

CREATING CROSSWORD PUZZLES FOR TRAINING REVIEW

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Tired of boring multiple choice or true-false pre and post-tests for assessing participant knowledge? Try using or designing a crossword puzzle based on key training points to test participants, while letting them have fun as they take it because training doesn't *have* to be boring!

Puzzles can be created with crossword puzzle making software (search the Internet for free versions) or you can draw your own. They are simple, and if you don't make them too extensive, take only a short time to design and produce. Puzzles also help to reduce test anxiety because they don't really look like a *test*, add creativity to your training and give good feedback on knowledge.

The preparation steps are:

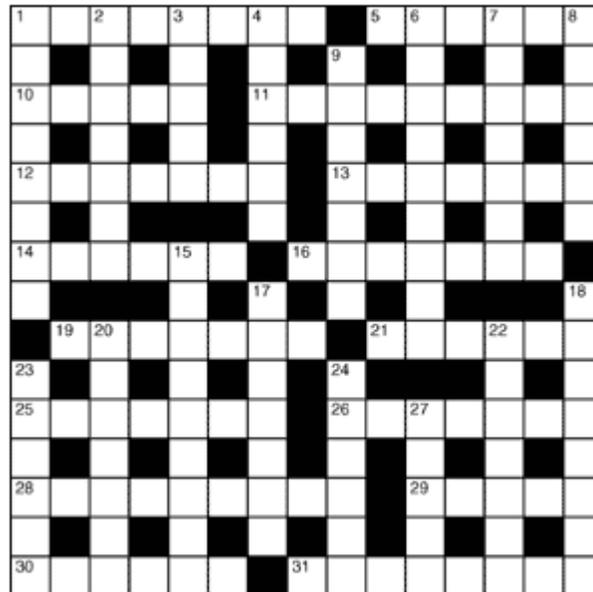
- Draw a square box approximately 8"X 8" and separate it into an equal number of grid squares. The more complex the test, the more grid squares. Start with 10 across and 10 down.
- Make numerous copies of this original for use with future puzzles so you don't have to keep redrawing it.
- Compile a list of statements or fill in the blank phrases that will serve as clues to quiz knowledge (e.g. for a recent train-the-trainer session I designed, I used a puzzle with clues that related to the T&D field. Two of them were "Final phase of a training cycle. It's purpose is to assess training outcomes." Answer = Evaluation and "_____ study" Answer = case).
- Once you've put together your clues, insert the answers to them in the blank grid squares. Try to interlock words by using common letters across and down.
- Numbering of grids should be done starting in the upper left corner and run left to right all the way down the square. Count every grid as you cross the page just as if you were putting a number in each grid, but place a number only in those blocks where the first letter of a word appears.
- Go back and blacken in all grids squares not having letters in them.
- Divide your clues into two columns. Clues which have their answer running across the page should be listed in order numerically in a column labeled ACROSS. Those running down the page should be in a column labeled DOWN.
- As a last step reduce the size of one of the blank puzzle squares that you saved

and the clues, put both on a single sheet of paper and you're ready to "test"!

- If you'd like, make a slide of the answer key to allow participants to "grade" their papers in class.

When you finish, your puzzle should look similar to Figure 1.

Figure 1



Bob Lucas B.S., M.A., M.A, CPLP is an internationally-known author and learning and performance professional. He has written and contributed to thirty-one books and compilations. He regularly conducts creative training, train-the-trainer, customer service, interpersonal communication and management and supervisory skills workshops. Bob can be reached at blucas@robertwlucas.com or through his website www.robertwlucas.com. Follow his blog at www.robertwlucas.com/wordpress and like him at www.facebook.com/robertwlucasenterprises