for distribution to your management team.
6. Send each member of your senior management team an e-mail with a link to virtual newsletters, such as [Spice of the Month](#) (archives) and the [Thiagi Gameletter](#).
5. Follow companies specializing in accelerated learning on Twitter.
[@trainingoasis](#) [@thiagi](#) [@centerforal](#)

Team Leader or Manager

1. Set the stage with your manager and director by identifying desired changes and their benefits.
2. Request permission to make a presentation at a team meeting regarding the benefits of accelerated learning.
3. Distribute handouts to other trainers, HR professionals and senior management.
4. Complete mini surveys of participant reactions to specific learning activities. Compile the results and review them with team leader.

Training Colleagues

1. Send your colleagues e-mails with links to virtual accelerated learning newsletters such as such as [Spice of the Month](#) (archives) and the [Thiagi Gameletter](#)
2. Arrange an in-house accelerated train-the-trainer demo for your team.
3. Organize an internal training conference. Include experiential sessions about accelerated learning.
4. Prepare and distribute accelerated learning kits to the trainers who you supervise or manage.
5. Circulate copies of relevant newsletters to your colleagues, manager, director, and vice-president. Obtain extra copies for circulation to the executive as well as managers and



directors from other departments.

5. Follow companies specializing in accelerated learning on Twitter.
[@trainingoasis](#) [@thiagi](#) [@centerforal](#)

Training Assistants & Administration Department

Most organizations have cut back drastically on training assistants. These roles are very demanding with heavy workloads. Follow the tips in All About Ambiance to minimize the pressure on training assistants. To win their support:

1. Stress the benefits of accelerated learning.
2. Anticipate and be up front with your manager and support staff about some of the potential logistical and administrative requirements.
3. Engage in brainstorming using mind maps to identify and generate ideas for resolving logistical challenges.
4. Invite managers and employees who provide administrative support to your training team to accelerated learning workshops or conferences. This will give them a sense of what you are trying to accomplish and help enlist their support

Course Participants

1. Don't just plunge in.
2. Recognize the fact that some people need time to “warm up” to new approaches. Use a Participant Profile or Learning Styles Inventory to determine how receptive they are likely to be to non-traditional instructional methods.
3. Use a pre-course package and your course introductions to give participants:
 - a brief overview of accelerated learning and its benefits
 - a mini-course on how the brain work and the implications for learning
 - a sense of new approaches to learning and their benefits.

Other Departments

1. Obtain accelerated learning books, videos, and tapes for your corporate library or resource centre. Click here for suggestions.
2. Be proactive. Offer to conduct a creativity session for a conservative department (e.g. finance, accounting and yes HR).
3. Offer your design and facilitation services to departments like corporate communications and sales for rallies and corporate events.



4. Invite an organization like Eagle's Flight, Creative Training Excellence ,or The Training Oasis, Inc. to facilitate one of their experiential sessions for a rally, conference or special event.

Places to go for Support

The Training Oasis, Inc. <http://www.thetrainingoasis.com>

We'd be remiss if we didn't blow our own horn. In addition to our virtual oasis for trainers that we invite you to explore, we offer a range of services (design, facilitation, in house train the trainer sessions, keynote addresses for conferences , and trainer recruitment services) to help you put accelerated learning into practice in YOUR world.

Center for Accelerated Learning <http://www.alcenter.com>

If you haven't taken Dave Meier's excellent course, we highly recommend it. Not only will it give you the latest information in the field of accelerated learning, you'll have an opportunity to network with trainers from all over North America and, in some cases the world.

International Alliance for Learning (IAALP) <http://www.iaalp.org>

They have contacts with accelerated learning practitioners in every corner of the globe. Their annual conference is a must!



Theoretical Tidbits: Accelerated Learning Theory

A Few Words of Caution



This issue of Spice of the Month, devoted to the theory behind accelerated learning, is a departure from our usual "light on theory and heavy on practical applications" approach. It has been prepared in response to the requests of some of the participants in audiences we have recently addressed. It is significant that these requests have never come from executives or line managers. In fact, none of the visitors to this site who have signed our guest book have ever said "give us more theory". A request of this nature invariably comes from trainers who are currently using lecture and presentation as their main method of instruction. They seem to be asking "how does accelerated learning work and why does it work?"

At first glance, these questions seem innocent enough. On closer inspection, this fascination with theory among trainers is intriguing. It is almost as if some members of our profession believe that theory will help us gain credibility in the real world. Our profession has never been criticized because we don't know enough about theory. Unfortunately, we have, at times, been dismissed as irrelevant and too theoretical for failing to prove that we produce measurable, bottom line results.

So, before we begin our exploration of the fascinating world of accelerated learning theory, remember that **theory will only get us so far and no further. Heading down the path towards obsession with theory is a dead end.** No matter how much theory we learn, it's the results we produce in terms of practical solutions to business issues that are of interest to senior management and our clients (both internal and external).

Since we use a lot of cooking metaphors and analogies in Spice of the Month, please indulge us for a moment. When it comes to theory, consider the advice that is given to people who are learning to use hot sauce in the preparation of West Indian dishes for the first time....a little goes a long way. (Since we're close to Valentine's Day, think about it, The same advice can be given about chocolate.) It's wonderful but an overdose of it can produce undesirable results.

Our study of accelerated learning theory will not be exhaustive, however, we hope that the bite sized tidbits we serve will be of value to you. Apply what you discover as soon as possible instead of focusing on amassing a lot of information about theory. Remember, “it's not what you know but what you **do** with what you know that counts”.

The Key Ingredients for Accelerated Learning



Despite the fact that accelerated learning has been around for some time, there are still a lot of misconceptions about it. When we think of accelerated learning, images of fun, baroque music and colourful peripherals (decorations) usually come to mind. Accelerated learning is much more than window dressing. It can be produced even if no one plays any games and a koosh is nowhere in sight.

The key ingredients for producing these results, in other words, accelerated learning, include:

- Solid content that addresses a clearly identified business need and produces measurable results
- An understanding of how the brain and the senses operate in the learning process
- The identification of the preferred learning styles of participants in order to cater to their preferences when selecting learning activities

A Change in Approach for a Changing World

Left brain and linear approaches to instruction (such as the presentations) have dominated the training and teaching professions for several centuries. For this reason, it is easy to forget that many of the instructional methods we now hold sacred were designed to address the needs of another era.

In the western world of the 19th. Century, child labour was common. Education and specialized training programmes were a privilege reserved for the well to do and middle classes. The illiteracy rate was high and the educational level of the population was low.

Against this backdrop emerged the harsh realities of the industrial, factory-based economy. There was little room for independent thought and innovation. Their role of workers was to listen, obey, and follow instructions. This was important for safety so that workers would not be injured by factory equipment. Instructional methods based on lecture and rote learning were ideal methods for preparing an uneducated workforce for the perils of that environment.

Towards the 21st Century

Fast forward to today the 21st. century. To meet the demands of a rapidly changing and increasingly competitive environment, companies need employees who will generate innovative, breakthrough solutions to business challenges. Rote learning and passive instructional methods such as presentations are not adequate tools for fostering innovation and out of the box thinking.

The pressure of our competitive environment has resulted in significant downsizing and



restructuring in many economic sectors. In many organizations, every department is stretched to the limit. To remain competitive, we must produce more results with fewer resources. The training department is no exception.

Thorough research and preparation were once the hallmarks of excellence in training. Today, trainers are required to deliver more training with less time for design, preparation and delivery. Fast response to the changing business needs and the ability to produce measurable, bottom line results are what's important. It is not surprising that there has been a growing interest in accelerated learning and other alternatives to traditional, classroom instruction.



Don't Just Have it Your Way



Season to Taste: Catering to Diverse Learning Styles

A basic "rule" for delivering effective training is "know thy audience". This is also one of the rules that is broken most frequently.

As facilitators, it's easy to fall into the trap of sticking to approaches that we enjoy or methods that work well with most of our audiences. While we all employ a mixture of learning styles, it is important to gain insight into how your participants prefer to learn and process information:

- **Analytical:** by analyzing (cases, data, details)
- **Structured:** through an organized step-by-step systematic approach
- **Visual:** seeing (videos and displays)
- **Kinaesthetic:** by doing (action learning, games, simulations)
- **Auditory:** by listening (lecture or presentation)
- **Discussing:** (case studies, peer coaching, debates)
- **Reading:** (independent study and quizzes)

Carl Jung identified the introversion vs extraversion continuum. It needs to be considered when assessing approaches that are likely to resonate with specific groups.

- **Introversion:** Introverts become energized by interacting with those around them. They like to be actively engaged in the learning process through discussion, asking questions, and responding.
- **Extraversion:** By contrast, extraverts need quite time to pause, reflect, and analyze information and situations.

A few analogies from the world of dining may be helpful.



Accelerated Learning Smorgasbords

Learning Styles Inventories

Burger places and pizzerias let customers select their toppings. Fine dining establishments give patrons a choice of rare, medium-rare, medium, and well done steaks. At Le Diperie, the assortment of toppings includes milk chocolate and not one but TWO varieties of dark chocolate (50% and 70%). It is just as important to select instructional methods based on the learning styles and preferences of participants. This is particularly important if participants are conservative or resistant to non-traditional approaches to training. Invariably, participant groups will have a mixture of learning styles. There is no need for a “one size fits all” cookie cutter approach to training. Use variety in your training and, whenever possible, give learners the opportunity to choose the exercises that are of value. Accelerated learning smorgasbords are a highly effective strategy for catering to diverse learning styles. Like buffets, they give participant the opportunity to customize their experience. Pause and give participants time to make their selections before each exercise. Create accelerated learning smorgasbords by:

- setting up an area around the perimeter of the training room with colour coded exercises for each major topic
- including colour coded sheets for the exercises in participant workbooks

If your course is at least 2 days, it's probably worthwhile to invest some time in having participants complete learning styles inventories.

Send out the inventories before your course as part of your pre-course package or learner preparation kit. Then, select the right "dishes" from the accelerated training smorgasbord and season each one to suit the taste of your group. Just for fun, why check out an [on-line learning styles inventory](#). It gives an idea of how these inventories work.

Bright Idea

Getting Participants to Return Pre-Course Forms

Frustrated by your attempts to get participants to complete and return pre-course forms and instruments? It is important to stress the fact that the information participants provide will be held in the strictest confidence. To increase the likelihood that documents will be returned, stress the benefits of completing the inventories, provide a reply envelope, and send reminder emails 2 weeks before the course. Have a prize draw for everyone who returns documents by the requested date



The McBer Learning Styles Inventory is a very valuable one for trainers. I found out about it from Dave Meir of the Center for Accelerated Learning. Get more information about it and order from the [Center for Accelerated Learning](#).

The [Herrmann Brain Dominance Instrument](#) (HBDI) is one of my favourites as it has direct applications for learning activities and methods.

Participant Profiles

If your course is less than 2 days in length, in some corporate cultures, using a learning styles inventory may be perceived as overkill. At The Training Oasis, Inc. we have found that adding a participant profile section to course registration forms can work just as well as learning style inventories. Participant profiles can produce a lot of valuable information about your audiences. In fact, armed with this information trainers can ensure practically fool proof results. We begin by asking participants some background information.

General Questions

- Name of company
- Department
- Position
- Do you manage staff?

Participant Interviews

- How many people do you manage?

Then, ask one or two questions to find out how much experience they have that is relevant to the course content. For example, for a presentation skills course we might ask:

One strategy that we have used with great success is to conduct 2 or 3 participants prior to the session. The reason we do this is to make sure that the valid concerns of these individuals are addressed upfront and that we make them our ally.

It is a good idea to interview the employee with the longest tenure and 1 or 2 of the individuals who are likely to be most resistant.

- Ask the organizer to inform the individuals that you will be contacting them to get their input for planning the conference, retreat or training session.
- Contact the individuals by telephone or e-mail to schedule a 5 minute interview.
- Clearly state that the purpose of the interview is to obtain their input in order to ensure that the session is worthwhile.
- Review the objectives of the session and the proposed agenda.
- Solicit and obtain candid feedback.
- Ask the individuals to think back on similar sessions that they have attended and identify what made them either worthwhile or a waste of time.
- Ask for advice about things to avoid with that particular group.
- Invite them to give feedback during the breaks for suggestions to improve the session.
- Keep it to 5 minutes



- Thank them for their time.



All About Ambiance: Creating the Right Climate for Accelerated Learning

Back to the Basics



It probably won't come as a surprise that surroundings have a powerful impact on how participants feel. An attractive and colourful environment stimulates the brain by creating a multi-sensory experience. When training facilities have dim lighting, no windows, poor ventilation, and dull colours, maintaining a high level of energy can be equally challenging for facilitators and participants.

Before concluding that this information is way too basic to be worth the bother of reading further, remember that common sense is not always common practice.

Think back to the last few training sessions and conferences you've attended. How often were the basics of creating a warm, inviting, colourful and stimulating environment ignored? Were participants seated in groups to encourage engagement or in rows? We rest our case.

So, how can trainers go about creating the right ambiance for learning?

- Themes
- Peripherals and props
- Room set-up
- Tablescapes

Themes

Themes are one of the most powerful vehicles for helping learners master and retain dry, complex, or technical content. Research into how long term memory works has shown that we tend to store and recall information in terms of events, experiences and examples rather than facts and figures.

Themes can help facilitators generate ideas for:

- rich metaphors and analogies

- examples
- titles for modules and exercises
- games and simulations
- guided imagery or visualization exercises
- graphics for workbooks and overheads
- props
- break time activities
- refreshments
- music

All of these elements go a long way towards creating the right ambiance. Instead of delivering another boring presentation, create vivid and memorable learning experiences with themes.

Anne's Anecdotes: From the School of Hard Knocks

At conferences, it's surprising how many well respected, veteran trainers forget the fundamentals of creating an atmosphere that encourages learning and standing where you won't block the overheads.

When I've spoken at conferences, it has surprised us that so many organizers make it difficult for presenters to do anything but "stand and deliver" their message in a dull, dingy room. As they allow no time for set up, it's challenging to even put up posters.

Anything but Peripheral

Peripherals are more than just window dressing. They can help trainers convey themes and create stimulating learning environments. Examples of peripherals include:

- mobiles and wall hangings
- displays
- posters
- scenic videos
- music videos
- table top energizers
- colourful wall charts with key learning points



Room Set-up

Many trainers still use a classroom style room set up (facilitator at the front, participants in rows facing forward). There are many pitfalls to this arrangement. A classroom style set up conveys the impression that the trainer will be front and centre and that there will be minimal interaction between participants.

If you have never experimented with alternative room set ups, try seating participants in clusters at smaller tables (4 - 6 at each table). They can work at their tables for the exercises and face forward for presentations.

Another option that accommodates presentation and group interaction is a U-shaped configuration with break out tables or rooms for group exercises.

Accelerated Smorgasbord Set-up

If you have time, ask the venue to provide 4 - 8 warmer trays that are usually used for buffets. Place them on tables around the perimeter of the room and organize the colour coded sheets for the exercises in the trays (blue for analytical, green for structured, yellow for visual, red for kinaesthetic). If set-up time is tight, serve one course at a time.

