



Training Openers

2 Truths and a Lie: Ask learners to introduce themselves to the group with three statements about themselves: two true and one false. The entire group tries to guess which statement is the lie.

Pass the Basket: Each learner takes a turn picking a question from the basket and answering the question. Sample questions: "What's your favorite song?" or "Name one thing you already know about today's topic." or "Who would you most like to meet?"

Word Scrambles: Identify major words that represent the major learning point(s) or concepts of your training. Give each small group a set of letters that spell one of the words. As each group unscrambles its word, ask them to post their word on the wall. Use the words to introduce the training topic.

Word Search: Create a word search game of key words related to your training and use it as an activity as learners are arriving. Use the key words to introduce the topic and agenda for the day.

Jigsaw Puzzles: Create simple color-coded puzzles with key concepts from the training. Ask each learner to choose a puzzle piece as they enter the room and to sit with people with the same color. Ask groups to assemble their puzzles, read the concept, and list 3 questions they have about what they want to know about it. Since each group will have a different concept, debriefing will give the entire class an overview of the agenda and content to be covered. Revisit lists (during review) to ensure that all questions have been addressed.

Stand Up/Sit Down: Ask learners to stand up. Then ask a series of questions that can be answered "yes" or "no". As learners are able to answer "yes" – they may sit down. Your questions can relate to the training content or to getting to know each other better.

Use Music: Use music during arrival time to establish an informal and welcoming atmosphere/environment.

Alumni Guests: Ask an alumnus of the learning experience to begin the session with a description of how they have benefited from the class.

Encourage Participation Right from the Start: Ideas include: take a poll, ask for opinions, use a quote related to your topic and ask what it means to people, administer a mini-quiz, or use interesting facts and figures to ask "Did you know...?" questions.

Morning Question Cards: For multi-day training sessions, ask learners to write down on an index card a question they have about the previous day's session. Collect and shuffle the cards. Redistribute the cards. Ask each learner to read their card aloud and answer the question – the entire group can add to or assist in answering, as needed. Set a time limit of 1 to 3 minutes per question and appoint a group timekeeper.

Training Energizers

Break Times: Assign groups to be responsible for providing entertainment or enrichment activities during break times. Each break activity must be related to the training topic. Some examples include: a walk around the block discussion, a mnemonic device to remember lessons learned, a rap song, etc.

Use Music: Use music during break times to establish the boundaries of breaks and establish an upbeat mood.

Stretch Break: Ask everyone to stand and stretch for one minute. Then request that all sit down and resume your presentation. Appoint a participant to raise their hand when they sense the group needs a quick stretch break.

Walk and Talk: Include activities that give learners an opportunity to stand up and/or move around. Periodically, ask learners to find a partner and walk around the room and review the content that you have just covered – naming one thing that is new for them and one thing that is re-enforced for them. Other options include: identify the most useful thing you have learned so far, the most valuable, the most applicable, etc.

Human Continuum: Ask learners to stand up. Point out an imaginary line, or continuum, stretching the length of the room. Ask a question and point out the ends of the continuum – “strongly agree” and “strongly disagree”. Ask learners to place themselves along the continuum. You can ask learners to stand in place or return to their seats before debriefing. Questions can be about how well learners are comprehending the content, or anything else you want to know.

Reflection Time: Give learners time to internalize and assimilate what has been covered by providing a few minutes of quiet, reflective time. Provide a handout for recording their thoughts; give them permission to walk around the room.

Face to Face and Back to Back: Form pairs and ask partners to stand back to back. Give learners a question to answer. Then say, “Face to face!” to signal that learners should find a new partner and begin discussing the question. Say “Back to back!” to indicate that learners should turn and stand back to back with their partner. Usually, all talking stops. Throw out another question and say “Face to face!” to signal that learners should find another partner and begin discussing the new question. Repeat for a third round. Ask learners to return to their seats. Debrief.

Wagon Wheel: Form small groups and ask them to name one insight from what has been covered so far. Ask groups to get together with another group and name another insight. Have the larger groups get together with one other group to form an even larger group and identify yet another insight. Repeat this process until all are one large group. Conduct a large group debrief.



Training Reviews

Articulation: Stop your presentation periodically and ask partners to talk with each other about what was just presented, what it means to each, and how they can apply it in their life and/or work.

