



Training from the Back of the Room!: 65 Ways to Step Aside and Let Them Learn

Sharon L. Bowman

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From Sharon L. Bowman, the author of the best-selling *Ten-Minute Trainer*, comes the dynamic new book, *Training from the BACK of the Room!* This innovative resource introduces 65 training strategies that are guaranteed to deliver outstanding training results no matter what the topic, group, or learning environment. Now, trainers can replace the traditional "Trainers talk; learners listen" paradigm with a radical new model for designing and delivering instruction: "When learners talk and teach, they learn."

Training from the Back of the Room!: 65 Ways to Step Aside and Let Them Learn Details

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Author : Sharon L. Bowman

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From Reader Review Training from the Back of the Room!: 65 Ways to Step Aside and Let Them Learn for online ebook

Jürgen Mohr says

Do you want to deliver successful trainings that stick in the participants minds?

This is a fantastic and incredible helpful book for trainers. All those who still use presentations with slide shows in their trainings should definitely read this book. It will give them an understanding how humans really learn and a bunch of ideas and concrete practices to improve the structure of their trainings. But even those who already use interactive training techniques will probably gather new insights and ideas for lecturing from the back of the room.

David says

I struggled through the first few chapters, learnt a bit from the rest, and managed to adopt one or two ideas.

Lorenzo says

The book in a nutshell:

1. Before the training, use an activity to engage the learners with the material.
2. During the training, teach them only what they **need to know**, keep lectures to ten minutes max, then break it up with an interactive exercise.
3. End the training with teach-back activities.
4. After the training, stay in touch with the group to nudge them toward actually using what they learned.

That's the whole book really, though it does have lots of "ways to step aside and let them learn". Out of the 65 activities, I connected with (and will try to use) about a dozen.

Mark Seemann says

This book comes highly recommended, and I'm certain that I need it, yet it doesn't work for me at all.

I occasionally do highly technical training (in advanced computer programming), and while I'm on firm footing when it comes to my knowledge of the technical material, I have no illusions about my abilities as a trainer. Sometimes I manage to keep my students engaged, but it also happens that I fail to catch their attention. Certainly, I could do better, so I'd hoped this book would help me.

Perhaps it will. I have no problem with its message, but I absolutely can't stand the way it's delivered.

First, the book is *ugly*. As an adult, well-educated person, I shouldn't let that affect me, but I can't help it. I constantly had the impression that the book is set in Comic Sans. It isn't, but somehow it feels that way. Wide margins, plenty of white space, and extensive use of clip art has that effect, I suppose. It simply looks cheap to a degree that distracts from the message.

Second, it's repetitive. It states the same points over and over. It's repetitive. It repeats points. It's repetitive.

Third, it leaves me feeling more inadequate than before. I clearly understand what I do wrong as a trainer, but I don't know what to do instead. Sure, the book boasts "65 ways to step aside and let [students] learn", but most of the practical ideas seem like they're aimed at a different type of training.

The basic premise of the book is that "learning is finding out what you already know". While I don't take such an assertion at face value, I can see how it would apply to corporate training like introductions for new hires, compliance training, instruction in procedure, etc. How this tenet can be applied to teaching property-based testing, category theory, and like topics, is unclear to me.

Granted, there are some ideas in the book that made me think. It may ultimately change how I teach, so reading it may have been a worthwhile effort, but I had a hard time getting through it.

Brian Button says

I recently finished this book while I was in the midst of redesigning all of our courses right before a major teaching engagement.

During that process I found the information in this book extremely useful, both in helping to reframe my mindset as I built training and in helping me reorganize my materials into something that should be more fun and more memorable.

This was not my favorite book I have ever read, but the information in it is definitely worth the time.

One last thing is that the book is filled with a number of interactive exercises - I found reading it as an ebook to be more difficult because I couldn't write on the pages for the practice.

Piotr says

An interesting perspective on training. Clearly presents modern science how brain learns, suggests many ways how to make learners participate in knowledge passing. Some parts however seem biased by author's experience, so in my opinion you need to carefully pick what will work for you.

Agile Kindergarten says

I liked it. The author ties learning theory and cognitive psychology to training behaviors, something we

should all do all the time. However, I didn't find the book as easy to use as the author intended. That said, there is one take away that can absolutely make a difference for anyone.

The author puts great emphasis on graphical Concept Maps as a way of increasing retention. Concept Maps are nothing more than a visual hand-out that the trainer has the participant use in context of the session so as to reinforce what is being taught. Sort of like helping the participant along in their note taking.... These are not PowerPoint print-outs, but interactive items. I've used them sporadically, but will make a conscious effort to use them more routinely going forward.

Olja Manojlovi? says

This book is great to use it as a handbook while you are preparing for training. One reading is definitely not enough.

?ukasz Lichota says

Great book. Restored my faith in trainings ;)
And now I know why I disliked many of the trainings I've been to.
Inspired me to apply this when I will run a training.

MrSnow76 says

so far quite nice and gave me already very good ideas about how to create sessions that are worth the attendees time.
After the second walkthrough and doing a crash-course about it I'm absolutely convinced that this is a must read for anyone doing trainings/workshops.

The feedback that you get from the trainings/workshops is your best indicator that you apply it the right way!

Alex Shevchuk says

Okay. That was super slow ride for me...

The book is HUGE! It's fundamental and complex to get it in a first/single read.
I'm using it as a handbook already for trainings design and that's just a tip of the iceberg.

Egia Chaparyan says

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Paul Brandt says

Having taken the course of Sharon I'm very impressed with what she's achieved with me; it's been more than a few years now but I still discover new material and tricks on how to better prepare the students on their task outside of the classroom. There simply are not many courses that achieved such an impact with me, in fact none have. Whether the book in itself, without the course and presence of Sharon, would have achieved the same - I don't think so, but it definitely will change your perspective on teaching. Don't let the somewhat simple, maybe even childish, layout, drawings and color scheme fool you: this is a very mature book that finds its roots in cognitive science, since Sharon's philosophy is to use the mechanisms of the brain as an amplifier to the learning process. It is that very philosophy that makes this book stand out of the crowd. I wish my teachers had followed this philosophy when I was in high school, or any of the learning environments I've engaged with for that matter!

Tilman Moser says

Pure gold for every training and workshop facilitator!

Deborah says

Sharon Bowman is quite likely the most intelligent and practical voice in learning and human performance today. Her books are a delight to read, more importantly her ideas are phenomenal - connecting with and reading Sharon has made my practice infinitely better. If you're a trainer or have a responsibility for teaching anyone (kids, adults, clients) pick up a book by Sharon and get after it!