Bright Idea

When Set-up Time is Tight

- ❑ Place posters and peripherals on a table.
- ❑ Get the course participants to help you put up the other posters and peripherals as part of your transition to each new section of the course.
- ❑ You'll end up with a rich learning environment. Getting participants up and involved will help them stay alert and reinforce learning.



Tablescapes



To add variety to your training and give participants the tools they need to be more active during training, there are a number of items that trainers can place on participants tables:

- thin Mr Sketch markers (scented for creative audiences)
- flip chart makers (scented for creative audiences)
- highlighter
- florescent Post-it flags for bookmarking pages
- oversized Post-it notes in a variety of colours
- light bulb & lightning bolt pats for instant feedback
- florescent oversized index cards for group exercises
- tactile table top energizers

With creative audiences, experiment with bright or florescent colours. For conservative audiences stick to yellow, green and earth tones.

Bright Idea

Giant Mind Maps

An idea that we picked up from the Center for Accelerated Learning is to create mind maps with course-related content and blow them up to 11" x 17" sheets.

Use them use as "placemats" that participants can colour during the session.

Don't try this with a conservative crowd.





Anne's Anecdotes: From the School of Hard Knocks

"I was invited to facilitate a breakout session about experiential learning at a conference. When I was given the time frame, it became clear that there would be few options but to give a lecture about experiential learning (a contradiction in terms if I've ever heard one). Since I'm never one to back away from a challenge, I agreed to do the session.

When I received the conference schedule, it became apparent that my session was scheduled to begin at 11:00 a.m. The session before it was scheduled to end in the same room precisely at 11:00 a.m. No time was built in for room set up, take down or even to give delegates coming from other rooms time to make the transition.

Although I gave the organizers feedback about this, they were at a loss to know how to juggle the schedule to allow more transition time. Besides, the programmes had been printed.

In spite of this, I racked my brains out and believe it or not I came up with a creative way to make the session interactive. It involved packing the props into colourful round and square boxes (one per table), putting the markers, highlighters, post its, etc. into small pencil boxes, and loading them on to two caterer's carts that I borrowed from the kitchen. I asked each team to appoint a leader and the leaders came to the front and collected their table supplies.

It didn't go entirely smoothly but I now use this approach regularly and it works like clockwork."

Overcoming Logistical Challenges

There are no quick fixes for this one as today's organizations are operating under tight time and space constraints. Even if you're really committed to creating the right ambience, set up can become a logistical nightmare if trainers don't have access to the room the morning or afternoon before training.

Anne's Anecdotes: From the School of Hard Knocks

“During my stint as a full time trainer in the corporate environment, there were similar challenges. Under both downsizing and rapid growth scenarios, meeting space was always at a premium. It became a "no no" to block out time for room set up and take down. It was difficult to find adequate time to use peripherals effectively. The moral of the story? Creating the right environment for learning takes time. We short change our participants and ourselves when there are too many logistical challenges.”

Here are some ideas for overcoming logistical challenges gleaned from the school of hard knocks. If trainers follow these steps and get organized, they can create an upbeat learning environment in 10 - 15 minutes.

Organizing for Quick Set-up

- Obtain several plastic bins with handles.
- Use one as an accelerated learning kit with participant supplies for all of your courses.
- Use the other plastic bins to assemble one kit for each of your courses.

Participant Supplies

- Obtain one patio glass or pencil case for each table
- Fill each glass with thin Crayola markers, highlighters, pens, post it notes, post it flags etc.
- Place them in a metal or cardboard glass or bottle rack
- Put index cards, thick Mr. Sketch Markers, and masking tape in the box with participant supplies.
- Obtain one plastic lunch bag or pail per participant table
- Fill it with table top energizers (stress balls, Lego, gum)
- Fill the gray and black lunch bags with conservative energizers
- Fill the red and yellow ones with creative energizers

Facilitator Supplies

- Mr Sketch Markers
- Masking tape



- Stapler
- Extra index cards, thick Mr. Sketch markers and masking tape for participants.
- A pencil case with extra post-it notes, thin Mr. Sketch markers, and pens

Course Kits

For each of your courses, assemble a "ready to go" kit including:

- floor plan and set up checklist
- facilitator's manual and participant handouts
- binder with overheads (or computer discs with slide shows)
- posters (for large or many posters use a portfolio)
- one box per table with props that participants will need)
- course specific videos and music

Setting up

Set-up will consist of putting:

- facilitator's material on your table
- up a few posters (if there is time)
- the following items on each participant table:
 - a patio glass or pencil holder with supplies
 - a pencil case or supply box with post it notes, etc.
 - workbooks or binders
 - a lunch bag or pail with energizers
 - a colourful cardboard or plastic box (that you can get at the dollar store) with course specific props (optional)
 - colourful note paper
 - place mat with mind map (optional)



Ambiance Isn't All

I've attempted to offer ideas for creating an inviting and stimulating learning environment. We realize that music is an important element for setting the mood and tone of training sessions. We haven't covered it here as we devoted our Musical Moments issue to the use of music in training. An attractive environment with the right ambiance can never make up for poor content or facilitation skills. It's like going to a restaurant in which the ambiance and presentation of the dishes is phenomenal but the taste is terrible. It's also like going to a beautiful tropical resort where the staff is rude and the customer service is shoddy. You won't be back. Neither will your participants if you get them excited because of the ambiance you've created and fail to deliver solid content.



SIZZLING Session Starters

Starting Off with a Bang



The way in which trainers begin a session sets the tone for either a positive or negative learning experience. (I'm sure you're saying "That's a no brainer. Tell me something new!")

Unfortunately, the way in which most sessions get started is far from ideal. I'm sure that this scenario will be familiar: Your session is due to begin at 8:30 and you're expecting 12 participants. You arrive at the training room 30 - 60 minutes before the session. One participant arrives at 8:20 and another comes in 5 minutes later. At 8:30, there are 5 people in the room including you. You uncomfortably say "let's give them another 5 minutes". At 8:34, three more people stroll in. There still are not enough people in the room for you to do your introduction. What's wrong with this picture? By waiting around for others to arrive to deliver the introduction, participants pick up on the following messages:

- It's okay to be late.
- I'm not going to miss anything important anyway.
- My learning depends on "pearls of wisdom" from the facilitator.
- This is going to be another boring, passive session with a lot of sitting around.
- This is going to be a waste of time.

Here are some sizzling session starters that get participants active and involved from the word "go". Experiment with them and tweet your success stories to us @[trainingoasis](https://twitter.com/trainingoasis). With your permission, we may include them with our next update.

Your Opening Act

By starting every session with a 10 - 20 minute exercise or activity that can be completed in pairs, trios or small groups, you'll banish the beginning blues forever! The selected activity should be entertaining and highly energetic..... fun but not a frivolous "nice to do" that sends the message that nothing of value ever happens at the beginning of your sessions. It should also be directly related to course content. Horror stories and success stories, short case studies, tough questions, card games, and word search puzzles are some superb starters that will add sparkle and sizzle to your sessions.

When the exercise is completed, if all participants have not arrived, give everyone who is present an opportunity to introduce him or herself to the group. (A future issue of Spice of the Month will focus on introductions.) Then, give a very brief course overview (5 - 10 minutes) and review the agenda.

Card Games	
Suggested Time Frame:	10 - 15 minutes
Suggested Group Size:	Pairs or groups (max. size = 4)
Preparation:	Select a card game such as rummy, crazy eights, or concentration as the overlay for your game. Prepare "playing cards" with information that is directly relevant to course content.
Set-up:	Place a "deck" of cards and a brightly coloured sheet of paper with instructions on each table.
Presentation:	When the course is scheduled to begin, play some upbeat instrumental music. Form groups of 2 -4. Allow the game to continue until most of the participants have arrived. Review the answers. Award prizes to the winners of each game (or the table with the highest score). If that doesn't encourage participants to show up on time for your next course, nothing will!!
Examples:	For a computer course, prepare cards related to function keys or the various menus of the software package that participants will be learning. For a technical training course you can use the parts and components of the first system that you will be covering as the basis for the game.



Horror & Success Stories

Suggested Time Frame:	10 - 15 minutes
Suggested Group Size:	Pairs or Trios
Preparation:	Prepare several colourful flip charts. Half of them should have the heading "Horror Stories" and the others "Success Stories" with relevant graphics. (Hint: If you are anything like me and you can't draw, use computer-generated clip art. You can print it in colour or run them off in black and white and colour them with scented markers).
Set-up:	<p>When the session is scheduled to begin, divide the participants who are present into pairs, trios or small groups.</p> <p>Ask participants to draw on their own experiences and identify horror (or success) stories related to course content. Ask them to write an amusing title for each "story" and 2- 4 short bullet points describing each one. Encourage each participant to identify at least one story.</p> <p>As more participants arrive, explain the exercise and ask them to join groups (pairs or trios) that are already working.</p>
Examples:	For a supervisory skills programme, ask participants to prepare horror and success stories based on their experiences with former bosses. During the course, you can get participants to share these stories as introductions to or examples of specific supervisory practices to follow or avoid.
Presentation:	After you have reviewed the course agenda, ask participants to return to their flip charts for another minute or two and write the topic from the course agenda for which each story is relevant.
Practice:	
Performance	During the course, ask participants to share their success and horror stories as introductions to or examples of specific topics on the course agenda.
Variations:	You can also use these stories during transitions, after breaks and during summaries
Debriefing:	

"Hi Anne,

I just had to say thank you. I used your ideas on Horror and Success Stories amongst others to make my module on people skills more interesting, and got some of my highest scores ever on the "happy sheets".

I'll keep dropping in. Best wishes."

Irene Swarbrick, Lancaster University, UK

Short Case Studies

Suggested Time Frame:	10 - 15 minutes
Suggested Group Size:	Pairs or groups (max. size = 4)
Set-up:	Prepare one or two case situations (maximum 2 pages) that are directly relevant to course content. Use large font and incorporate graphics. For each case study, prepare 2 - 4 questions that are directly relevant to course content. (Ideally, participants should be asked to read these cases as pre-work. If this is not possible, then place one case per participant on the participant tables.)
Examples:	For a presentation skills course, prepare case studies about individuals who made successful or unsuccessful presentations. Ask participants to identify and record everything that contributed to a poor or an excellent presentation. During the session, if participants are resistant to trying some of the strategies the course is recommending refer back to the information they generated through the case study. Similar references can also be useful when introducing new topics.
Preparation:	When the course is scheduled to begin, play quiet music. Give participants 3 - 5 minutes to review the cases and highlight any information that is relevant. Then, form pairs, trios or small groups and ask the groups to record their answers to the case study questions on flip charts. As the other participants arrive, describe the exercise and ask them to join groups (pairs or trios) that are already working.
Presentation:	When the exercise is completed, play lively music and ask participants to circulate and read the other groups' answers. When you review the course agenda, be sure to link the answers to the topics that will be covered during the course.
Variations:	Ask participants to label their stories based on where they fit in the agenda. Provide an opportunity to present after you do the introduction to each section of the programme or as part of the wrap-up of each section.
Practice:	
Performance:	
Debriefing:	



Word Search Puzzles

Suggested Time Frame:	15-20 minutes
Suggested Group Size:	Pairs or groups
Preparation:	Prepare questions that are directly relevant to the first agenda item and a word search puzzle containing the answers. Copy the questions and puzzle on a variety of fluorescent sheets of paper.
Examples:	Word search puzzles can be used for a wide variety of training programmes including orientation sessions, technical training, product or service training, and management training.
Set-up:	Place the sheets with questions and the word search puzzles on participant tables (1 per person).
Presentation:	When the course is scheduled to begin, play upbeat music and group participants into pairs or trios. Ask the participants to use the word search puzzle to find answers to the questions. When most of the participants have arrived, review the answers. Award prizes to the pair or trio with the highest number of correct answers.
Variations:	Word search puzzles can also be used review.
Practice:	You can also ask participants to create word search puzzles and exchange them for practice.
Performance:	
Debriefing:	

Practice Makes Perfect

These are just a few of the sizzling sessions that have been tried and tested by The Training Oasis, Inc. Experiment and send us a tweet [@trainingoasis](https://twitter.com/trainingoasis) to let us know what works for you.

Good luck!



Conservative Corner: Accelerated Learning for Analytical Learners

A Recipe for Frustration

Facing a conservative or highly analytical audience can be one of the most frustrating experiences for trainers who use accelerated learning. Instead of an enthusiastic reaction to icebreakers, game or group exercises, trainers hear groans or see participants rolling their eyes. After the session, it can be discouraging to read comments on your reaction survey like "the facilitator treated us like kindergarten kids".

We haven't devoted a lot of time to methods of instruction that appeal to analytical learning as they dominate the educational system. We have had a lifetime of exposure to traditional training. Everyone has experienced it and we all know what that approach looks like. How can keep your sessions upbeat, energetic and interactive without insulting conservative audiences?

Bright Idea

Reducing Resistance

When your audience is conservative, one of the most risky approaches you can use when attempting to introduce accelerated learning is to plunge right in without explanation. If you're not careful, you'll be facing mega resistance before too long. Conservative audiences need a period of transition and time to "warm up" to new approaches.



Wading In

After the session starter and a brief introduction, give the audience a short presentation about the latest research about learning, the brain and the impact of colour, music, interactivity, etc. on learning and retention. We reviewed some of this research in [Theoretical Tidbits](#). The following approaches will appeal to even the most conservative palate. Draw parallels between the latest research about learning and advances in the fields of medicine, science, IT, or technology. For example, ask the group if they would be comfortable driving to work in a horse and buggy or receiving treatment from a doctor who had only taken advantage of the medical knowledge that was available up to and including the year 1900. Stress the fact that it is just as important to take advantage of the most up to date information about the functioning of the human brain and learning.

