

Quick Guide: How To Be The Best IT Trainer

Whether you are embarking on training one person at a time, or a small group, the principles are much the same. However when delivering training before a group the technique is different and much more preparation is required. So here are the top ten tips to be the best IT trainer:

1. **Don't touch their mouse or keyboard:** instruct rather than do. It is very easy to become a 'rescuer' rather than a trainer. If you always do tasks for others, they never learn and you never lose your job as a rescuer, getting them out of trouble.
2. **All of us learn differently** – you may be training an activist, pragmatist, theorist or reflector. Questionnaires and exercises can determine their learning styles. Also, are you an activist rushing through material, or a theorist hung up on the manual?
3. **You only need to get your trainees to conscious competence.** First, get them to recognise what they don't know (unconscious incompetence). Then they can focus on more practice in these aspects, leading to conscious competence.
4. **Encourage trainees to find their own answers.** Many prefer to follow what you say or do, parrot fashion; some will use crib sheets extensively, without going it alone. So get them to internalise the learning experience, minimising future reliance on you.
5. **Give your sessions a KISS** (keep it short and simple). When devising a training session, write it out as you would say it, then transfer to cue cards. Remember to put an incentive as to why they should learn the task.
6. **Write objectives** to increase knowledge, address skills and change attitude to the task. The difference in knowledge and skill? Write your signature with your normal writing hand, then with the other. You have the knowledge but lack the skill!
7. **Nothing succeeds like success!** Explain how the procedure fits in to their work, encourage them when they get something right and congratulate them at the end when they have made progress.
8. **Design appropriate courseware** to reinforce learning after the session (handouts, manuals, either paper or electronic media). Start at the very beginning and do not assume your trainees know anything.
9. **Own your courseware.** Be proud of what you produce: put your name on your courseware (handouts, manuals, paper or electronic media), date it and add the version or issue number.
10. **Enjoy your training sessions.** If you do not relish imparting your knowledge to others, stop doing it. Give the job to someone else if possible, as how you feel will come across. Life is too short to waste time doing something you do not like doing!

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