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# ~ TRAINING SOLUTIONS ~

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## USING QUOTES TO ENHANCE LEARNING

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Quotes are a great way of adding spice to your training material. ~ learning4good

### INTRODUCTION

If you are like most early childhood trainers, you are constantly seeking ways to enhance the professional development experiences you offer. Items commonly found on this "wish list" include new ways to: motivate participants; make an important idea memorable; summarize key points; encourage meaningful reflection about personal values and beliefs; promote ongoing learning; and even add humor to the presentation. Quotes—used effectively—can provide a meaningful way to address each and every one of these goals.

### WHY USE QUOTES

There are a number of reasons to use quotes to enhance learning in training sessions. The following list illustrates a few of the many ways quotes can be used as an effective training strategy.

#### ~ To Summarize

When planning a training session, it is important to develop and articulate a primary learning goal as well as several specific learning outcomes you anticipate for participants. Good quotes seem to say in a nutshell what many of us cannot express in several written pages or hours of monologue. For example,

The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires. ~ William Arthur Ward

A well chosen quote that summarizes the primary goal can help you stay on track in planning and delivering your

session as well as help participants understand the overall intention of the session.

#### ~ To Enhance Retention of Learning

Effective trainers strive to provide training that makes a difference in the professional lives of training participants. A training session that makes a difference gives participants something they will remember and use when the training is over. Meaningful quotes have the advantage of being easily remembered and quickly revisited long after participants have returned to their programs.

#### ~ To Motivate

In addition to planning and presenting relevant and meaningful material, trainers have a responsibility to inspire and motivate participants to learn and use the content that has been planned. Motivational and inspirational quotes that learners can relate to can improve attitudes and self-confidence both during and after a training session. Inspirational examples motivate people in the same way that the simple "power of positive thinking" and "accentuate the positive" techniques do; people imagine and visualize themselves behaving in the way described in the quotation, saying, story, or poem. ~ Alan Chapman

#### ~ To Encourage Reflection

A great deal of learning in the early childhood field is tied to the learner's ability to be aware of and examine personal attitudes and beliefs about the appropriate care and education of young children and the teaching/learning process. Sometimes a quote, such as the one below, presents a new idea in a non-threatening

way and encourages participants to reflect on (and perhaps re-think) their existing beliefs. For example,

The old school said, "What punishment can I give my child so that he will not do the same thing again?" The new school says, "What can I teach my child so that he will not make the same mistakes again?" ~ Sally Goldberg, PhD

~ To Add Humor

Laughter allows for a "change-up" in the mood and tone of a training session. It introduces a new perspective and can enhance the memory of adult learners. When you use a humorous quote, you provide the opportunity to laugh at life as it relates to your topic. For example,

Child care is only easy when you don't know what you are doing. ~ Jim Greenman

~ To Promote Lifelong Learning

Many quotes address change and the learning process itself. Posting these quotes on the walls or sprinkling them selectively throughout handouts reminds everyone that worthwhile learning takes time and effort, it is not always easy, and it is not finished at the end of the session! For example,

Change. It has the power to uplift, to heal, surprise, open doors, bring fresh experience, and create excitement in life. Certainly it is worth the risk. ~ Leo Buscaglia

~ To Enhance Learning on Many Levels

When thoughtfully chosen and strategically exploited, relevant quotes can enhance learning in any training session on a variety of levels.

Quotes can teach key concepts:

We (early childhood professionals) are interested in guidance that is based on positive relationships, respectful of children, and that helps children build inner controls. ~ Stephanie Feeney.

Quotes can make strong social statements:

Equal NOT Special. ~ Braveheart Press 2005.

Quotes can also inspire:

Never doubt the capacity of the people you lead to accomplish whatever you dream for them. ~ Benjamin Zander.

## WHO TO QUOTE

When you determine to use quotes to enhance your training, quotes related to your favorite presentations will seem to be everywhere. As you select quotes, keep the following suggestions in mind.

~ Choose diversity in authors—diversity of race, gender, culture, and perspective. At least some of the time, the diversity of authors should be obvious to the reader. For example,

If a child can't learn the way we teach, maybe we should teach the way they learn. ~ Ignacio 'Nacho' Estrada

Let us put our minds together and see what life we can make for our children. ~ Sitting Bull

I have learned that, in order to bring about change, one must take the first step, or else it will not be done. ~ Rosa Parks

Quotes (and other learning materials) should be offered in multiple languages anytime it is likely that participants may be bilingual. Many quotes can be quickly translated at <http://babelfish.altavista.com>.

~ Always give proper recognition to the individual being quoted or the author of the quotation. You should only use "unknown" when the author is truly unknown.

~ Use quotes from well-known early childhood professionals to introduce participants to authors and great minds in the early childhood field. For example, the following quote is from Carol Brunson Phillips (now Day), past Executive Director of the Council for Early Childhood Professional Recognition, Washington, DC in Working Mother, July 1995, p. 34.

When adults can anticipate children's needs and know the capabilities of children within certain age ranges, they are able to plan experiences that children enjoy and learn from. These skills don't always come naturally to adults, even if they have been well educated and have raised kids on their own. If you want good programs, you need trained teachers.