Sizzling Session Starter

Can facilitators use "icebreakers" with a conservative audience? You better believe it...but it all depends on how you use them. First of all, don't call them icebreakers. That term will be a turnoff to most conservative audiences. Instead, refer to them as "session starters" and you're likely to get more than a lukewarm reception. Use session starters to convey specific course-related content instead of as a "nice to do get to know each other better" activity. Position them as "our first activity", or "our first exercise". Here is an example:



Sticky Situations

Overview:	A sticky situation is a "real world" issue, challenge or problem that the individual is actually facing on the job.
Suggested Group Size:	For pairs or groups (max. size = 4)
Suggested Time Frame:	10 - 15 minutes
Required Supplies:	2 Name tags per Participant
Set-up:	Place oversized, florescent post-it notes or index cards on the participants' tables.
Preparation:	<p>When the course is scheduled to begin, form groups even if everyone hasn't arrived. Ask each group to work together to come up with at least one sticky situation per person.</p> <p>Prepare 6 - 10 questions of your own in case all questions have been answered to the satisfaction of the group.</p> <p>Ask participants to write only one situation per per post-it note or card.</p> <p>As other participants arrive, explain the exercise and ask them to join groups that are already working. Feel free to re-configure the groups if necessary so that the exercise is not prolonged.</p> <p>When writing the situation, ask participants to use a W5 approach:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Who is involved?• What is the specific issue, problem or challenge?• When did the situation develop and when do the problems typically occur?• Where do the problems occur (i.e. context - in meetings, one on one, etc.)?• Why do you think the situation is occurring (i.e. identify contributing factors)? <p>After you review the course agenda, ask the participants to work in their groups for another minute or two to identify the area of the course to which the situation pertains and label their cards.</p>
Presentation:	<p>Before you finish each section of the course, ask participants to look at their cards and ensure that all questions have been answered to their satisfaction.</p> <p>Ask participants to identify any questions that have not been answered. Take time to answer any questions that have not been addressed sufficiently.</p>
Practice:	Forum Role-Pay: See instructions on YouTube https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SnzSmRxf5No
Performance Variations:	<p>Variety is the spice of life so don't fall into the tedious rut of always using the cards in the same way. Find at least 2 different ways to use the cards. The Sticky Situations can be used in a number of ways:</p> <p>Group Exercise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The cards with these questions can be exchanged between groups.• Answers can be written on the back of each card before the cards are returned to the original group. <p>Rave Reviews:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• At the end of the course, ask the participants to go through the cards and identify any outstanding questions.• Focus your end of course review on answering these questions



Themes for the Conservative Crowd

You may be wondering if it's possible to use theme, props and peripheral (decorations) with executives and conservative audiences. You certainly can. Just save them for content that is complex or for times of day when anyone would welcome a change (11:00, just after lunch, around 3:00). With conservative audiences it is also very important to make sure that your themes have some link to the content. Until you've given the audience a chance to "warm up" to accelerated learning, restrict your peripherals to colourful posters with key learning points, diagrams, or information about the learning process.

By adding questions about hobbies, interests, and favourite sports to Participant Profiles (see [Season to Taste](#)), facilitators will have a rich source of ideas for themes. Just make sure to link the theme closely to course content through examples, anecdote and analogies. Fluff or filler just won't cut it with the conservative crowd.

Presenting with Pizzazz

Build your session as a series of 20 minute presentations followed by a discussion, exercise or practice session. Use games sparingly at first and rely more heavily on case studies, small group discussions, debates, mock trials, and in class projects with presentations. Provide markers and encourage participants to highlight and circle pertinent information.

The Energizers

At The Training Oasis, Inc., energizers have become one of our trademarks. Energizers are short activities, props, videos or peripherals that we use from time to time to help participants re-charge their batteries. When, based on Participant Profiles, it appears that a particular audience is likely to be conservative, we modify our approach to energizers. Often, we provide a 5 - 10 minute break every hour in addition to the regular mid morning and mid-afternoon breaks when we work with conservative audiences who may consider



some of the more creative energizers to be beneath their dignity.

Even the most senior executives are unlikely to turn down an opportunity to practice their putting during breaks if provide some mini putters. Add some golf posters, an upbeat video about golf, golf balls and tees for prizes, and some golf paraphernalia to decorate the room. You're well on your way to developing a golf theme for one of your executive development sessions. Be sure to use lots of golf analogies, anecdotes and examples in your presentation. Give the group an opportunity to do some stretching followed by a quick coffee re-fill. Later in the day, provide background music for stretch breaks as a way of gradually getting the group used to music during training sessions.

If lunch is provided during the training session, put out a few decks of cards, a couple of chess sets and a backgammon set. You don't have to say a word. Just stand back and watch what happens. It's not unusual for participants to start a game and continue it at every break time. It keeps them alert, energized and enthusiastic - a perfect state for learning.

Here is how to modify energizers for conservative audiences:

**Videos: Energized
by Remote Control**

With predominately male audiences, use clips from football or soccer game. We've used "When Me Becomes We", a motivational video about the sailing team aboard America 3 that won the world championship. It has a short clip with sailing scenes set to music. This video has been a big hit with executives and senior managers.

Musical Moments

When introducing a conservative audience to the use of music for training, slow and steady is the wisest approach. Provide a very brief presentations about some of the latest research about the impact of



music on the brain and the learning process. At first, restrict the use of music to break time. Even the most conservative audience will appreciate short breaks and lively, instrumental music during times of the day when it is challenging to maintain a high energy level (11:00 a.m., after lunch, around 3:00).

When making musical selections, stick closely to the preferences that participants have indicated on Participant Profiles.

Table Top Energizers

During training sessions, I typically put colour coded lunch bags on participant tables at about 11:00 when energy is about to decline.

They are filled with objects like stress balls, silly putty, Snafooz puzzles, wooden hand massagers, Rubik's cubes, Lego, and slinkies.

With conservative audiences, I begin slowly and gauge the reaction.

Anne's Anecdotes: From the School of Hard Knocks

If conservative audiences don't warm up to tactile energizers, just move them to a side table at the earliest opportunity. The first time I went overboard with a conservative audience they were really turned off. I had failed to use Participant Profiles and catered to my own preferences rather than the groups. Very simply, I did not do my homework.

The second time this happened was with a group of executives and managers from an engineering department. After I moved the objects to a side table, some participants played with them at lunch time and during breaks. From time to time, a couple of participants would get up and take an object back to the table when they felt their energy was dwindling. By the end of the session, a lot of participants were "into it".



Tips for Using Tactile Energizers

Often, participants just need time and a slow and steady approach to warm up to new approaches. With conservative audiences, start out with miniature props that are directly relevant to the training or session content. What I often do is put a few of these props and some Lego out around 11:00. I explain the reason for providing energizers and encourage participants to manipulate the objects whenever they feel their energy or attention dwindling.

Before the session, I put most of the tactile energizers on a side table and cover them with a bright cloth. Usually someone peeks and the cloth is removed. If that doesn't happen, I wait until energy is waning, remove the cloth, invite people to help themselves and give a 5 minute mini-break.

I have had great success with small boxes of Lego with engineers and executives. These groups have also enjoyed the cube puzzles manufactured by SnaFooz, metal objects that are flexible, and 3D puzzles such as the type which have objects stuck inside them. The challenge is to remove the objects.

Stress balls and koohes have also been popular with conservative groups once they have had an opportunity to warm up to the idea. With conservative groups, we don't introduce the koohes until later in the day when they have already bought into the concept of table top energizers.

Some participants find it distracting when others are fiddling with objects so One table near the front of the room is labelled "Kooshed out Corner, no toys allowed." By the end of the day, it is usually filled with toys.



When the Going Gets Tough

Tough Crowds: Overcoming Resistance in the Training Room

It's a situation that almost every trainer, professional speaker, or facilitator encounters from time to time....a tough crowd. It can be a trainer's worst nightmare whether facing:

- participants who just don't want to be there
- a rowdy crowd that has consumed too much alcohol
- a resistant group that is unwilling to change or try anything new
- individuals who seem to have more interest in coffee breaks, the luncheon buffet, or smoking than the session

There are no fool proof strategies for dealing with tough crowds but there are a number of steps to take before, during, and after your sessions to manage tough crowds.

Before the Session: Prevention

By taking proactive measures, it is possible to reduce resistance from tough crowd including:

- clarify organizational needs and priorities with an initial project meeting/tele-conference
- determine audience concerns and preferences
- clearly identify expected behaviour and agree upon a process for dealing with problem participants
- conduct telephone interviews with 2 or 3 of the participants who are likely to be resistant
- get a senior decision maker to sign-off on the final agenda



Initial Project Meetings Re-visited

We can't take credit for this idea. Daina Gaines-Robinson stressed the need to meet with one or two key decision makers to help them pinpoint and clearly articulate the "business" needs that are driving the conference, training or team building initiative. In the real world this is easier said than done.

During these turbulent economic times, many executive teams find that their time is over scheduled and that they are pushed to the limit. In-house trainers often find that it can be challenging to get face-to-face time with members of the senior management. Typically, an individual who is relatively junior in the organization contacts independent consultants to do the initial screening. Often, this individual gathers up all of the information and passes it on to a more senior team who makes the final decision. So, what is the solution?

Telephone Interview/ E-mail Survey:

Prepare a standard form or telephone interview to use with your key contact. Often that individual won't have the information required but, armed with the right questions, they can obtain it.

Some of the initial information that you can gather includes:

- Proposed Dates
- Group Size
- Purpose of Session (i.e. business-related, recreational or a combination)
- Objectives of Session
- Approximate Budget
- Desired Length
- Demographics of Group (occupation, degree of physical fitness, analytical vs. creative types)



Prepare a Senior Management Communiqué

If you are an in-house trainer, prepare a brief senior management communicate and obtain assistance from your manager or director to distribute it to members of the senior management team. (External consultants would prepare the draft e-mail and ask their key contact to assist them in getting the e-mail to the appropriate members of the senior management team.)

What information should this communiqué contain? Here are a couple of ideas:

- 3 - 4 key questions related to:
 1. Key Business Challenges your team and organization are facing
 2. Recent organizational and team changes and how your team has reacted to them
 3. Gaps in or barriers to team and organizational performance
 4. Changes or measurable improvements in performance that they would like to see as a result of the session
- a brief outline of why the information is needed
- a statement that indicates how the information will be used and conveying the benefits of providing it

Identify Participant Concerns and Preferences

[Season to Taste](#) described the steps to take and tools that can be used to uncover participants concerns and preferences. We won't re-hash everything here.



Discuss MUTUAL Expectations

Most participants conduct themselves in an appropriate manner but every now and then one encounters a group that is WAY over the top. Discuss the usual participant expectations such as timeliness, being prepared, and turning off cell phones.

Come to an agreement about how unruly or disruptive participants will be handled. Work out a protocol so that if there are any concerns, you will advise the organizer who will deal with the participant.

Expectations are a two way street. One of the things that it is important to clarify is Your role. Some clients want the facilitator to keep things on track, ensure that timeframes are respected and that the group moves through the agenda in an orderly fashion.

Sometimes, let's face it, the training or team building session is an excuse for shopping, a drunken binge or a party. We need to be open to clues about the "hidden agenda" when things are still in the planning stage.

Anne's Anecdotes: From the School of Hard Knocks

A prospective client asked if we could reduce the session to half a day so that the participants would have more time for "shopping". They were flying and bussing in close to 1,000 individuals (employees, spouses, children) at great expense and their priority was shopping.

Some of these situations can be avoided by having a frank talk with the organizers upfront and at pre-scheduled checkpoints.



On all of our contracts we now indicate that we have the right to refuse to allow any individual who is intoxicated to participate in activities that involve physical exertion.

Anne's Anecdotes: From the School of Hard Knocks

I had an experience that was a wakeup call. I organized and facilitated a retreat for a group of sales professionals. The session was a simulation and included some rugged activities. During the site inspection, our contact organizer asked if the group would have access to a fridge "for their beer".

The first night before the group was to head off for activities in the wood. The recreational facilitator noticed that the director was passing a bottle of hard liquor around. On the spot, he made a decision to eliminate some of the activities and reduce the intensity of others.

The next morning, the session started over two hours late as the group was so hung over.

On the final day, the CEO had to be confined to his bed as he and others had been drinking heavily and they had gone for a polar bear dip in the night. If anything more serious had happened, there would have been a risk of liability for my company and the client organization.

The organizer was NOT supportive. She felt that I should have just "gone with the flow". Attempts to keep the group on time and on track were not well received.

If the agenda includes physical activities, it is important to discuss concerns about safety and cover expectations with respect to alcohol consumption. Don't get caught in the middle.



Anne's Anecdotes: From the School of Hard Knocks

Yet another group used up so much of the budget on 5 star accommodation where everyone could have their own room, a host bar, and gifts for each participant, that there was little left for facilitation. Again the priorities were clear.

In these instances, it is best to walk away from the engagement or refer the group to a facilitator with whom they will be more compatible.

After coming to an agreement about expectations, make sure to communicate them clearly in any pre-session communication with participants. Independent consultants, should also include a clear statement of expectations in contracts.

Before the Session

After tabulating the results of Participant Profiles and interviewed 2 or 3 participants, prepare a detailed agenda for sign-off by a member of the senior management team. Unfortunately, this is an important but often neglected step. Why? It is sometimes difficult to arrange meetings with members of the senior management team. Logistics for training and team building sessions are often delegated to someone more junior and critical agenda items can be missed. For this reason, even if a meeting is not possible, it is always important to have someone more senior review, suggest modifications to and, ultimately, sign off on the agenda. Sign-off doesn't have to always come from an executive. However, try to get the most senior person who will be in attendance involved at this critical juncture.

By laying the proper groundwork before the session, 90% of problems can be prevented.



During the Session

During the session, it is important to keep things on target and on-track by:

- including an executive briefing
- pausing for review checkpoints just after lunch and at the end of the first day
- address small issues yourself....refer big concerns like intoxication or a highly disruptive participant to the event organizer

Include an Executive Briefing

One of the most important strategies that you can use to build participant commitment is to arrange for the member of the senior management team to make a presentation to kick-off the session. This can be delivered in person, through a video, or by a virtual presentation. Arrange for a member of the executive team to introduce you and

- highlight key business challenges to position the session
- review the process that was used to obtain group input
- provide key highlights from the learning survey and participant profile
- obtain agreement about the proposed agenda
- review mutual expectations (it helps to have them posted and included in the participant manual)

In most instances, the facilitator will have to prepare the presentation and get it to the executive team member ahead of time. It's well worth it.



Anne's Anecdotes: From the School of Hard Knocks

I used to conduct orientation sessions as well as a 4 day Foundations of Management Programme for a wireless communications firm. We would plan the schedule well in advance and, in most instances, the CEO would make the presentation. When he couldn't make it, he would delegate the responsibility to one of the vice-presidents.

Typically, a senior management briefing will take 15 to 30 minutes. Also, some executives can be long winded and they may have a tendency to run over the allotted time. Still, it's well worth it. It's best to build it for 15 minutes but allocate a buffer of 15 – 30 minutes on your version of the agenda.

The sessions that I have conducted that have included executive briefings have been some of the most problem free sessions I have ever conducted. The organization clearly communicated that the sessions were important, therefore, the participants took them seriously.

Conduct Checkpoint Reviews

One strategy that can be highly effective in identifying concerns before they develop into major issues is to have checkpoint reviews. Just before lunch, hand out:

- anonymous sheets with a temperature gauge and room for comments
- "How are we doing?" surveys or index cards.

Fill in one of these sheets yourself. Review the feedback at lunch time and summarize the results. Highlight what is going well and areas for improvement.



Deal Appropriately with Issues

Review areas of concern and get the group to help generate solutions. Repeat this process at the end of the first day and review the results with the group first thing in the morning.

As a general principle, deal with smaller issues that involve the whole group directly, refer bigger areas of concern that involve particular individuals to the organizer. Some examples of smaller items include concerns about timekeeping, lateness, and individuals having off-track discussions instead of completing group exercises. Sometimes, simply re-arranging the room and pairing the more focused participants up with those who are more concerned with break time and lunch menus is all that is needed to get things back on track

Anne's Anecdotes: From the School of Hard Knocks

During a session that I recently conducted in Asia, I noticed that 3 of the men weren't working all that hard. By contrast, the female participants were focused and engaged. For the rest of the session, I always made sure that I partnered a female delegate with a male delegate. This resolved the problem.

