Managing the training time bomb

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1. A disorienting dilemma

2. Self examination with feelings of guilt or shame

3. A critical assessment of assumptions

4. Recognition that one's discontent and the process of transformation are shared and that others have negotiated a similar change

5. Exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions

6. Planning a course of action

7. Acquisition of knowledge and skills for implementing one's plans

8. Provisional trying of new roles

9. Building of competence and self confidence in new roles and relationships; and

10. A reintegration into one's life on the basis of conditions   d
    one's new perspective (from Mezirow 1991)

Cases

- Certificate IV in Youth Work

- Diploma of Business (Frontline Management)

- Certificate III in Automotive Mechanics (Motorcycle)

Case data collection

- 10 learners surveyed

- 8 consented to participate in follow up interviews

- Interviews conducted 2 – 3 months after course completion

- 3 trainers interviewed

Results overview

- 6/10 surveys indicated transformative learning

- 5 of these 6 were among the interviewees

- 1 of these 5 felt that her current management style was challenged by the training

- 4 of these 5 felt that the training challenged management practices in their organisations

- 2 of these 4 had changed employers

- 2 of these 4 were planning to change employers

The message of the course?

"Good" managers

…have got empathy with human beings. They understand that the only way to get results is working with people rather than pushing them. There can be lots of 'effective' managers who get things done, but they push people and they ruin people in the process. So a good, effective manager would be one who gets things done but they do it through using good human relations intervention....Another value they might have is that they can't achieve things on their own. They are in fact dependent on workers. (Trainer A)

Participant X interview excerpt

…the way I see is: the better I can motivate staff and get them to sort of pull in the direction, the easier my job as a manager will be – and that is something that wasn't really clear to me. For instance, how important it is to delegate and to develop staff, and give them training opportunities, and all these things were not clear to me and they are clearer now.

Participant X interview excerpt (continued)

So what sort of approach to management did you take before the course?

Probably much more assertive and forceful rather than cooperative and consultative - because it is not normally my style, because I prefer to 'work along.' I absolutely dislike any kind of team work. I only do it if I absolutely have to and unfortunately in this role, managing staff is part of it and the part I really enjoy least of all, so the course really gave me some simple tools of going through the motions and managing staff in a more professional way than I would otherwise have.
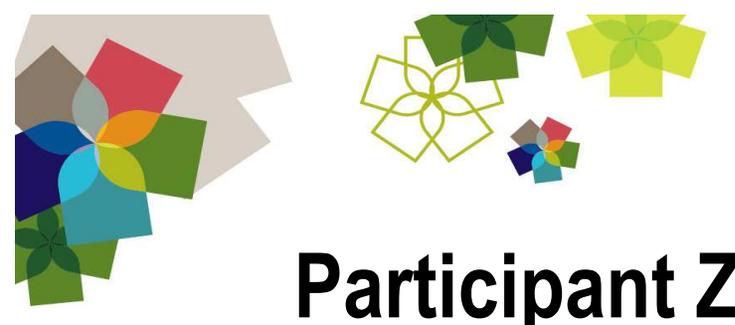
Participant Y interview excerpt

I wish my manager was at the course….He should have done this course a long time ago.

Why?

He needs this stuff more than me.

Participant Z interview excerpt

The area I was working in last made me realise that there are a lot of managers out there that don't care about the people. They just care about getting things done and that is one of the things that were highlighted to me by the course. Because I had worked in other areas of the company where the managers were really good, they treated their staff really well, things like that, we didn't really think about those kind of things, so as to coming up to being a manager or a supervisor or getting into team leader roles and going off and doing this course really made me realise that I have had a lot of good managers in the past but there is also a lot of horrible people out there that just don't care about the people   and I ended up being one of those people that suffered because of that.

Trainer B interview excerpt

…I don't tell them [the students] the challenge but they do challenge, and they share with me their challenge and I will discuss it with them…but I know where the end point usually ends up. They leave the organisation and it happens. If I am very wary of that outcome because their personal challenge gets to the point where they become frustrated with their organisation and then they are in turmoil and they think the only thing they can do it leave and they do, so I am a bit worried…

Trainer B interview excerpt (continued)

I seem to be a precursor to people changing their jobs because they hear about how it can work, how positive it can be with real examples that I can give them from my own organisations that I have worked for, and they can't see it happening in their own organisation and they leave. Therefore coming back as a representative of [the training provider] I would hate to be accused by the organisations who are paying for their participants to come to setting them up to get into this turmoil and this challenge, but I know they will over time but then I can't be accused of encouraging them to do it.

Managing the training time bomb?

- Consider the implications of putting a single employee through management training, especially given the social and systemic nature of management practice

- Research into discrepancies between competency standards/training curriculum and actual industry practice, particularly in human service fields with complex psychological and ethical dimensions   such as management

- Relevance of transformative learning theory to management training