Stump Your Buddy: Ask partners to ask each other 3 questions about what was just presented.

Question/Answer Exercise: After your presentation, ask each person to write down 1 - 3 questions they have about what was just covered. Then have each person get up, wander around the room, and ask each other their questions until they find the answers. Then debrief.

Error Recovery: When teaching people how to use equipment or computers, etc. – put learners in pairs. Have one partner put an error into the system. The other partner then has to recover from the error, explaining what is to be learned by this. Then ask partners to reverse roles.

Materials Creation: Have learners – in teams – create learning materials for the entire group. This could include job aids, review games or quizzes, models to manipulate, problem-solving exercises, etc.

Question Basketball: Allow teams to take turns answering questions or solving problems relative to the topic. A correct answer or solution gives a team the chance to shoot a ball in a junior hoop from a set distance or toss a bean bag into a bucket. Award a point for each basket. The team with the highest score at the end wins. You can award the winning team a bag of snacks or whatever is appropriate.

Action Items: Ask learners to turn to their neighbor and share at least one action they plan to implement immediately as a result of attending the training.

Virtual Slideshow: Ask learners to think of 2-3 pictures or slides that they would want to present about the day. Pass the clicker around the group and ask them to “click” as they tell the group about and present each of their slides. Ask learners to point the clicker at their “virtual” slide screen as they are talking about their slides. It has an uncanny way of taking the spotlight off of the speaker and onto the slide show! A variation: Form small groups and ask them to create a brief 5-minute review “show” to present to the entire group.

Adapt a Game: Adapt popular TV game shows and board games to review training content: Jeopardy, Trivial Pursuit, Wheel of Fortune, etc.

Sources:

- The Accelerated Learning CourseBuilder: The Center for Accelerated Learning, Lake Geneva, Wisconsin: <http://www.alcenter.com/>
- Creative Training Techniques Newsletter: <http://www.creativetrainingtech.com/>
- Elaine Biech, ebb associates, inc.; Norfolk, Virginia: www.ebbweb.com
- Michelle Cummings, Training Wheels; Littleton, Colorado: www.training-wheels.com

Training Closers

3-Questions: Form small groups and ask them to answer 3 questions: 1.) WHAT did you learn? 2.) SO WHAT – Why is it important? 3.) and NOW WHAT? - How can you use or apply your learning's?

Traffic Light Metaphor: Use a traffic metaphor to ask key questions you want to know. For example: Green Light: What went well today? What was the most useful for you? Yellow Light: What do you need to be careful of? What do you need to learn more about? Red Light: What did not go well? What improvements do you recommend?

Body Part Debrief: Ask learners to relate their experiences to parts of the body as follows: Heart: How do you feel about today? Head: What are your thoughts about today? Hands: What one thing do you intend to do as a result of attending today? Feet: Where do you intend to go with today's learning's? Stomach: What took guts to do or pushed you outside of your comfort zone?

Object Lessons: Ask learners to pick an object from a basket of common, everyday objects and describe how that object relates to the content you have covered in class. Examples: dice, tennis ball, magnifying glass, etc.

Metaphors: Ask small groups to create a metaphor for the main learning point(s) of the training content; and facilitate report-outs.

Bumper Stickers: Form pairs or small groups and ask learners to create a bumper sticker that sums up what they are "taking away" from the training.

Crossword Puzzles: Distribute crossword puzzles for learners to take and complete on their own time as a review. Or form teams and see which team can complete their puzzle first. Award small prizes.

Fortune Cookies: Purchase silk fortune cookies that can be found in novelty stores; fill them with questions to reflect upon or pertinent quotations. Learners can take the slips of paper and you can recycle the "cookies".

Buddy Up: Match learners with a buddy who will promise to follow-up in a pre-determined number of weeks to inquire about application of the training and get a "progress report".

Facilitate Networking: Provide a contact list of participants.

*How to Get Even **MORE** Ideas...*

- Network with your colleagues
- “Customize” someone else’s idea to meet your specific needs
- Get creative – “make up” your own methods
- Search the World Wide Web for free hints and tips
- Ask for book recommendations
- Subscribe to newsletters and periodicals
- Keep a log of what other trainers and guest speakers do
- Attend workshops, seminars, and conferences – or get ideas merely from the books that presenters have authored or the handouts available on the Internet after events occur
- Revisit strategies you’ve used before by keeping them on file