When it comes to bigger issues like highly disruptive participants, individuals missing whole chunks of the programme or drinking, always refer that to the organizer. Our role as trainers, facilitators and professional speakers is not to be a police officer or to enforce rules.



After the Session

After the session, carefully review the feedback forms. It is always good practice to build a debriefing session into the process. This can be accomplished face to face or through a tele-conference.

To avoid the blame game, prepare a brief word document. Identify:

- What worked well
- What could have been improved
- Enhancements for next time

Send the client the template for the same chart ahead of time and invite them to fill it in.

Debriefing should focus on successes, areas for improvement, areas for improvement and possible remedies.

If some participants were dissatisfied, contact them, clarify what they were looking for and find a way to meet their needs.

Anne's Anecdotes: From the School of Hard Knocks

I can think of a couple of instances in which providing the individual with a book that covered theory in more depth or offering a complimentary 1 hour coaching session was all that was required to address concerns. These individuals kept in touch with me for a long time and gained a new level of respect for me even though their initial experience had been unfavourable.



Follow-Up

For some sessions like management training, strategy sessions, and executive development, it is important to build a follow up session into your process. During the follow up session, review the feedback and build the agenda around closing the gap and dealing with any material you were unable to cover in-depth during the first session.

Anne's Anecdotes: From the School of Hard Knocks

For the Foundations of Management programme described earlier, a post course clinic was built into the process which included:

- *a pre-course coaching clinic and course overview for the immediate supervisors*
- *the 4 day Foundations of Management course*
- *a ½ day follow-up clinic for the course participants*

The follow-up focused on the challenges participants were having in applying to the course concepts and strategizing to assist with application.



Technical Tidbits: Taking the Tedium out of Technical Training

A Trainer's Worst Nightmare



Few experiences can be more challenging than presenting highly technical or complex information to a non-technical audience.

Even when the audience has a technical background, it can still be a challenge to maintain high levels of participant energy and enthusiasm. And, what could be duller than droning on and on about company policies and procedures?

Far too often, when content is technical, trainers subject their audiences to uninspiring monologues, slides with fine print and detailed technical drawings. The result:

- eyes that glaze over
- information that goes over people's heads
- and just plain boredom

There has got to be a better way to deliver technical training.

Overview

While there are some approaches that trainers would be best to avoid like the plague when presenting complex information, the only limit to what you CAN do is your imagination. It's time to take some risks with technical training. At the Training Oasis, Inc., we have used a variety of approaches including props, games, game shows, and action learning to convey technical content.

Avoid Like the Plague

When presenting complex, detailed or technical material there is one method to avoid like the plague. Unfortunately, it is also the approach that is used most often to deliver technical training. It's the "bore them with presentations and overcrowded slides" approach.

"What is wrong with presentations?" you may be asking. The main problem with

presentations is that they appeal to only one or two senses. People quickly forget what they hear. They remember roughly 20% of what they only hear. Even when visual aids such as slides are used for technical training, they often dull and uninspiring. People remember only about half of what they see AND hear.

So, here is our list of practices to avoid like the plague when dealing with technical or complex material.

Our X List

- × Presentations that last longer than 20 minutes.
- × Failing to break up presentations with short exercises.
- × A very serious tone with no humour.
- × Tiny font.
 - ❑ Font size should be at least 24 for titles and 18 for the main text
- × Slides & slide shows without graphics.
- × Black and white visuals.
- × Crowded and text heavy visuals. Instead use:
 - ❑ Maximum words per line = 4 - 7 words
 - ❑ Maximum lines per slide = 4 - 7
- × Failing to give hard copies of detailed diagrams so that participants can follow along.

(Some of them may sound like Training 101 and way too basic to be worth the bother of browsing this way again. But, time after time, when we have coached trainers and attended training sessions, these fundamentals have been neglected by trainers who have been in the business for years. Even when we have attended conferences, we have been surprised to see



how many famous training practitioners ignore these fundamentals on a regular basis. So consider what follows as a friendly reminder from a colleague.)

Game Shows

For technical training, game shows can be a powerful alternative to traditional reviews. At the Training Oasis, Inc., we designed 2 game shows for a client's technical training programme. During break time, we played excerpts from an interview with retired game show hosts and placed a call bell on each of the participant tables. Then, we re-configured the groups to give participants a chance to mix and mingle.

We asked each table of 4 to select a name for their team. Then, participants took turns answering questions about the technical information they had covered before the break. Just like a real game show, participants rang the bell when they knew the answer. We awarded points for correct answers and prizes to the winning team.

At around 11:00 when energy levels are typically low, we gave participants an opportunity to write questions about anything that was unclear on florescent index cards. We had also pre-prepared typical questions that customers and prospective customers were likely to ask. Once again, we re-configured the teams. This time, instead of ringing the bell for correct answers, participants leaped to their feet. To pump up the energy level, we had the whole group do a few practice leaps at 11:00. After participants answered each question, points were awarded and the technical trainer expanded on each answer briefly. The information sank in much more quickly than if the trainer had used a presentation format during the final hour before lunch.

Games, Games, Games

As we will cover in [Rave Reviews](#) most review sessions consist of the trainer flipping slides at the front of the room while participants yawn. Tests usually given in such an intimidating environment that it is a miracle that anyone does well.



Anne's Anecdotes: From the School of Hard Knocks

When The Training Oasis helped one of our clients from the wireless communications industry design a technical training programme for sales and customer service, we knew that these approaches would be deadly. Instead, we sprinkled games throughout the session for the purposes of instruction, review and testing.

We played "game show" music from an audio cassette album from Creative Training Techniques International as participants arrived. We placed florescent sheets of paper with trivia questions beside the props we described earlier. The questions were about what we would be covering during the session. The layout on our trivia pre-test was clean with lots of white space and large font. Amusing graphics were used to keep the trivia game light fun. A variety of formats were used for the questions (fill in the blank, multiple choice, mix and match). Participants were encouraged to complete the game in pairs. This entertaining pre-test was repeated at the end of the course.

Did the participants master what they learned?

Based on the results of the trivia post-test, you better believe it!

One reason the results were so positive was that we used game shows for review sessions.

We knew we were on the right track when, on her way out, one of the participants said:

"I dreaded coming here today. It thought it would be the same boring stuff as usual. I never knew that technical training could be fun. For once, I understand what I've learned."

When trying to spice up technical training, there's nothing like the right prop to increase retention.

Anne's Anecdotes: From the School of Hard Knocks

One of our clients, a wireless communications company, faced the challenge of training their sales and customer service people so that they could comfortably discuss a new product. At The Training Oasis, we knew that reviewing detailed engineering schematics would put everyone to sleep in a hurry. We decided to take some risks.

As the product worked at home and in the car, we went to a dollar store and for every 4 participants, we carted back:

- a floor of a doll's house*
- a miniature car*
- a phone magnet*
- small people*
- 2 tiny computers*
- Lego*
- arrows*
- a small basket for the props*

On the wall, we put up colourful posters about the product. On a display table, we placed product brochures. We arranged to have 4 participants per table and we put a full set of props in the centre of each table. Participants were pleasantly surprised as the environment was completely different from any other technical training they had attended.

The trainer described the product and system components with the help of a colourful and graphical PowerPoint slide show. As they listened, participants worked together and constructed a replica of the system for processing calls with the props that were on their table. Then, they moved the people and arrows around as the trainer described how calls were processed. Did it work? Did the information stick? Read the information about games that follows to find the answer to these questions.

Game Shows

For technical training, game shows can be a powerful alternative to traditional reviews. At the Training Oasis, Inc., we designed 2 game shows for a client's technical training programme. During break time, we played excerpts from an interview with retired game show hosts and placed a call bell on each of the participant tables. Then, we re-configured the groups to give participants a chance to mix and mingle.

We asked each table of 4 to select a name for their team. Then, participants took turns answering questions about the technical information they had covered before the break. Just like a real game show, participants rang the bell when they knew the answer. We awarded points for correct answers and prizes to the winning team.

At around 11:00 when energy levels are typically low, we gave participants an opportunity to write questions about anything that was unclear on florescent index cards. We had also pre-prepared typical questions that customers and prospective customers were likely to ask. Once again, we re-configured the teams. This time, instead of ringing the bell for correct answers, participants leaped to their feet.

To pump up the energy level, we had the whole group do a few practice leaps at 11:00. After participants answered each question, points were awarded and the technical trainer expanded on each answer briefly. The information sank in much more quickly than if the trainer had attempted to present the same information in a presentation format during the final hour before lunch.



Action Learning

It may be trite but it's true "actions speak louder than words". This point was vividly illustrated when we taught force field analysis as part of an "off the shelf" training programme. Participants didn't get it. They found the information confusing and they had difficulty applying it to their situations.

Anne's Anecdotes: From the School of Hard Knocks

When we were about to deliver the programme to a group of technicians, we knew that the presentation method just wouldn't cut it. Instead, we used a soccer game to create a living force field. If are unfamiliar with force field analysis, send us an e-mail and we'll send you a PowerPoint or word document with a force field. These were the steps in the game:

- each participant selected a goal
- we had one volunteer write the goal on a piece of masking tape and we taped it to a small, toy soccer ball
- we set up 2 goal posts and labelled one "met" and the other "not met"
- we had some of the participants form two teams of four - one team was called "barriers" the other was called "supports"
- our volunteer identified 4 barriers and 4 supports that would have an impact on goal attainment
- we labelled each team member with one of the barriers or one of the supports
- then, as a group we filled in a force field on a slide
- we briefly explained the force field, comparing it to a soccer game
- then, we played soccer while the audience acted like rowdy soccer fans and cheered for their favourite team
- after the game, we reviewed the force field analysis and participants worked in pairs to complete their force fields

Use the same approach for any technical model or system. Turn it into a game or just re-create it by having each participant "act out" the role of one of the model's components.

Try It.....They'll Like It

To get you started, we've given you a few examples of how you can take the tedium out of technical training. If you're not sure how your participants will react to these unconventional approaches, all we can say is, based on our experience here at The Training Oasis, Inc., your participants will thank you. We encourage you to take some risks with technical training.



The Energizers: A Sure-fire Recipe for Keeping Participants Awake

Solid Content: The Raw Material



Effective training must begin with solid content that meets a specific business need. The steak and the sizzle are both important. One way to think of this is starting with the right raw material. Once content has been determined, it is important to identify any material that is complex, dry or tedious. Find a creative way to present this information and it will be easier for participants to master it. In other words, add the spice.

Some facilitators dismiss energizers as time wasters - frivolous fluff that distracts participants and gets in the way of learning. They question the value of fun in training. One thing is certain, it is difficult for participants to learn anything if they're falling asleep. (Of course, Aldous Huxley would disagree with this. Read *Brave New World* to find out what we mean.) Some material is so difficult to master that participants have been known to burst into tears. By creating vivid and memorable learning experiences that actively engage participants, trainers can cover more content in less time and with less frustration.

The Doldrums

During training, it can be a challenge for participants to stay alert and energized for the entire session. During the hour just before lunch, even the most enthusiastic participants find it tempting to "nod off". After lunch, lunch bag let down is common. The 3:00 doldrums have been known to plague most training sessions. There are many steps that facilitator's can take to counteract these challenges and keep sessions lively and fun.

An Ounce of Prevention

The first step in dealing with energy slumps is to prevent them. Instead of the usual introductions, kick off your sessions with a ten minute activity that gets participants on their feet right away:

Options

Paired Activities

- a short trivia quiz
- a course related puzzle
- interviews for horror and success stories
- related to the course (these can be shared after breaks)

Group Activities

- expectations chart
- card game
- writing captions for course
- related cartoons

Keep your introduction short (ten minutes maximum) and then get participants on their feet to toss around a koosh as they introduce themselves or their partner.

Often, it appears that there is no way around **presenting** some theoretical information early in the session. If this is the case, keep it lively, short (10 - 20 minutes) and interactive.

Participants will appreciate a 5 minute break to re-fill their coffee or pop into the washroom no later than an hour into the session. During the break play some upbeat music. Let them know that there will be another break in about 45 minutes and encourage them to get up and stretch or re-fill their coffee at any time.

As soon as possible after the first break, try to get participants involved in a paired or group activity. An exercise that gets participants on their feet working at a flip chart is ideal.

By 11:00 participants will definitely be ready for another break. Keep it to 10 minutes and make the last half of it active. Getting the group up to do the Macarena or forming a massage chain will perk up even the drowsiest participants.

Break Time



Avoiding Lunch Bag Let Down



So Long to Siesta Time

Finishing Touches



To avoid the energy slump that often follows a meal, keep the hour immediately after lunch interactive and then take a 5 minute short break.

Bringing in cool drinks at this time is very refreshing. Experiment with unusual pick-me-ups such as popsicles or pink lemonade.

At the end of the break, put some colourful lunch bags (the cloth ones that children take to school) filled with energizers on the table. Encourage participants to fiddle with them for the rest of the session.

By 3:00, participants will welcome a play break complete with yo-yos and Frisbees or vacation get-away via video. Picking an afternoon snack from the country featured in the video would be a nice touch.

At 4:00, play some lively music. Get participants up on their feet for a 3 minute workout.

Then, ask them to line up, grab the shoulder of the person in front of them while they give and receive a vigorous massage

The last hour of the day should be an interactive session. This would be an ideal time for skill practice or small group exercises.

Instead of the usual approach to review at the end of the day (flipping slides while everyone goes to sleep), ask participants to re-cap what they learned and present it in creative ways like charades, commercials, and improvisation.

One thing is certain, with the energizers, your training sessions will never be the same and your participants are sure to come back for more.

Musical Moments

The Magical Elixir

Have you ever wanted to discover a training technique that would:

- relax participants?
- help participants absorb information in less time?
- rejuvenate and refresh groggy participants?
- restore calm to a rowdy audience?
- stimulate the free flow of ideas for brainstorming?

How much would you be willing to pay for this magic potion?

The good news is that it is available to you any time, anywhere and at minimal cost. It's music.

Many trainers are hesitant to experiment with music. They are worried that it will make them come across as too dramatic and contrived. There is also a concern that using music with a senior audience might reduce their credibility.

Here at The Training Oasis, Inc. we have been experimenting with music for a number of years. How do we do it? We use a lot of royalty free music that has been cleared for use during training programmes. The response has been phenomenal!

Musical Tips for Conservative Audiences

Even the most conservative audiences can warm up to music in the training room if you use the right approach.

If your audiences are conservative or you aren't sure how your audiences would react to the use of music, be sure to read Laying Down the Rhythm Track in our Season to Taste issue



before you read the other information in Musical Moments! You'll also find some helpful information in the Musical Moments section of our Conservative Corner issue helpful.

Our Playlist

Click on the underlined text below for examples of music that is appropriate for each of the purposes listed. Some opportunities for using music include:

- as a session starter
- while participants are reading or completing written exercises
- for games and simulations
- during breaks
- for exercise or dance breaks,
- for guided imagery,
- to energize tired participants,
- to calm a rowdy group,
- as a finishing touch

Copyright Considerations

Our playlist is designed to provide examples only. Before using any music, it is important to ensure that you are not violating copyright.

