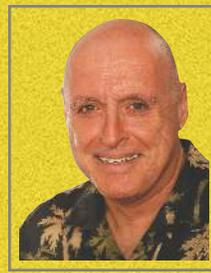


THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



714 What's Your Formula to Evaluate Learning?

I'm taking a course and came across something yesterday that I thought might be helpful, whether just for yourself or if you have a voice in learning for your organization. I'm Jerry Roberts and that's next, on The Extra Point.

The course I'm taking has a section the theory of learning and how to evaluate it. I'm always looking for new ideas and approaches, and I found some things I want to share with you.

The instructor rolled out a formula that tracked the learning process, I added a piece to it, and I hope it gives you a different view in how to make it work for you and your coworkers.

1. A person must want to learn. Unless the desire is there, training isn't going to be received as well as it will be for someone who is dialed in. Your expectations should be greater for people who want to be trained, than for those who don't. Invest more to train people who want more, and who respond to it.

2. Applying the training. This is the "doing" stage. Not everybody implements training at the same level. Not every company requires it at the same level. In our training, we ask people what parts of a course they liked best and what they plan to use immediately. I have them go back over their notes and pick things out, then verbalize those in front of the group.

3. Get feedback. What is the student's view of the training and the implementation? How's it going? If the supervisor has seen positive results, he/she should make that known. It reinforces the value of the learning, and will make them want more.

If there is no feedback and, in fact, little or no discussion about the learning and the benefits of it, there will be a tendency to think it doesn't matter. That's not what you want.

4. Digest learning. This is where the student

hits the pause button and takes time to evaluate what has taken place. What was learned, what was accomplished, where do things stand?

The point was made that Asian countries focus on digesting learning, and the key benefit is twofold, One, people connect what was learned to what they already know. This is a bit above my pay grade, but essentially it gets into how our brains work.

By making this specific kind of connection, the learning becomes more permanent. Retention is a good thing. The second benefit is that the student is more connected to the process, more engaged with the learning. Frankly, that's huge.

This doesn't happen to the same degree in western cultures, particularly America and the United Kingdom. We tend to slam education into people, say we did by checking off boxes in their employee record, and then quickly move on to something else. We do it in the workplace and sadly, we also do it in our schools. I favor the idea of digesting the training.

5. This is what I added. Decide what's next. As I was thinking about all this, it came to me that there was one more part to the process. After we've gone through these four steps in our training, now what?

If the student is excited about learning, is using what is learned and obvious growth is taking place, you don't want to just walk away. You want to stoke the fire of their learning desire. Move them into more learning and see if you can leverage the benefits.

You'll see different results in your organization, from those who love to learn and respond well, all the way to those who have little interest and don't respond at all, with a couple of groupings in between those two.

(Con't.)

There's a different decision to make for each.

Learning in an organization is a process. By adopting a sensible approach to it, you can get a lot further and do a lot better. If you need help with this, give me a call.

That's The Extra Point. Be responsible and make something good happen today. For 93.3 and the Ray Gibson Show, I'm Jerry Roberts.

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For information on training and consulting services with Jerry Roberts, please click this link: guamtraining.com

