Training Style Inventory

Richard Brostrom

Instructions: For each of the following 15 phrases rank the 4 statements given in the order that completes the phrase to your best satisfaction. Give your most favored statement a rank of 4; your next favored, 3; your next, 2; and your least favored statement, 1. Place your ranking for each statement in the square to the right of that statement. For now, ignore the letters in the boxes.

1. In planning to conduct training, I am most likely to

   - survey the problem and develop valid exercises based on my findings.  c
   - begin with a lesson plan—specify what I want to teach, when, and how.  b
   - pinpoint the results I want and construct a program that will almost run itself.  a
   - consider the areas of greatest concern to the participants—and plan to deal with them, regardless of what they may be.  d

2. People learn best

   - when they are free to explore—without the constraints of a "system."  h
   - when it is in their selfish interest to do so.  g
   - from someone who knows what he or she is talking about.  f
   - when conditions are right—and they have an opportunity for practice and repetition.  e
3. The purpose of training should be

- to develop the participants' competency and mastery of specific skills.  
  
- to transfer needed information to the learner in the most efficient way.  
- to establish the learner's capacity to solve his or her own problems.  
- to facilitate certain insights on the part of participants.  

4. Most of what people know

- they have acquired through a systematic educational process.  
  
- they have learned by experience in trial-and-error fashion.  
- they have gained through a natural progression of self-discovery rather than some "teaching" process.  
- is a result of consciously pursuing their goals--solving problems as they go.  

5. Decisions on what to be covered in a training event

- must be based on careful analysis of the task beforehand.  
- should be made as the learning process goes along and the learners show their innate interests and abilities.  
- should be mutually derived, by the learner and teacher.  
- are based on what learners now know and must know at the conclusion of the event.
6. Good trainers start

- by gaining proficiency in the methods and processes of training how to teach--and then bringing in the content.  

- by recognizing that learners are highly motivated and capable of directing their own learning--if they have the opportunity.  

- by mastering the field themselves and becoming effective "models" for the learners.  

- by considering the end behaviors they are looking for and the most efficient ways of producing them in learners.  

7. As a trainer, I am least successful in situations

- where learners are passive, untalkative, and expect the trainer to do all the work.  

- that are unstructured, with learning objectives that are unclear.  

- where there is no right answer.  

- when I am teaching abstractions, rather than concrete, specific ideas.  

8. In a training event, I try to create

- the real world--problems and all--and develop capacities for dealing with it.  

- a learning climate that facilitates self-discovery, expression, and interaction.  

- a stimulating environment that attracts and holds the learners and moves them systematically toward the objective.  

- an interesting array of resources of all kinds--books, materials, etc.--directed at the learners' needs.
9. Emotions in the learning process

- are utilized by the skillful trainer to accomplish the learning objective. a
- have potential if the trainer can capture the learner's attention. b
- will propel the learner in many directions, which the trainer may follow and support. c
- provide energy that must be focused on problems or questions. d

10. Teaching methods

- should be relatively flexible but present real challenges to the learner. g
- should be determined by the subject. f
- must emphasize trial and feedback. e
- must allow freedom for the individual learner. h

11. When learners are uninterested in a subject, it is probably because

- they do not see the benefit. c
- they are not ready to learn it. d
- the instructor has not adequately prepared the lesson. b
- of poor planning. a
12. **Learners are all different:**

- some will learn, but others may be better suited for another activity.  
- the best approach is to teach the basics well and put learners on their own after that.  
- with an effective training design, most tasks can be mastered by the majority of learners.  
- an experienced teacher, properly organized, can overcome most difficulties.

13. **Evaluation of instruction**

- is done by learners, regardless of the instructor; the instructor should be a sounding board.  
- should be built into the system, so that learners continually receive feedback and adjust their performance accordingly.  
- is ultimately decided when the student encounters a problem and successfully resolves it.  
- should be based on pre-established learning objectives and done at the end of instruction to determine learning gains.

14. **Learners seem to have the most regard for a trainer who**

- taught them something, regardless of how painful.  
- guided them through experiences with well-directed feedback.  
- systematically led them step-by-step.  
- inspired them and indirectly influenced their lives.
15. In the end, if learners have not learned,

- the trainer has not taught.  
- they should repeat the experience.  
- maybe it was not worth learning.  
- it may be unfortunate, but not everyone can succeed at all tasks.

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<td>b</td>
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Sum all the numbers that you placed in the "a" and "e" boxes in the Training Style Inventory. Place this total in the "a + e" box in the figure on the next page. This is your behaviorist score. Do the same for the following totals: "b" and "f"; "c" and "g"; "d" and "h."