In Canada, to obtain a license to use music for a specific training session, contact SOCAN. In the USA, you should contact ASCAP or BMI.

For information about the use of music for training purposes, e-mail The Music Group or call them at 1-888-687-4251. Be sure to check out our Royalty Free Music section for links to locations where you can obtain royalty free music to use during training sessions.

Theoretical Music Links

If you would like theoretical information about the impact of music on the brain and learning, please bookmark this page so that you can find it again easily and then click here,



here, here, here, or here.

Sizzling Session Starters

Theme From 2001 a Space Odyssey
Twin Peaks Theme
Flashdance
Time of My Life (Dirty Dancing)

Reading / Written Exercises



Accelerated Learning for Virtual Learning: Conferences and Training

Game Changers

9/11 ushered in an era of concerns about the safety of airline travel. Fast forward to today and truck attacks and terrorist incidents have increased the level of concern surrounding business travel.

Higher workloads and shorter turnaround times have resulted in many companies reducing the amount of time that employees are available for face-to-face training. These factors have resulted in an increase in the use of video conferences and virtual learning.

Simply using traditional approaches to training and delivering content via technology will not lead to any improvements in training effectiveness. Wall-to-wall talking heads are no more appealing when presented virtually than during face-to-face training sessions.

Can accelerated learning improve the effectiveness of virtual conferences? Absolutely. The key is to make sessions more interactive and include a generous helping of energizers.

Virtual conferences work best with a hybrid meeting format. Host a number of pop-up event venues that can serve as conference rooms in remote locations. By providing participants with the opportunity to gather locally, facilitators can integrate virtual learning with interactive, face-to-face small group exercises.

Here are some resources to assist facilitators in the design of virtual learning:

The information in the first video is of value but the format is much too text heavy:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Y1uv2l42no>

While our focus here is on the design of learning rather than technology, it is important to

A Quick Word



About Technology

say a few words about technology.

Since we first released this information as an issue of our **Spice of the Month** ezine well over a decade ago, there has been a dramatic transformation of the event technology landscape. In addition to the emergence of social media, which wasn't even on the horizon at that time, there has been an explosion in the options to deliver virtual learning.







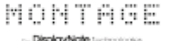













For Large Groups Cisco WebEx, Onstream and INXPO can make it possible for virtual participants who are tuning in online to interact with each other, ask questions and have discussions in virtual conference rooms.

For Small Groups Telepresence, Skype, Google Hangouts, Facebook Live, and Second Life are options to consider.

I mention Second life deliberately. While some may perceive it as “old school”, in the race to rush on to the hottest new technology, we are not exploring all of the possibilities in existing technology. Second Life is being used for many types of events like music festivals and concerts.



Event Technology For Virtual and Hybrid Events

If you need to...	consider...	such as...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stream slides from a single source Facilitate Q&A between participants 	Webinar Platforms	 
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support live video and content streaming Give larger groups of remote attendees access to content Facilitate interaction or discussion between virtual participants 	Interactive & Live Streaming	  
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enable attendees at various locations to share content simultaneously in real time Give larger groups of remote attendees access to content Facilitate interaction or discussion between virtual participants 	Wireless Presentation Systems	 
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Broadcast meetings, events or content over the Internet 	Webcasting	   
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enable individuals in different locations to communicate and share 2-way video and audio transmissions 	Video Conferencing	  
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amp up the remote attendee user experience with avatars 	Virtual Worlds & Avatars	   
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a 360° fully immersive, virtual environment 	Virtual Reality	 

Source: EventMobi [What You Need to Know About Hosting a Virtual Meeting or Hybrid Event](#) – A blog post I ghost wrote for a client.

Virtual Reality

From simulated interactions with employees for management development to technical training, VR will have many applications for learning and development. VR will give learners



an opportunity to participate in scenarios and experience realistic outcomes. The creation of realistic 3D models will add power to medical and technical training.

Virtual reality has the ability to create vivid and truly immersive multi-sensory experiences.

A number of projects including Sansar by Linden Lab, the creators of Second Life, will open the door for virtual learning through a shared virtual reality experience.

- Sansar <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-tdkW64u3YA>
- Virtual Reality for Training <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1MpUUDr6OFM>
- 3 Ways Virtual Reality Can Enhance Learning <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jRQzl8ewDMQ>
- Virtual Reality for Technical Training (Demo) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rrUaCxo_s34

Pre-Course Kits

For classroom training sessions, some see pre-course kits as a nice to have. For virtual learning and video conferences they are a must have. About a week prior to the session, ensure that each participant has a kit with the following:

- A short exercise that participants can use to prepare for the training session or meeting.
- An interactive workbook or handout (with a lot of graphics plus ample room to take notes and fill in the blanks.

These can be pre-shipped to remote conference rooms.

- Scented thin markers for colouring graphics
- Mr. Sketch markers
- To appeal to kinesthetic learners, small snack pack with table top energizers such as silly putty, play dough, slinky, stress balls, and Kl maxx.

Visit the [accelerated learning smorgasbord](#) on our website for more ideas.

Check out [The Energizers: Sure-fire Strategies for Keeping Participants Awake](#) for a description of how you can put together snack packs with table top energizers.)



The Power of Peripherals

Put up some colourful peripherals. You don't need many items as you probably won't have a lot of set up or take down time. But put up a colourful poster. If you will be doing some flip charting exercises, mount the flip chart paper on brightly coloured backdrop and put them up around the room. Ensure that the items you place on the table are colourful. Florescent post-it notes, post it flags, and index cards will read well on the video. Ensure that you wear something bright that day as well. (As we'll discussed in [Brain Food](#) colour stimulates the brain, improves attentiveness and appeals to the visual learners.

Session Starters

As people arrive, play some warm and inviting music. It should be upbeat and energizing. Start the session with some gentle stretching or Tai Chi. If possible, arrange in advance for one of the participants to lead it. Again, the people at the other end in the video conference can participate.

If your video conferencing equipment enables you to play a video for all participants, another option would be to play a really upbeat scenic or music video at the beginning of the session.

[Our Musical Moments](#) provides many suggestions for music and upbeat, scenic videos.

If you have a minimum of two participants at each location, have participants review the exercise they prepared for the session and share their results with the whole group. Right off the bat you are communicating the message that this will be an interactive session.

Exercises and Group Work

Using exercises during an interactive session can be a challenge. Getting participants to work on exercises individually will KILL the energy. So you do the reverse of what you would do for a face to face session. Do whole group exercises. Perhaps you can give participants a chance to prepare in trios or pairs but restrict the preparation to 10 minutes. Then, give the participants opportunities to take turns presenting the results of the paired exercises and



discussions, flip charting, and leading exercises. You will need detailed instructions for each exercise in your kit and the handouts will need more detailed instructions than you would require for a face to face session

I have written content about virtual learning for some of my clients. Please consult these additional resources that I wrote for clients:

- [10 tips for creating interactive hybrid events](#)
- [Organizing a Pop-up Event: 4 Keys to Success](#)

These suggestions will help you start video conferencing sessions off on the right foot and keep participants engaged throughout the session. If you have any other suggestions or questions, please send us a tweet [@trainingoasis](#) and we may include them in a update.



Our Dinner Theatre: Acting Exercises for Accelerated Learning

Appealing to the "Whole" Self



One of the beauties of accelerated learning is that it allows you to bring your whole "self" into the training room.

- If you're athletic you can use warm up exercises as energizers and draw rich metaphors from the world of sports.
- If you play an instrument, you can create musical moments for some of your breaks, quiet reading and group work sessions.
- If you enjoy acting, you can bring improv games and acting exercises right into the training room.

Even if you've never done acting, a sure-fire strategy for "spicing up" your training is to borrow some costumes, props, sets and techniques from the actor's trunk.

Setting the Stage

One way in which you can have an impact before the session even begins is to use a few of the tricks that work for theatre companies. Serve your morning refreshments in a lounge, lobby area or just outside the training room. This will give participants an opportunity to mix and mingle informally before the session begins.

Prepare the agenda for the session in the same format as a theatre programme. Post the agenda, facilitator's headshot and bio on the wall near the entrance to the training room. Participants can review this information while they enjoy light refreshments. It's a good way of getting them to focus on the session and the course objectives.

For room set-up, think "theatre in the round" (fishbowl) as opposed to a traditional theatre

style seating. Arrange the around the room in groups of of 4 - 6 at tables around the room. Place a small table with 2 - 3 chairs in the centre of the room and put a reserved sign on it. Use this table for forum roleplays, peer coaching, and impromptu activities involving the whole group.

- Use idea chains, mind maps, or storyboards to select a theme that reflects the focus of your programme.
- Use decorations and props to convey the theme.
- Instead of using one central area at the front of the room for the segments of your session that involve presentations, "block" your presentation. Pick different areas of the room for different presentation segments.
- Create small "sets" with decorations and props that are appropriate for specific segments. As people enter the room, just like in the theatre, play music that fits your theme.

Bright Idea

Theatre Inspired Session Starters

Movie theatres often use on screen presentations and trivia to give audiences a point of focus before the film begins.

Mike Aoki, a dynamite Toronto-based professional speaker and trainer who I've known for years and who I had the pleasure of mentoring, modified this approach for use in the

training room. He uses PowerPoint to create presentations with information about the course, his bio and course related trivia. When participants enter the room, they listen to upbeat music and try to guess the answers to the trivia questions.



Scenes

Select a scene from a play or movie that's relevant to your topic. Mix and mingle with the participants as they arrive. Cast the scene with the liveliest people in the room. Give the

A Word About Using Copyrighted Scenes

participants an opportunity to read the scene and enact it a bit before you begin your introduction or start a new section of the course. Movie and theatre scripts are available at:

- [Drew's Script-O-Rama](#)
- [Scripts on the Net](#)
- [Simply Scripts](#)

Before using scripts or any other copyrighted material for training or educational purposes, it is extremely important to ensure that you are not violating copyright. Copyright guidelines vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction so we strongly recommend that you seek legal advice. Here are a few links that will help you identify the requirements for legally using copyrighted material in the US and Canada:

- [Copyright Clearance Centre](#)
- [The Intellectual Property Law Server](#)
- [Guidelines for the use of Copyrighted Material in Multimedia for Educational Purposes](#)
- [Copyright Board Canada](#)
- [The Canadian Copyright Licensing Agency](#)

Another option would be to obtain permission to show 1 or 2 scenes from a popular movie at various points in the course when they are relevant. [Popcorn and Pictures](#) gives information about how you can do this legally.



Skits

Opening your training session with a skit can help create the right climate for learning. Skits are a fun, upbeat and unexpected way of kicking off a session.

Bright Idea

Skits

For example, Mohr Learning kicked off their powerful Accounting Game simulation with a skit. They give a brief overview of the session including a 5 minute presentation about accelerated learning and it works. Then, they have participants close their eyes while they use music and guided imagery as a transition.

The 2 facilitator's put on costumes (tee shirts and caps turned backwards).

When they the participants opened their eyes, the skit transports them back to their childhood days of running a lemonade stand. This created an atmosphere that was fun, upbeat and relaxing. It's was very effective way of making a seminar about finance for non-financial managers less intimidating. For the rest of the session, the facilitator's drew heavily on examples, analogies and metaphors related to running a lemonade stand.



Opening Act

Acting Out

Suggested Time Frame:	15 - 20 minutes
Suggested Group Size:	Pairs or groups (max. size = 6)
Preparation:	<p>About five minutes before the scheduled start of your session, scan the room.</p> <p>If just about everyone has arrived, break the group up into teams of 4 - 6. If a lot of people are missing, use pairs and trios. As more people arrive, have them join existing pairs and trios to form bigger groups.</p> <p>Identify some business challenges or pressing business issues that they are facing (related to the course topics) and give each challenge the title of a movie or TV show.</p>
Set-up:	Ask the groups to record the titles and the name of the person who generated it on a flip chart.
Presentation:	<p>Do a brief opening presentation and go over your agenda. Ask the groups to go back to their flip charts and identify the topic from the course agenda to which each of their challenges is related.</p> <p>Ask the two groups that have situations relevant to the first course agenda item to roleplay their scene in front of the group..</p>
Practice:	Re-do the roleplays as forum roleplays after you have completed the first topic. This will give the participants an opportunity to rehearse how they can apply what they are learning in the course
Variations:	<p>You can use the other challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• to introduce topics on the agenda• for skill practice• as forum role plays
Performance:	
Debriefing:	



Practice Makes Perfect

Forum Roleplay

After an important section of the course, use forum roleplays to give participants an opportunity to practice various ways of handling challenging situations that they are facing on the job . Here's how:

If you have not already done so, set up the room in "theatre in the round" formation.

Have the participants who are involved in the first roleplay sit in the middle of the room and begin the roleplay.

At any time (for example, when someone is stuck), any of the other participants in the room can tap one of the actors on the shoulder and take his or her place.

After the group has experimented with 2 - 3 approaches to resolving the situation, discuss the roleplays with the group.

Repeat the process with 1 or 2 other situations.

Finishing Touches

Acting Out - Part Two

Suggested Time Frame:	15 - 20 minutes
Suggested Group Size:	Pairs or groups (max. size = 6)
Preparation:	
Set-up:	
Presentation:	An effective way to bring your session to a close is to give participants an opportunity to re-enact the challenging situations they identified at the beginning of the session.
Practice:	This time they should resolve their challenge using strategies they've picked up during the course.
Performance:	
Variations:	If anyone is stuck, use a forum roleplay to help them generate possible solutions.
Debriefing:	



Bowing Out

Suggested Time Frame:	10 - 15 minutes
Suggested Group Size:	Pairs or groups (max. size = 4)
Set-up:	A quick way to end a session on a high note is to give each participant a review comment card.
Preparation:	Play some upbeat music and give participants about 5 minutes to identify <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the 2 - 3 key learnings from the course that they found most beneficial• the specific ways in which they plan to use what they learned when they get back to work.
Presentation:	Give each participant an opportunity to go to the front (or center) of the room. Share what they've written and take a bow.
Variation:	If you're working with a large group. Give participants a few minutes to share their key learnings in groups of 3 or 4. Ask for 3 - 4 volunteers to come to the front of the room and take a bow.



Popcorn & Pictures: Enhancing Learning with Movie Magic

Movie Magic



Tips for Using Films with Conservative Audiences

The motion picture industry plays a powerful role in shaping our culture. During training programmes, movie clips and training videos can have a strong impact on your participants.

They can:

- provide a sizzling start for your sessions
- reinforce key learning points
- create a relaxed atmosphere
- energize exhausted participants
- add fun and variety to your breaks

Even the most conservative audiences can warm up to the use of movies in the training room if you use the right approach.

If your audiences are conservative or you aren't sure how your audiences would react to film clips, be sure to read Laying Down the Rhythm Track in our Season to Taste issue before you read the other information in Popcorn & Pictures! You'll also find some helpful information in the Movie Magic section of our Conservative Corner issue helpful.

Theoretical Links

If you would like theoretical information about the impact of pictures and images on the brain and learning, please bookmark this page so that you can find it again easily and then click here for our Brain Food section of our Theoretical Tidbits issue.

