

HOW TO MANAGE DIFFICULT BEHAVIOURS IN TRAINING



By Marc Ratcliffe

Even experienced trainers with the latest resources and most interesting training material can be thrown off course by the behaviours of difficult participants. Therefore, it is important to load the kit bag with a variety of tools and techniques to overcome the dilemmas presented by some students.

One of the simple things that can be done is to change the structure of the training to reduce the affect of some students whilst drawing out the voices of others. Below are some quick things that can be done on the run to help your classes move more smoothly:

Shy Students could be brought out using quizzes where every student is involved in the game. Alternatively, they may find their voice in a small group discussion and the trainer can provide strong positive reinforcement for their contributions as the move around the groups.

Discussion Dominators can be used as observers or scribes, therefore changing their discussion behaviours from active to passive roles. This has the benefit of giving them the attention they often want, but gives the rest of the class a voice, as the scribe or observer role is a non-speaking one. They will have a chance at the end to reveal their observations, but in the mean time, the rest of the group can speak freely without the influence of the dominator. Alternatively, the group could be broken up into a more manageable size and

contributions asked for on posters and explained by all members of the team.

Hecklers/Arguers can be deflected by taking the argument to the group – e.g. “so what does the group think...” or you can build on or around what has been said, focusing on the positive. For example, “interesting point, but where do we go from here...” And finally, the Side conversations during training can be combated by using the following tactics:

- Ask their opinion on topic being discussed.
- Ask talkers if they would like to share their ideas.
- Casually move toward those talking.
- Standing near the talkers, asking a nearby participant a question so that the new discussion is near the talkers.

Good luck back in the classroom!