Questions for Self-Study

1. What type of learner learns most effectively in the behaviorist orientation? The structuralist? The functionalist? The humanist?
2. What type of learning tasks should be undertaken with the techniques of the behaviorist? The structuralist? The functionalist? The humanist? Give examples. What tasks should not be undertaken by each? Consider such tasks as manual skills, information transfer, problem solving, and creativity.
3. Is it possible to incorporate in a single learning situation a training role that prescribes supportive, directive, assertive, and reflective emphases? Think of examples. What might make this assignment difficult?
4. Consider how the qualities of the various training styles may be developed.
5. Examine the model that integrates the orientations to learning on two axes, a cognitive mode axis (holistic to analytic) and a locus of control axis (external to internal).
   1. Is this representation essentially correct? Why or why not?
   2. Considering the stages of growth of people (for example, from infancy to maturity) and assuming that the model is correct, what would it indicate as the most suitable learning orientation in various stages?
   3. Considering the stages of development of a training group, what would the model imply that the trainer's role should be, both early in the process and later as the group develops?
   4. What are some other applications of the model?
## TSI Style Contrasts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Orientation to Teaching/Learning</th>
<th>Behaviorist</th>
<th>Structuralist</th>
<th>Functionalist</th>
<th>Humanist</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New behavior can be caused and &quot;shaped&quot; with well-designed structures around the learner.</td>
<td>The mind is like a computer; the teacher is the programmer.</td>
<td>People learn best by doing, and they will do best what they want to do. People will learn what is practical.</td>
<td>The learner must be willing (or motivated) by the process or the product; otherwise, it is useless to try teaching. Performance &quot;on the job&quot; is the true test. Opportunity, self-direction, thinking, achieving results, and recognition are important.</td>
<td>Learning is self-directed discovery. People are natural and unfold (like a flower) if others do not inhibit the process. &quot;Anything that can be taught to another is relatively inconsequential&quot; (Rogers). Significant learning leads to insight and understanding of self and others. Being a better human being is considered a valid learning goal. Can be a very inefficient, time-consuming process.</td>
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| Basic Assumptions | Training designers select the desired behaviors and proceed to engineer a reinforcement schedule that systematically encourages learners' progress toward those goals. Imaginative new machinery has made learning fun and thinking unnecessary. Learners often control the speed. | Content properly organized and fed bit-by-bit to learners will be retained in memory. Criterion tests will verify the effectiveness of teaching. The teacher "keeps people aware" while simultaneously entering data--a much-envied skill. | | |

### Key Words and Processes

- stimulus-response
- practice
- shaping
- prompting
- behavior modification
- pinpointing
- habit formation
- task analysis
- lesson planning
- information mapping
- chaining
- sequencing
- memory
- audiovisual media
- presentation techniques
- problem solving
- simulation
- "hands-on"
- reasoning
- learner involvement
- reality-based
- freedom
- individuality
- ambiguity
- uncertainty
- awareness
- spontaneity
- mutuality
- equality openness
- interaction
- experiential
- reward and punishment
- teaching machines
- environmental design
- successive approximation
- sensitizing
- extinction
- token economy
- mastery.

- standards
- association
- evaluation
- measuring instruments
- objectives
- recitation.

- consequences
- achievement
- failure
- confidence
- motivation
- thinking
- competence
- discipline
- recognition
- feedback
- working.

**Interpersonal Style**

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<td><strong>Strengths</strong></td>
<td>&quot;The Doctor&quot;: clear, precise, and deliberate; low risk; careful preparation; emotionally attentive; complete security for learners; a trust builder; everything &quot;arranged&quot;; protective; patient; in control.</td>
<td>&quot;The Expert&quot;: informative; thorough; certain; systematic; stimulating; good audiovisual techniques; well rehearsed; strong leader; powerful; expressive; dramatic; entertaining.</td>
<td>&quot;The Coach&quot;: emphasizes purpose; challenges learners; realistic; lets people perform and make mistakes; takes risks; gives feedback; builds confidence; persuasive; gives opportunity and recognition.</td>
<td>&quot;The Counselor&quot;: sensitive; emphatic; open; spontaneous; creative; a &quot;mirror&quot;; nonevaluative; accepting; responsive to learners; facilitative; interactive; helpful.</td>
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| **Limitations** | "The Manipulator": fosters | "The Elitist": preoccupied with means, image, or structure rather than means; loses | "Sink or Swim": ends justify means | "The Fuzzy Thinker": vague directions; abstract,
dependence; overprotective; controlling; manipulative "for their own good"; sugar-coating; hypocritical agreeing; deceptive assurances; withholding data.

than results; ignores affective variables; inflexible (must follow lesson plan); dichotomous (black or white) thinking; superior.

patience with slow learners; intimidating; insensitive; competitive; overly task oriented; opportunistic, return-on-investment mortality.

esoteric, or personal content; lacks performance criteria; unconcerned with clock time; poor control of group; resists "teaching": appears unprepared.

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