Copyright Considerations

Before using videos and film clips for training, it is important to ensure that you are not violating copyright. Some videos are intended for use in training. Others are intended for public use. Caution must be exercised if you want to use clips from major motion picture production studios.

"Videocassettes sold or rented to the public are intended exclusively for the enjoyment of friends and family in their personal home. Any other type of exhibition is considered a Public Performance and requires the consent of the original copyright holder or its agent. Many public organizations still expose themselves to copyright infringements, simply because of a lack of understanding of copyright legislation."

Audio Cine Films Inc.

In Canada, the Canadian Copyright Act governs the use of copyrighted material. To obtain a license to use music for a specific training session, contact ACF. Depending on your situation, you can obtain a license to use a specific film in your training for as little as \$100. ACF is the licensing agent for some of the most prestigious Canadian, American and foreign films. Click [here](#) to see a list of the companies for which ACF is the exclusive motion picture non-theatrical distributor and public performance licensing agent. To purchase a license from ACF call them directly at 1-800-289-8887.

The laws in the US are significantly different from those in Canada. In the USA, you can obtain information and purchase rights to use movie clips through ASCAP or BMI.

In Canada and the U.S., Criterion Pictures also has the right to rent some motion pictures. Click [here](#) for contact information.

Here are some ideas to get you started. We will be adding to this list over the next few weeks. Click on the underlined text below for examples of video clips that you can use:

- as session starters
- to reinforce key learning points or themes
- to create a relaxed atmosphere
- as energizers
- for breaks
- exercise or dance breaks,
- just for fun

Title Sequences

Sizzling Session Starters

[An American in Paris \(Opening Sequence\)](#)



The Sound of Music (Opening Sequence)
Three Coins in a Fountain (Opening Sequence)
Raiders of the Lost Ark (Scene in the Temple)

For Key Learning Points

- Balance - The Preacher's Wife (Whitney Houston, Denzel Washington)
- Cross Cultural Communication - Dances with Wolves (Kevin Costner)
- Diversity - The Joy Luck Club
- Ethics - A Soldier's Story (Denzel Washington)
- Management (How Not to do it) - 9 - 5 (Dolly Parton)
- Motivational Sessions - Field of Dreams (Kevin Costner, Ray Liotta)
- Race Relations - The Partner (Whoopi Goldberg)
- Teamwork - Mission Impossible (Tom Cruise)

.....Andcourtesy of one of our visitors Richard Demming:

- Leadership - The Edge - Anthony Hopkins
- Effective Presentations - Michael Douglas in American President and Anthony Hopkins in AMISTAD
- Ignoring Warnings - Titanic (the Captain)
- Losing Focus - Titanic (The Businessman and his security man)
- Mixed up Priorities - Titanic (The Countess)
- Changing your environment can Change you - Pretty Woman
- Becoming Institutionalised - The Shawshank Redemption
- Carpe Diem & Challenging Tradition - Dead Poets Society

Relaxing Moments

Singing in the Rain (Gene Kelly)
South Pacific
The Harder They Come (Sitting Here in Limbo Beach Sequence)
The Secret Garden (Garden in Spring Sequence)
Fred Astaire & Ginger Rogers Dance Sequences
Dance Sequences from Rita Hayworth movies



The Energizers

A Hard Day's Night - Opening Sequence (The Beatles)
Elvis Presley Movies (Song & Dance Sequences)
Fame (Numerous Dance Sequences)
Grease (Dance Sequences)
Oklahoma (Dance Sequences)
Saturday Night Fever (Dance Sequences)
Time of My Life (Dirty Dancing)

Breaks

A Hard Day's Night (The Beatles)
Dance with Me (Vanessa L. Williams & Cheyanne)
Mambo Kings (Numerous Dance & Music Sequences)
Taps (Gregory Hines)

Exercise or Dance Breaks

Flashdance (What a Feeling)
YMCA (Village People - Does anyone remember the movie this came from? Please e-mail us.)

Just for Fun

Alice in Wonderland (The Mad Hatter's Tea Party)
Any Eddie Murphy Movie
Fantasia (The Sorcerer's Apprentice)

Finishing Touches

Casablanca (Closing Sequence)
Gone With the Wind (Closing Sequence)



In the Public Domain

Trying to find video clips that you can legally use for sessions starters, energizers, and breaks?

Help is just one mouse click away. Contact these organizations and request their catalogues.

Be sure to let them know that you were referred by Anne Thornley-Brown, President, The Training Oasis, Inc. in Toronto, Canada.

Motion Pictures:

- Criterion Pictures
1- 800-890-9494 (US)
1-800-663-0991 (Canada)

Study Guides Covering Business Applications
for Popular Movies:

- Movies for Business
- More Title Sequences

Videos For Vacation Breaks:

- Tropical Video

Videos with Breathtaking Scenery and Music:

- Miramar Productions - 1-888-627-0500



Brain Food: Food for Thought - Brainstorming

Harnessing Brain Power



Theoretical Tidbits highlights the fact that an understanding of how the brain operates in the learning process is one of accelerated learning's key ingredients. We described the resources (ranging from the logical and linear to the creative and intuitive) that are available to us through the brain. We also discussed a range of strategies for energizing and stimulating the brain through the senses.

Many exercises and strategies that can be used to harness brain power and help learners generate new ideas and approaches. Some exercises use on a logical, step by step approach. Others are intended to foster "out of the box thinking" and unleash the brain's creative powers. Experiment with them in training sessions, at team meetings, and in the boardroom. You can use them for brainstorming sessions, problem solving and even networking. One word of caution is in order. Be sure to allow enough thinking time before diving into brainstorming exercises. UCLA Professor Dario Nardi cautioned that traditional "shout-it-out, put-it-up-on-the-board brainstorming" shortchanges introverted learners and the entire group. Build some quiet reflection time into your design or identify the specific issues to be considered ahead of time so that participants will have an opportunity to prepare.

Picture It

Required Supplies:	1 deck of picture cards or stack of magazines for every 4 - 6 participants
Set-up:	Place a deck of cards or set of magazines on each participant table.
Instructions:	Divide participants into groups of 4 -6. Give each participant 5 minutes to introduce themselves and answer questions about the type of leads, contacts or ideas they need Flip over 2 picture cards. Group members spend 10 minutes brain storming in response to pictures on cards.

More Heads Are Better Than One

Required Supplies:	8/12 x 11 sheets of paper or flip charts pens or markers
Preparation	Give each participant time to write down a brief introduction: My name is _____ from _____. I specialize in helping _____ to _____ . I need help with _____ . or My name is _____ from _____. The main challenge I'm facing is _____. I could use some ideas for _____ . Divide participants into groups of 4 -6.
Instructions:	Give each participant 5 minutes to introduce themselves and answer questions about the type of leads, contacts or ideas they need. The group should then spend 10 minutes generating ideas to assist that participant before moving on to the next person.

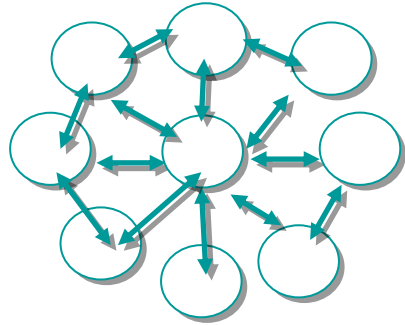
Mind Maps



Mind mapping was invented by Tony Buzan as an alternative to linear methods of note-taking and brainstorming. If you are not familiar with mind mapping:

Mind Mapping Exercise

Required Supplies:	1 Flip chart for every group of 4 -6. 1 marker per person (thick)
Set-up:	Divide participants into pairs, trios or groups of no more than -6.
Instructions:	Give each participant 5 minutes to introduce themselves and answer questions about the type of leads, contacts or ideas they need Group members spend 10 - 20 minutes developing a mind map with ideas, leads and contacts



More structured than mind maps, idea chains will be more appealing to analytical learners.

Idea Chains

- Required Supplies:** Large idea chains for groups and small ones for individual work
- Set-up:** Divide participants into pairs, trios, or groups of no more than -6.
- Instructions:** Identify the specific issue that needs to be considered.
Give the group some quiet thinking time for individual work,
Start in the centre and branch out, adding as many outer layers of circles as required.
Identify the 3 ideas with most potential.
Complete an analysis using force fields to select the most viable option.

Give & Take

- Required Supplies:** 2 Name tags per Participant
- Preparation:** Give each participant two name tags. On the first, they write down one business-related issue they need to resolve or piece of information they require. On the second they right down a couple of items for which they are a good source of information.
- Instructions:** Give participants the opportunity to work in pairs, trios or small groups giving and receiving information and ideas.
- Variations:** For Creative Participants
Approach the exercise as a game. Each participant should begin the game with 10 - 20 business cards (depending on the size of the group). When information and ideas are given, At the end of the game, prizes are given for the person who has given and the person who has received the highest number of business cards with the specific information.

Grab Bag

- Required Supplies:** 1 bag of assorted objects per table.
- Set-up:** Place one bag on each table.
Divide participants into groups of 4 -6.
- Instructions:** Give each participant 5 minutes to introduce themselves and answer questions about the type of leads, contacts, or ideas they need
Pick 2 objects from the bag and generate ideas using the objects for inspiration.

Bingo

Required Supplies:	Pre-prepared Bingo cards (several versions) Markers
Preparation:	When participants register, get them to indicate the specific type of lead, information or idea they are seeking. Write these in the boxes on bingo cards and also on index cards (record the name of the person seeking the lead). Leave a few boxes blank on each bingo card to accommodate last minute registrants.
Set-up:	Place a set of assorted Bingo cards on each table
Instructions:	When the game begins, start picking cards and reading out requests. When each item is called, it should be marked on the bingo card. The person who had the request should stand. Other attendees should think of ideas, contacts, etc., write them on the back of a business card. The person who had the request should go around and collect the cards. Bingo wins.
Variations:	Same game but with participant mixing, mingling and exchanging information and ideas in an attempt to get bingo. (Cross off each person they meet on the Bingo card.)

Commercials & Collection

Required Supplies:	4 Collection Plates, buckets or baskets Business cards or oversized post it notes
Set-up:	
Preparation	Give each participant an opportunity to write a 1 minute commercial about their work and the type of ideas or information they require.
Instructions:	To generate a large volume of ideas. Give each participant an opportunity give the commercial in front of the whole group. The other participants should right down ideas, information and contacts on business cards or post it notes. The participant who gave the commercial should go around the room with a collection plate, bucket or basket to gather the business cards or post its. Give each participant who wants to obtain information or ideas a turn.
Variations:	To give participants more time for brainstorming and discussion, vary the format to a small group exercise.



Pictograms & Pictographs

Pictograms are pictorial representations of words, phrases, or ideas. They are less structured than mind maps or idea chains. They can be used for an interactive exercise:



Pictograms & Pictographs

Required Supplies:

1 Flip chart for every group of 4 -6.
Thin Mr. Sketch markers for participant tables
Thick Mr. Sketch markers near flip charts

Set-up:

Divide group into teams of 3 -6.

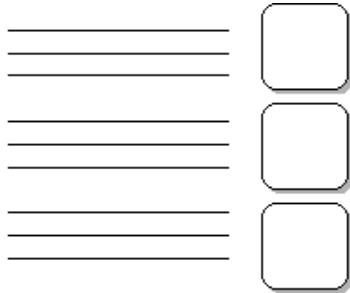
Instructions:

Play upbeat instrumental music (if it is a good fit for the learning styles of participants)
Divide the group into teams of 3 – 6.
Allow 5 – 10 minutes of quiet thinking and reflection time.
Ask participants to quietly gather around a flip chart or Bristol board. It may be best to put the pads of flip chart paper on the tables or on the floor.
Ask participants to quietly create one or more pictures that represent their idea or solution.
Ask participants to sit down when they have finished their drawing.
When everyone has finished, ask the group to re-assemble and share their ideas using the pictures as a point of reference.

Variations:

Use an idea chain or mind map instead of a pictogram.

Storyboards



Storyboards are used in the development of TV commercials. On one side of the page, in boxes, there are the images and pictures that will appear on the screen. Beside each box, there is the corresponding text for the script or voiceover. For brainstorming, let ideas flow freely and record them in a storyboard format combining words and pictures.

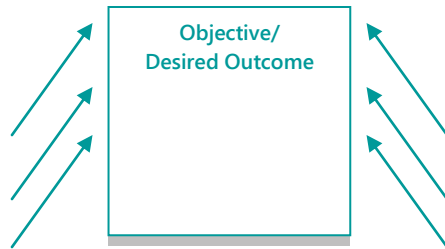
Storyboarding Exercise

Required Supplies:	1 Flip chart for every group of 4 -6. 1 marker per person (thick)
Set-up:	Divide participants into groups of 4 -6.
Instructions:	Give each participant 5 minutes to introduce themselves and answer questions about the type of leads, contacts or ideas they need Group members spend 10 minutes developing a storyboard with ideas, leads, and contacts
Variations:	Have a stack of magazines handy so that participants who can't draw can cut out pictures for storyboards or mind maps.

Fish Bowl Roleplay

Required Supplies:	None
Set-up:	Give participants an opportunity to jot down a situation. (A when, where, who, what format works best.)
Instructions:	Each person briefly describes a personal or professional challenge for which they could use some assistance. Select partner(s) to begin enacting the situation with you as the rest of the group observes. When a member of the group has an ideas for handling the situation, she will tap you (or the person "playing you") on the shoulder and take your place in the role-play.
Variations:	This exercise can be completed in small groups or in front of all participants.

Video Example: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SnzSmRxf5No>



Force Field Analysis

Required Supplies:	Large force fields for groups and small ones for individual work.
Set-up:	Divide participants into pairs, trios, or groups of no more than -6.
Instructions:	<p>Identify the idea, objective, or option that is being considered and write it in the centre of the chart.</p> <p>On the right create arrows to list all factors supporting it.</p> <p>On the left use arrows to identify anything that might hinder successful implementation.</p> <p>Brainstorm with mind maps or idea chains to generate with solutions for any obstacles or challenges.</p> <p>Only if support outweigh obstacles and obstacles can be cleared is the idea viable.</p>

When You Get Stuck

The brain has been described as the most powerful computer in the world. While it surpasses any computer in terms of complexity, it's not a computer and we're not robots. Sometimes ideas flow freely and sometimes we get experience a mental block.

Anne's Anecdotes: From the School of Hard Knocks

When I was attempting to come up with a company name, I mind mapped and "brainstormed" like crazy but I was blocked. I just couldn't come up with a name. Finally, I just let it go and focused on other things.

It took time but one morning, out of the blue, I woke up with the name "The Training Oasis". It was so obvious and it captured my vision of training perfectly. I wondered why I hadn't thought of it before.

Our Festive Feast



Deck the Halls:
Christmas Event Decor
and Peripherals

Every year from 1997 - 2012, we've added special festive dishes to our [Accelerated Learning Smorgasbord](#) to inspire you to add punch and pizzazz to training sessions and corporate events during the festive season. We took a break as our content was so well received that our President, Anne Thornley-Brown, has been busy blogging for major portals. We're happy to be back this year with fresh new ideas and some of our old favourites.

