

Things Trainers can learn from MacGyver



By Marc Ratcliffe

Marc is the CEO and Founder of MRWED Training and Assessment, a private Australian Registered Training Organisation, specialising in trainer training. He has been involved in workplace and vocational education for 21 years and has delivered training to thousands of students in areas as diverse as business management, health and safety, marketing, team building and training and development. This experience includes conducting over 300 courses in "trainer training" in the last 15 years. In addition to this, he has presented training related workshops internationally in North America, Africa and Asia. He is a Registered Teacher and has completed a Masters in Education specialising in Adult and Workplace Education.

Whilst it is some time since MacGyver has graced our televisions with new episodes, the character made famous by Richard Dean Anderson continues to live in the hearts and minds of those who grew up with the handy hero who could dismantle a bomb with little more than duct tape, chewing gum and a Swiss Army knife! But what can trainers learn from TV's MacGyver?

Flexibility

There are different solutions needed for each situation and as trainers we need to realise that it is not a one-size-fits-all! Flexibility means that there are many different ways to get to our destination. The challenge is in finding the best journey for each of our learning groups.

Ingenuity

Simple resources can have sophisticated results. We don't always need all the bells and whistles to create a great learning experience. Sometimes some colourful charts placed around the room can be more effective than a series of slick power points. The trick is to continue to engage the participants with teaching aids and delivery methods that spark their curiosity.

Patience

Sometimes we have to sit tight, until the right opportunity to act becomes available. Participants' acquisition of competency will be varied across each group and between groups. As such, we need to be ready with a range of support activities in our bag of tricks to

build the skills and knowledge of inexperienced participants and extend the development of the more advanced ones.

Creativity

Often training budgets prevent us from buying expensive off-the-shelf resources, so trainers need to find cost-effective ways to generate great resources to complement the learning experience, that won't break the bank. This being said, there are dozens of activities that can be created with some pipe cleaners, match sticks and index cards that can be purchased for less than the cost of a bus ticket. For instance, you could ask students to complete conceptualisation activities using only these three resources, engage the group in problem solving tasks or lead a group-based tower building exercise. The options are endless if you are prepared to add a little creativity to your training!

Integrity

A high degree of personal integrity is necessary for us to win the respect of our learners. Doing the right thing is not always the easy thing, but our learners will appreciate that we have given them a robust learning experience that they can immediately transfer to the workplace. (Rather than just pushing them through the process to get that piece of paper!)

So with flexibility, ingenuity, patience, creativity and integrity you can get out there and transform your training MacGyver-style to create a unique training event for your next group of learners!