~ Apply an ancient proverb to a current situation or issue to illustrate that many things about life are the same now as they always have been. Brackets can be used to acknowledge modifications you might make to meet today's standards. For example,

Who takes the child by the hand, takes the mother [and father] by the heart. ~ Danish proverb

~ Use quotes from participants in previous training sessions to honor all learners and illustrate their ability to capture the essence of the topic at the same time they share their experiences with wit and wisdom. For example,

I love to pretend, what an escape for old and young alike! I guess that's why I could only stand working in a bank for four years, so rigid! But, to be with kids and to be able to fly around a room, that's living. ~ Carol Pinnell (Kalispell, MT)

[Quotes] have a kind of authority as people expect quotes to be by important people. The author of the quote lends their authority to your message. It is not just you saying something, but Shakespeare said it too. ~ learning4good

## WHEN TO USE QUOTES

~ Quotes can be used in **recruitment and registration materials** to relate what previous participants have said about the training or spark potential participants' interest in learning more about the topic.

~ A quote can be used as the focal point for the **warm-up activity**. Quotes chosen for this purpose should stimulate participants' thinking about or provide motivation for the topic they are about to discuss.

~ A carefully selected quote could be used at the **beginning of a mini-presentation** to introduce your topic or at the beginning of a learning activity to provoke discussion.

~ A relevant quote can form a bridge or segue to the next activity or key point. This type of **transition** can elevate interest in what's happening next and show the relationship among your key points.

~ Perusing quotes provides a meaningful way for participants to spend time during **breaks** or when they have completed an individual or small group activity earlier than others.

~ Many times a quote seems just right to use at the **end of your presentation** to reiterate the conclusion,

summarize the primary purpose for training on this topic, or inspire people to try what they have learned.

~ A quote to **take home** can serve as a memory device. An attractive copy of a quote that can be easily posted is visual motivation to implement the skills and practices learned during the session.

Most people like quotes. A well chosen quote will probably be remembered and repeated to others - spreading your training even further afield!  
~ learning4good

## A FEW EXAMPLES OF HOW TO USE QUOTES

~ To Form Small Groups

Cut 3-4 laminated quotes into large puzzle pieces and give each participant one piece. Have participants find pieces that match theirs and join together to complete the puzzle. When accomplished, participants have discovered an inspirational message, and you have effectively mixed people up to form new small groups for an activity.

~ To Get Participants Moving

Using a large font, put each word or two of a quote on half sheets of paper. Mix them up and give a different word to each of 10 - 15 "players." Have the players stand shoulder-to-shoulder in an open space or hallway holding their word sheets. The remaining 3-5 participants work together to put the words in order by moving people around. This activity offers relief from sitting down the whole session, reinforces participants' learning one another's names (Sharon, you move over and stand between Steve and Lina), and can serve as a smooth transition to the next activity.

~ To Explore Feelings

Using a quote to spark a small group discussion provides participants with the opportunity to review key concepts and explore new ideas on an issues. This type of activity often raises awareness about individual biases or beliefs related to the topic. For example, when you use the quote "Access for children with disabilities to the world of child care involves opening our hearts as well as widening our doors" from Project Exceptional, participants in a session on inclusion have the opportunity to review what they have learned about

accessibility as well as explore their feelings about inclusion and what it means to "open our hearts."

#### ~To Invite Individual Reflection

Select a set of 8 - 12 quotes relating to the same theme or topic. Format the quotes with relevant graphics and attractive borders. This preparation allows a variety of options for using the quotes in training sessions. You can 1) post them in inviting groupings on the walls around the training room. Posted quotes can inspire participants and promote reflection on the topic when individuals arrive early or are finished with a break. 2) Let individual participants look through a stack of quotes, have him/her choose the one that "speaks to them personally" and use that reflection to start introductions. 3) Place the quotes at the tables where participants are seated to support ongoing reflection throughout the training session.

#### ~ To Enhance Individual Reflection

Reflecting individually on a quotation can deepen participants' understanding and critical thinking about a topic or key point. As participants share their thoughts in pairs or small groups, the meaning and application for the quote broaden in participants' minds. For example,

The world we have created is a product of our thinking. It cannot be changed without changing our thinking. ~ Einstein

[Quotes] can be a very good way of subtly reinforcing your training message. ~ learning4good

## CONCLUSION

Using quotes to enhance training has many applications. Only a few have been discussed here. In fact, you may already be using quotes in ways that were not addressed. You can use the Trainer Directory listserv to let your colleagues know about them (see below). You can learn more about using quotes by talking to colleagues and paying attention to the use of quotes in the training sessions you attend. It is likely that there are as many applications for using quotes in training as there are quotes to be used!

Just like any other active learning tool, quotes must be used judiciously and with a meaningful purpose to be truly effective. Using quotes just for the sake of "using quotes" can work against your learning goals. ~

## RESOURCES\*

- \* [www.learning4good.com/educators.htm](http://www.learning4good.com/educators.htm)
- \* [www.quoteland.com](http://www.quoteland.com)

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If you have stories to share about implementing the ideas described in this issue, please address your comments to your training colleagues at [trainerdirectoryexchange@listserv.montana.edu](mailto:trainerdirectoryexchange@listserv.montana.edu). If you have comments about the topic of this newsletter or ideas for topics to address in future issues, please contact:

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