We've done your brainstorming for you. So, help yourself. Our Festive Feast is overflowing with energizers, decor, visuals, and games. Stop by whenever you need inspiration or you're stuck for ideas to "spice up" your training or corporate events.

[Creating the Right Ambiance for Accelerated Learning](#)

The right ambiance goes a long way to creating the right ambiance for learning.

During the festive season, decor is available in abundance. So go ahead and deck the halls.

Transform meeting rooms and event venues from boring to brilliant.

You may be thinking, "I don't have a lot of set-up time to create a festive feel in your training room or for a Christmas event." Many have faced that challenge but it doesn't have to stop you.

If you like, you can provide a basic kit for each team and, with your invitation, ask each participant to bring a decoration or ornament. Divide your group into teams, give each team a bag or box of decorations and 15 minutes to decorate a part of the room. (You can also use this activity for any winter event or to decorate the breakout rooms for any winter team building session or retreat as we have done here.)

If your budget is tight, divide the group into teams in advance. Appoint a leader for each team. Ask the team members to consult with each other, come up with a Christmas theme, share the responsibility of bringing decorations to bring that theme to life. Let them know there will be prizes. Play some festive music. Give the winning team their prizes in neatly wrapped Christmas paper. Prizes can often be donated by suppliers or arts organizations.



- Miniature Carousels and Other Animations
- Festive Table Cloths and Napkins
- Festive Glasses to hold pens, markers, etc.
- Snow Globes
- Miniature Villages
- Winter Clothing (Scarves, gloves)
- Candles
- Bells
- Wreaths
- Holly & Ivy
- Tinsel
- Snow Flakes
- Snow Men & Ladies
- Mistletoe
- Ribbons
- Christmas Cards for Name Tags
- Wrapped Packages
- Toys
- Popcorn Chains
- Sleighs
- Ice Skates
- Santa's Sack

Sizzling Session Starters

Session starters involve everything from what participants experience when they first arrive to the steps facilitators and event planners take to encourage them to interact with each other.

Surprise participants upon arrival with 3D projection mapping to add rejuvenate even the most dreary building exteriors. On a budget? Let friendly animations like virtual Santa work their magic. They are created with DVDs and projectors.

Add a festive touch to the process of finding partners for your first exercise with these 3 session starters.

Icebreakers for
Accelerated Learning

Silly Festive Trivia

1. How many reindeer does Santa have?
2. From what fabric was Frosty the Snowman's hat made?
3. Which Scottish poet wrote the words to Auld Lang Syne?
4. How many ghosts visited Scrooge on Christmas Eve?
5. If you re-arrange the letters in Santa's name, what rather ominous figure do you get?
6. What is the name of the horse in Jingle Bells?

Answers

1. Eleven. Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Donner, Blitzen, Rudolph, Olive and Howe....."Olive the other reindeer used to laugh and call him names....and Howe the reindeer loved him and he shouted out with glee."
2. Silk.
3. Robbie Burns.
4. Four - The ghosts of Christmas past, present and yet to come, and Jacob Marley.
5. Satan.
6. Bobtail - "Bells on Bobtail ring...making spirits bright".

Card Exchange



Preparation

It is important to be sensitive to multi-cultural issues and offer participants the option of using Christmas, Hanukkah or Kwanzaa cards or gift for this icebreaker.

Step 1

- Prepare a card for each participant.
 - Inside each card, write the name of one of the participants.
- Or
- Ask each participant to bring a card to the session and sign it.
 - Cards should be placed in envelopes but not sealed.

Step 2

- Just before the exercise, label the envelopes with the names of the participants who have arrived and seal the envelopes.

Step 3

- Distribute cards to half of the participants. Give participants an opportunity to open their cards and find their partners by locating the name of the person who signed their card.

Step 4

- For round 2 of the exercise, change partners by distributing the remaining cards and repeating step 3.

The Merry Mixer



Preparation:

- Obtain small gift tags (or blank red, green and white index cards).
- Select the name of a Christmas or Winter movie for each team or group you want to form (examples: Heidi, Miracle on 34th Street, It's A Wonderful Life).
- On separate cards, write the name of the movie, name of the lead actor and actress, the name of a song from the movie. Add other categories if there are more than 4 members for each group you want to form.

Instructions:

- Distribute the cards.
- Give participants an opportunity to find the members of their groups (or teams) by locating other participants who have elements from the same movie that is represented by the item on their cards.
- Give prizes such as candy canes or Christmas chocolates to the first team to locate all of its members.

Gift Exchange



Preparation:

Step 1

- Purchase a small gift for each participant (under \$2.00). Wrap each gift and label it. Put a participant's name in the "From" section of each label.

or

- Ask participants to purchase, wrap and label a small gift. They should write their name in the "From" section of the gift label.

Step 2

- Just before you do the exercise, label the "To" sections of each gift label.

Instructions:

Step 3

- Distribute half of the gifts.

Step 4

- Participants find their partners by checking the "From" section of their gift labels

Step 5

- To change partners, distribute the remaining gifts, and repeat step 4.

Energizers for Break Time



The Energizers

- Noise Makers
- Horns (New Year's)
- Christmas Crackers
- Piñatas
- Sparklers
- Vintage toys in gift bags
- Toys from around the world in gift bags
- Christmas Trivia
- Tree trimming
- Gingerbread House Decorating
- Baking and decorating cookies
- Sleigh Rides
- Snow shoeing
- Christmas Shoe Boxes (Charity)
- Christmas Bingo
- Christmas Charades
- Christmas "Scene-it"
- Clips from Christmas movies (observe copyright)
- Vacation videos from winter destinations
- Videos with winter scenery
- GoPro Sleigh Rides
- GoPro Videos with Winter Sports
- Christmas themed virtual reality

Musical Christmas Moments

Music for Accelerated Learning

- Any selection from The Nutcracker Suite
- The Christmas Song (Chestnuts Roasting On an Open Fire)
- Walking In the Winter Wonderland
- Felice Navidad
- The Twelve Days of Christmas
- Christmas Virtual Fireplace
- Boney M

Christmas Themed Breaks Accelerated Learning Breaks

- Gingerbread House Decorating
- Cookie or Cake Decorating
- Christmas Pinata
- Mini Christmas Baking Challenge
- Dance Breaks (Reggae, Parang, Latin American, Beach Boys – Little Saint Nick)
- Sleigh Rides
- Snow Shoeing

Refreshments



A Cup of Coffee...a Sip of Tea

Add seasonal fare from around the world to your "spice up" a traditional holiday menu.

Whether it's sorrel from Jamaica or a yule log from Quebec, your guests will appreciate the variety and change of pace.

Multicultural Pot Luck

With work teams becoming more multi-cultural, participants will appreciate this fresh spin on traditional holiday fare.

If your budget is limited, for a lunch they'll never forget, ask participants to bring a festive appetizer, main course, drink, or dessert that represents their cultural heritage.

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cocktail Patties (Jamaica) | <input type="checkbox"/> Dark Fruit Cake/Black Cake (Jamaica) | <input type="checkbox"/> Sorrel (Jamaica) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Salmon Gravlox (Denmark) | <input type="checkbox"/> Buche de Noel (Quebec) | <input type="checkbox"/> Chocolate Tea/Hot Chocolate (Jamaica) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tourteire (Quebec) | <input type="checkbox"/> Rosca de Reyes (Mexico/Spain) | <input type="checkbox"/> Ting (Jamaica) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fondue (Switzerland) | <input type="checkbox"/> Shortbread (England) | <input type="checkbox"/> Cola de Mono (Chile) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Raclette (Switzerland) | <input type="checkbox"/> Sacher Torte (Austria) | <input type="checkbox"/> Wassail (UK) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Goose (England) | <input type="checkbox"/> Kurisumasu Keiki (Japan) | <input type="checkbox"/> Mulled Wine (UK) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Roasted Lamb (Italy) | <input type="checkbox"/> Pavlova (Australia) | <input type="checkbox"/> Egg Nog (Canada/USA) |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> Coquito (Puerto Rico) |

Other Ideas



- Egg Nog
- Fruit
- Punch
- Hot Cider
- Turkey
- Hors
- D'oeuvres
- Nuts (Check for Allergies First)
- Candy Canes
- Popcorn
- Cake Decorated
- Cup Cakes Decorated
- Cookies Decorated
- Ginger Bread Men & Ladies
- Gingerbread House
- Shortbread Cookies
- Yule Log
- Gumballs or Jelly Beans (Red & Green)
- Fruit

Rave Reviews: Re-capping and Reviewing without Regurgitating

Preparation:

- Obtain a small gift. Assemble boxes of various sizes and several types of wrapping paper.
- Place a small gift in a small box and wrap it.
- Stick a label on the box and write a question related to course content on the label.
- Wrap the box a few more times and always put a label with a course-related question on each layer of wrapping paper.
- Put the small box (wrapped) inside a medium-sized and wrap it several times. Put a label on each layer of paper with a course-related question.
- Repeat this process many times until you have one question per participant and the gift has been placed inside several boxes.

Action:

1. Ask participants to sit in a circle. Play festive music such as one of the selections from The Nutcracker Suite or another seasonal piece
2. Participants pass the box around until you pause the music.
3. When the music pauses, the participant who has the box tries to answer the question.
 - If he or she answers it correctly, that participant removes a layer of wrapping paper.
 - If the answer is incorrect, it becomes a toss-up question. Any participant who successfully answers the question will remove a layer of wrapping paper
4. Start the music again and repeat steps 3-4 until some lucky participant unwraps the last box and get to take the gift home.

The Music Box



Screen Savers

Need to "spice up" your computer generated presentations? Why not download some colourful festive screen savers? Put them on at break time.

For a special treat, adjust the "Properties" settings on your desktop so that random, colourful scenes appear on your screen to stimulate your audience if discussion goes on longer than 5 minutes.

Bright Idea

Shifting Focus

One quick tip. Don't stand near the screen when you are responding to questions or facilitating discussion. Take the opportunity to move around and connect with different members of the audience. This will give the participants who need the visual stimulation a chance to look at the screen and the others the opportunity to focus on you



A Cup of Coffee...A Sip of Tea

Taking the Boredom out of Break Time



Many of today's workplaces are hectic, fast paced environments in which people aren't used to sitting still for very long. It's no wonder that eyes quickly glaze over during training sessions if presentations are too long and there isn't a heavy dose of "energizers".

We have already devoted one full section of Spicing up Your Training to [energizers](#). Now, let's look at breaks, one of the most effective energizers.

First of all, remember that many participants become restless if they sit or concentrate on a passive activity for more than 20 minutes.

So, if absolutely must use a passive method of instruction such as a presentation to convey some information (and sometimes there is no way around it) present only what is essential and keep it to 20 minutes.

Then, either have an energizer or involve the participants in an exercise that involves active participation. will appreciate a 5 minute break to re-fill their coffee, stretch, and use the restroom.

Here are some general guidelines for breaks:

- During your introduction, encourage participants to get up and re-fill their coffee or stretch whenever they need it.
- Let participants know that you want to try hourly 5 minute mini-breaks.

This can be as simple as providing 5 minutes for a washroom break or quick coffee re-fill or an energizer like a stretch break or a dance break. Stress the fact that they will have a longer, full break later and that this is not the time to pick up voice messages or try to get in a quick smoke.

Anne's Anecdotes: Lessons from the School of Hard Knocks

Depending on group dynamics, some will benefit from mini-breaks, others will abuse it. I have seen this strategy work very effectively with some groups and backfire with other groups, particularly if there are a lot of smokers.

- Have your first **full** break no later than two hours into the session.
Right after the first break, try to get participants involved in a paired or group activity to keep their energy flowing. An exercise that gets participants on their feet working at a flip chart is ideal
- By 11:15, participants will definitely be ready for another break. Keep it to 10 minutes and make the last half of it active. A massage break, dance break, or getting the group up to do the Macarena will perk up even the most drowsy participants. (Do this again at 3:30).
- One hour after lunch have a 5 minute break, air out the room (if possible), and provide cool drinks.
- Around 3:00 or 3:15 get the group moving again with a dance, play, or vacation break.
- During breaks, play some upbeat music.
- Let participants know when there will be another break and encourage them to get up and stretch or re-fill their coffee at any time.



Getting 'Em Back From Breaks on Tim

Likely, some trainers reading this are thinking, “Great ideas for breaks but **my** main challenge is getting participants BACK from breaks”. Here are a few things that you can try.

- At the beginning of the session, contract with your group and come to an agreement about the approximate timing and length of breaks
- Stress the reason why it is important to respect time schedules.
- Enlist the help of other group members.

Anne's Anecdotes: From the School of Hard Knocks

One group of customer service managers with whom I worked suggesting having a different participant volunteer to remind the group when break was coming to an end. Five minutes before the end of break they would use a warning horn (bicycle horn) or chimes to alert the group. At the end of the break they would sound the horn or chimes again.

If you ever use an equestrian theme, try the warning sound that is used 30 seconds before the end of chukkas.

- Offer an incentive for returning from breaks. Some facilitators collect business cards and have impromptu draws for prizes right after break. If a name is selected, the individual must be present in order to win.
- If you use the dance breaks, let the group know that whoever is late will dance for the group and provide entertainment.

(This was suggested by a group of participants in a competency based Interviewing course I offered in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. We have had a lot of laughs and fun with this one).

- Have a few trivia questions for points at the end of the break. At the end of the session, the participants can trade in the points for prizes. Lottery tickets work really well with some groups.
- If timekeeping continues to be a problem, have a frank discussion with the group to identify causes and solutions.



Anne's Anecdotes: From the School of Hard Knocks

I worked with one group in Mumbai (India). On the first day, everyone was on time. On day two, the female participants were habitually late from tea breaks. I asked the group what was going on. They told me that Amitabh Bachchan, one of India's biggest movie stars, was shooting a TV commercial just down the hall. They were racing over there on breaks. At the next break, I asked them to take me over there and I was actually taken on the set and introduced to Amitabh Bachchan. I told him that he was giving me unfair competition. Everyone had a great laugh. I regret not taking a photo. I could have posted it with this story. For the rest of the day, I arranged for the ladies to do their exercises near the set. They promised to get the work done and honoured their commitment. Everyone left the session with a big smile.

Ideas for Breaks

If you're looking for something different to add energy and variety to breaks, try dance breaks, theme breaks, vacation breaks, and play breaks.

Grab Bag

Cue up dance sequences or clips from popular movies. Cue them up and put the videos in a large gift bag. At the beginning of your session, collect business cards from all participants. At some of the breaks, pick a business card and invite the participants to select a movie that appeals to them for the break.

An alternative would be to give the opportunity to select the movie clip for the next break as a reward to a winner of one of your games or competitions. [Popcorn and Pictures](#) will give you some suggestions and show you legally use movie magic in the training room.

Dance Breaks

Many people are nervous about dancing. It brings back memories of being a wallflower at high school dances and it's just plain uncomfortable. If you are going to use a dance energizer, the way in which you start it will determine your likelihood of success or failure.



