

Reflection on learning from training day:

The day consisted of an introduction to the course and the associated virtual learning environment (VLE).

I was excited about the day and the start of the course as it would give me chance to learn some of the theory around what I had already been practicing. I had already covered some of the models of learning during my PTLLS although this was prior to any practical teaching experience. Although I had covered the models to be honest I had not had chance to put them into practice and felt that I had been 'winging' it to a degree. The only factor that had made this possible I feel was my 25 years of policing.

I had approached the day with an open mind and as soon as I arrived at the venue I introduced myself to a fellow student. I engaged in conversation which gave me an insight into that student's particular field of education. When completing my PTLLS this was in a totally policing environment so I felt that it was important to learn about education and training within other organisations. It soon became evident that despite the other students field of training being totally different to mine, there are common themes. It also made me aware of how the nature of my training field did not suffer the same problems as the other students. Examples of this were that my students have taken part in a rigorous selection procedure to ensure their academic ability and also that they want to take part in the training and get paid a wage to attend. This was not the case in the other student's field of training.

I felt that the day was also my opportunity to learn from professional training staff and to see good practice with regards to an introduction day. In my current role I have moved from being a practitioner of 25 years experience into a training environment with little or no guidance. I have facilitated 2 introduction days but always felt that they could have been better structured and delivered more meaningfully. The environment for the training was of high quality and prior to attending I had been informed by email exactly what was expected of me. This ensured that time did not need to be spent on the initial day covering these points.

The room was well laid out with three tables allowing for 3 groups to naturally form. I purposely did not sit with students from my own organisation again to broaden my knowledge of other training areas. The use of tables did not appear to be a barrier and facilitated group work and note taking which came as a surprise to me as little use is made of tables in my own workplace. The current layout used consists of 16 students in a row facing the trainer.

The lead trainer Mel introduced herself and also introduced the company directors, one of whom was the lead on the VLE. This served to reinforce the commitment of the company to the success of the course. It was evident that they were there purely to examine how the programme was working and to take responsibility for it. This increased my confidence in the management and delivery of the course as I felt that it was not just being left to the trainer to deliver which is the case in my training environment.

Students were asked to make name badges which I initially thought was a little unnecessary but as the world's worse forgetter of names I found it of benefit throughout the day when doing group presentations.

It was explained that the course programme was new and had not been delivered in the current format or with the current VLE. This was not done by way of apology and served to add a sense of purpose and excitement to the process.

The course programme was clearly signposted and it was explained that the focus was not on pass or fail but was about developing students as teachers within a supportive environment. Mention was made of the graduation process which served to give a sense of meaning to the programme. The outline of the day was clearly defined together with anticipated break and finish times. This served to enable the students to know when they could anticipate getting a break as not to do so may have led to us losing our train of thought.

The day was a mix of administrative process, introduction to staff, the programme and fellow students but also included an element of learning key teaching models and concepts. This worked very well as my own experience of introductory days is that the student just wants to get on with learning some knowledge of the course but getting bogged down with admin.

A number of the learning parts of the day involved group tasks which were made easier by the use of tables in the classroom. The groups were moved around however which enabled each student to work with and meet different people. The group tasks and the process of moving around helped as an energiser and also as an icebreaker.

An icebreaker session was introduced which initially met with a few pained expressions from the group. It was cleverly used also as a lesson in the use of icebreakers and I found it surprisingly useful as within my group we actually came up with an actual icebreaker that we had not come across before (phonetic vegetables) together with ideas from other groups. The use of icebreakers as an energiser was also a concept I had not considered previously.

Mel was obviously an experienced trainer and her use of pauses and repetition of key terms was useful to me as a learner. This meant that the session seemed relaxed but still progressed at a good pace throughout the day. She explained that the lesson resources would be made available after the day so there was no need to make notes unless required (I personally like to write down key points to help me remember).

The use of flip charts, blue tack and laminated sheets and pen during the sessions took the learning into what I would later learn was the psychomotor domain of learning. I realise that my own teaching has not perhaps made the best use of the various domains of learning. I now appreciate the value of entering the various domains both with regards to maintaining interest and reinforcing knowledge.

A mix of slides and whiteboard in the presentations helped me to maintain interest as there was a different focus. By moving my attention from one side of the room to another and to a different medium I felt that my attention was held longer.

The slides were clear with the exception of the domain of learning triangles which were too small and the colours were merging making them unreadable on the screen. This made clear to me the importance of viewing a slideshow on the wall screen and not just the computer screen.

The session on ground rules again served as a lesson on the subject and also the introduction of ground rules. This session was of benefit to me as in my own teaching practice I have not introduced any rules as I felt that as adults the group would self police itself. This has proved problematic and the session has enabled me to understand the need. With regards to this session it was also timely as there are students within the group who seem to spend time talking to each other. This has been happening in my own group and as a trainer I had chosen to ignore it as I could teach over it. I now realise how disruptive and annoying it is to other members in the group.

Whilst on this subject I also now realise how annoying it is when other students lead the trainer off on a tangent that is personal to their own circumstances. This was dealt with effectively by Mel as it could have proved most disruptive to the subject learning.

The session on teaching values asked students to examine their own experiences and feelings of achievement. This served to take us into what I now know to be the affective domain of learning and was a good example of the effectiveness of this. By thinking of my own feelings after completing a piece of work it reinforced my knowledge of teaching values.

Although the day consisted of a long period in the classroom I felt that I still wanted more at the end of the day. I felt that I could have comfortably have sat through another session. This was a good point to finish at though as I left with a hunger to learn more.

As previously stated I felt the day was very well balanced and covered learning in all of the three domains covered by Bloom. I certainly feel that I have witnessed a 'master class' in what an introductory day should contain and how to deliver it.