How to Get 'em Dancing

"I have taught people from as far away as Bangkok and Malaysian Borneo how to dance reggae and I regularly use reggae breaks as an energizer. The key when you begin is don't mention the word dance. Just about any dance will do. As my background is West Indian, I often use reggae, calypso and, on occasion, the limbo. You can also use salsa, the Macarena, and the bird dance. Just get them moving and laughing. That's all that matters."



Anne's Anecdotes: From the School of Hard Knocks

*Start putting on some music with a lively beat. Ask participants to stand as you would for any other energizer. Keep a straight face (**NO SMILE**) and try to have a rather bored or bland look on your face. Slowly take the group through the very first step. To teach reggae, I get the group to march on the spot slowly to the beat. Then, I add the movement of the arms in while marching slowly on the spot. Next I get them to step from side to side and eventually forward and back. Then, I get the group to put a little bounce into it. By then some participants have caught on. Finally, we speed things up and I shout out..."guess what, you're dancing reggae". Everybody has a good laugh.*

- "Nice Time" and "Could you be Loved" by Bob Marley are great for reggae breaks
- My recommendations for Calypso breaks include "Hot! Hot! Hot!" by Arrow
- [Boogalu Productions](#) has excellent salsa videos and DVDs that you can order and use for dance breaks.

What to Serve During Breaks

Our [Accelerated Learning Smorgasbord](#) on The Training Oasis website, has a number of suggestions for refreshments. Try to match the snacks to the theme of the event. Appealing to all of the senses including taste is a sure-fire strategy for creating vivid and memorable learning experiences.

Theme Breaks

Theme Breaks

Supercharge your breaks by pulling all of the ideas we have discussed so far together with a theme related to your topic. The only limit is your imagination. When I am trying to come up with a theme, I use an idea chain or mind map and generate as many ideas as possible before settling on one that fits participant profiles and learning styles.



Change Management

Theme:	Survivor
Breaks:	Team Immunity Challenges
Meals:	Any seafood dishes
Snacks:	Chocolate covered ants (not really but Glosette Raisins are a Good Substitute)
Music/Dance:	Theme music from the series

Diversity	
Theme:	Around the World Tour
Breaks:	Vacation Breaks (a different country per break)
Meals:	European Continental Breakfast, Pot luck style with various countries or one country per meal
Snacks:	Malaysian Satay, Sushi, Jamaican Patties, London Afternoon Tea
Music/Dance:	Varied

New Managers Course/Financial Management	
Theme:	The Apprentice
Breaks:	lay Successive Rounds of Trump the Game of Business for 5 Minutes after each break
Meals:	BBQ'd items - "You're Fired"
Snacks:	BBQ'd items - "You're Fired"
Music/Dance:	Theme music from the series

Orientation	
Theme:	Beach - Tropical - "Getting Your Feet Wet"
Breaks:	Vacation Break, Dance Break
Meals:	Seafood, Caribbean, Mexican or other Latin American, Malaysian, Thai, or Singaporean
Snacks:	Mock Pina Colada's with Umbrellas, Jamaican Patties, Baked Alaska
Music/Dance:	Reggae, Calypso, Beach Boys, Jan and Dean, Salsa, Mexican, Cumbia

Play Breaks

By 3:00, many participants will welcome a play break complete with yo-yos and Frisbees and hula hoops. Never use the word "play". Just set the stage and participants will dive in. **One word of caution, ALWAYS use a participant profile or learning survey to determine if your group would respond well to a play break.** Even the most analytical learner could probably get into a game of speed chess or a chance to practice their putting. Some groups will surprise you.



Anne's Anecdotes: From the School of Hard Knocks

After 5 minutes, I asked the group if they were enjoying the puzzles. When the response was positive, I shared with them the fact that I had been told the group might be a bit conservative. I asked them if they would like something more colourful. Again the group was receptive. This time I passed around colourful bags with slinkies, silly putty, stress balls, etc. When they opened the bags, the men let out a squeal of delight and said "toys". They entertained themselves for another 10 minutes. The retirees stayed at the back and continued playing. A slinky, a Rubik's cube and my best puzzle were stolen....but it was WELL worth it."

This one is not rocket science. Just go to your local toy store or dollar store and there will be a lot of inexpensive choices. Beach balls make a great choice if you are using a beach theme for your session. If you are holding your session at a resort or hotel, you can even set up your schedule to give the group some time for a recreation break. Often you can tack these on to lunch hour on the second day so that participants get more bang for their buck.

Vacation Breaks

For a number of years, I have been using vacation breaks with great success. Before the session, put up a travel poster and cover it with flip chart paper. Put out some toys or novelties from the country you selected. When break time comes, tell the group that you are going to take them on a mini-vacation during their break. Perhaps give them a clue and an opportunity to guess your destination. When you're ready, just press the play button on the VCR or DVD player, unveil the poster and reveal the toys. Picking an afternoon snack from the country featured in the video would be a nice touch.



It's quite easy to get vacation DVDs. I have been successful in obtaining videos for Jamaica, Bermuda, Singapore, and Dubai from Tourist Boards. Travel magazines like **Caribbean Travel and Life** and **Departures**, and, believe it or not, bridal magazines are a great place to pick up DVDs. Here are some other ideas:

- [Ken Davis Music](#) (Australia)
- [Travel Video Store](#)
- [Natural States](#)
- [Canyon Dreams](#)
- [Desert Vision](#)

As a sidebar, I want to request your help. I used to obtain my videos from **Destinations on Tape** which was bought out by **Cahners Travel**. Now no one seems to know what has happened to the videos. I have posted about this on a couple of discussion boards but to no avail. If anyone can solve this mystery for me, I will gladly share the information with other visitors, thank you and provide a link to your site.



Actions Speak Louder Than Words

Commercial Potential

Rave Reviews: Recapping Without Regurgitation

Frequent and effective review is essential for promoting learning and retention.

Unfortunately, far too many trainers rely on outdated approaches to review sessions. Often, review consists of flipping slides and repeating information that was presented earlier.

The result = boredom.

The most important thing to remember about review sessions is that they should be participant-centred not instructor lead. By actively involving participants in review sessions, there will be a significant increase in retention. Remember, people only 20% of what they hear. There are many creative ways to make review sessions an active experience for participants instead of a passive and boring time waster.

For courses in which participants are learning a specific way of structuring information or documents, a “write your own commercial exercise” can be an entertaining way of reviewing and applying structure.

Commercial Potential	
Suggested Time Frame:	10 - 15 minutes
Suggested Group Size:	Pairs or groups (max. size = 4)
Preparation:	An interesting way of coming up with products for the commercials would be to fill a grab bag with a variety of products from around the house.
Set-up:	Place one bag on each participant table.
Presentation:	Each pair (or trio) could reach into the bag and pick out 2 products. Then, they would decide which product to use for their commercial.
Examples:	<p>These commercials can be presented as "energizers" before or after breaks.</p> <p>During a presentation skills course, participants could work in pairs to write a commercial that follows the same format or structure that they are learning in the training session.</p> <p>For a report and proposal writing, participants could work in trios to write a magazine ad that uses the proposal format that is presented during the course.</p>



Concentration

When participants need to memorize information such as codes or computer function keys, Concentration will help them master the material in no time

Concentration

Suggested Time Frame:	10 - 15 minutes
Suggested Group Size:	Individually or in teams of 2 -3
Preparation:	Prepare (or ask participants to prepare) sets of paired cards. For example, one card in each pair could have a code. The other card would have the information that the code represents.
Set-up:	Ask one participant in each group to shuffle the cards, turn them face down, and arrange them in rows.
Presentation:	Participants take turns picking up a card and then turning another one over in search of a match. Participants get to keep the pairs that match. At the end of the game, the individual (and team) with the highest number of matches wins.
Practice:	
Performance	
Debriefing:	

"Tic Tac Toe" or Hangman

Suggested Time Frame:	10 - 15 minutes
Suggested Group Size:	Pairs or groups (max. size = 8)
Preparation:	Prepare for Tic Tac Toe in the same way that you would prepare for "Stump the Chump".
Set-up:	Put out oversized grids for each group. Divide the group into 2 teams the X's and the O's.
Presentation:	When participants answer questions correctly, they can put an X or an O on the grid. Play several rounds of this game until you run out of questions.
Variations:	Tic Tac Toe is ideal for small groups (4 to 8). (You can also play hangman using questions prepared by participants. For a new twist, each time a participant gets a correct answer, he or she can draw part of the "hangman". Unlike the traditional version of the game, the first team to successfully draw the hangman wins.)
Practice:	For even more practice, give participants 10 minutes to work in pairs, review the course material and come up with the questions and answers to be used in the game.
Performance	
Debriefing:	



Trivial Pursuit Or Snakes & Ladders

Even when course information is technical and tedious you can still "spice up" review sessions with a lively game of Trivial Pursuit.

Trivial Pursuit or Snakes & Ladders	
Suggested Time Frame:	20 - 30 minutes
Suggested Group Size:	Pairs or groups (max. size = 8)
Set-up:	Put out one game board for each group.
Preparation:	<p>If your group is large, you can still have fun with Trivial Pursuit. When you send out your pre-course material, let the participants know that you will need Trivial Pursuit board games and game pieces for the course. Ask anyone who has a game to contact you and arrange to bring the game to the course. There's more than one way to spark some interest when your topic is less than inspiring.</p> <p>Come up with categories that reflect course content. Write questions and answers on florescent index cards that correspond to the colours of your categories.</p> <p>As you play quiet music in the background, give participants an opportunity to prepare additional questions. (They should make as many copies of their questions as there are board games.)</p>
Presentation:	Give participants 20 - 30 minutes to play Trivial Pursuit. The first person to complete the game wins a prize. Also give prizes to the members of the team with the highest number of correct answers.
Variations:	<p>If the group is large, have participants work in pairs to boost collaboration. You can have up to 4 pairs in each group.</p> <p>For some variety, try using a snakes and ladders board. Every time a participant answers a question correctly, he or she can roll the dice and move their marker.</p>
Practice:	For even more practice, give participants 10 minutes to work in pairs, review the course material and come up with the questions and answers to be used in the game.
Performance	
Debriefing:	



"Stump the Chump"

At times, participants are too embarrassed to ask questions or provide feedback that some information is unclear. "Stump the Chump" and take the fear and intimidation out of question periods and provide an opportunity for review.

Stump the Chump	
Suggested Time Frame:	10 - 15 minutes
Suggested Group Size:	Pairs or groups (max. size = 4)
Preparation:	<p>To play "Stump the Chump", you'll need over-sized florescent index cards in a variety of colours - the brighter the better.</p> <p>While you play classical or baroque music, give participants 5 to 10 minutes to work in pairs go through their workbooks and write down questions about anything that is unclear or confusing.</p> <p>Encourage them to formulate questions about any information or ideas presented which they did not "buy" or which they would have difficulty applying back on the job.</p> <p>Ask each participant to come up with at least 2 questions.</p>
Set-up:	Divide the group in teams of 2 to 4 and ask each team to come up with a name.
Presentation:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Then, ask participants to take turns asking the members of the other team their questions.2. Award points for correct answers and give prizes to the team with the highest score at the end of the game.
Practice:	
Performance	
Debriefing:	



Calculating Training R.O.I.

It is important for sponsoring executives to assess the costs and benefits of training initiatives in order to determine the potential and actual R.O.I.



Step 1: Identify Situations.

Focusing on the past year, identify 2- 3 SPECIFIC situations, events or circumstances that team members could have handled more effectively. Pinpoint the impact on business and results:

- increased costs
- costly delays
- difficulty in completing an initiative
- reduced efficiency and effectiveness in decision-making
- employee retention challenges

Step 2: Situational Analysis.

For each scenario, identify what it cost the company in terms of:

- time and money to resolve the situation
- opportunity cost (**examples:** customers or business opportunities lost due to poor decision making or because the team did not work cohesively)
- quantify time lost by multiplying time vs. the salaries of the parties involved in the situation

Step 3: Pinpoint Indirect Costs.

Factor in indirect costs of situations such as:

- negative impact on morale
- turnover
- reduced productivity
- customer churn
- revenue losses due to poor decision-making
- implementation difficulties due to the erosion of team cohesion

Step 4: Identify & Calculate the Value of Opportunities.

Identify opportunities that can be generated by more cohesive teamwork and pinpoint their value.

- ❑ For example, pinpoint a specific piece of business that can be generated by improved teamwork and track the results in hard dollars.

Step 5: Assess Total Impact.

Add up the amount that would have been saved or generated if the team had been able to work together more cohesively.

Step 6: Calculate Proposed Investment in Training.

Use these figures to:

- ❑ determine time and budget requirements
- ❑ determine what it would be worthwhile to invest in training
- ❑ set time and budget parameters

Step 7: Compare cost & time benefits to proposed investment.

Final Calculation: About 8 weeks after training, replace the estimates projected in steps 3 & 4 with actuals.



Experimentation is the Key to Success

Experiment with some of these ideas. Then, let us know how you used them by sending us an e-mail. We'll feature some of the most interesting applications in a future updates of this e-book Keep the last hour before lunch very active and interactive. Avoid showing videos and other passive activities during this time. If there is a need for skill practice or a hands-on session, this would be a good time to build it into the schedule.

These are just a few ideas for adding some life and energy to review sessions. Experiment until you find approaches that work for your audiences and topics.

Good luck! Let us know how your make out.



The Training Oasis Menu of Accelerated Learning Programmes

Accelerated Learning

Spicing up Your Training

Globally

Competency Based Interviewing

Globally

The Changing Face of Diversity

Career Makeover

Star Quality Presentations

Globally

The Trainer's Bootcamp

Globally

The Designer's Studio

Cash Flow Game

Over the Rainbow

Beyond the Time Warp

Globally

Availability	Fostering Innovation	Interviewing Skills	Career Management	Presentation Skills	Train the Trainer	Instructional Design	Diversity
Globally				•	•	•	
Globally		•					
Globally							•
Globally			•				
Globally				•			
Globally				•	•		
Globally					•	•	

Availability	Fostering Innovation	Managing Change & Uncertainty	Stress Management	Thriving in a Fast-Paced Environment	Financial Acumen	Time Management
Globally		•		•	•	
Globally	•	•	•			
Globally		•				•



More About Accelerated Learning

You can obtain more information about accelerated learning at the following internet sites:

For Executives

- Executive Oasis International
<http://www.executiveoasis.com>
- Corporate Team Building Blog
<http://corporateteambuilding.wordpress.com>

For Trainers

- Spice of the Month Accelerated Learning Archives
<http://www.thetrainingoasis.com/ezine.html>
- The Accelerated Learning Smorgasbord
<http://www.thetrainingoasis.com/acceleratedlearningsmorgasbord.html>
- The Center for Accelerated Learning
<http://www.alcenter.com>
- The Thiagi Group
<http://www.thiagi.com/resources/#/articles-feed>
- The Bob Pike Group
<https://www.bobpikegroup.com>
- Qube Learning
<http://www.qube.com/research.asp?PageFlag=6&SubSec=1>

For Educators

- Accelerated Learning by Colin Rose
<http://www.acceleratedlearning.com>
- Quantum Learning by Bobbi DePorter
<http://www.qln.com>

