

Hello – and welcome to my May newsletter. In my last newsletter, I looked at the downfalls of trying to apply one solution to a number of problems. The receipt of an image, kindly sent by a colleague, prompts me to return to that theme.

Issue 8

May 2015

“Find me a problem, I’ll find a solution” but not the same one!

“Baah gum”, “aye up”, “put wood inth ‘ole” and, perhaps a rule for life, **“Ear all, see all, say nowt. Eat all, sup all, pay nowt. And if ever thou does owt fer nowt – allus do it fer thissen”**.

Expressions from Yorkshire, the historic county of Northern England and the largest in the United Kingdom. Those expressions may not mean a lot to those outside Yorkshire, but like almost all regional dialects, a delight to listen to, even if you are not entirely sure what the outcome is!

But they do tell us that while somethings are right for some people, some situations and some places, they are not necessarily right all the time. Rather like giving feedback, when it is so easy to fall into the trap of saying “I would do it like this ...” when the reality is that the way you approach something, however well it works for you, is not necessarily the right way for someone else. There are similarities of course, and the main part of what you suggest may be sound – and a tweak here and a change there may work well. But it’s not going to be exactly the same.

We can also apply this to a training session; a good session delivered by one tutor won’t necessarily be a good session delivered by another – different time, different audience, different learning styles all have an impact.

To go back to the crux of my last newsletter – a desperate need to provide a consistent approach can make a process unfit for its intended purpose. I viewed a series of documents recently, used to record learner contact – a visit plan, a progress review, a visit report and commented that there was no opportunity for the employer to contribute to the process. The response I received was along the lines of “Ah well, we did used to have space for the employer to comment, but they never did, so we took it out”. And that, it seemed, was the problem solved! It transpires that this provider was given that advice by a consultant (one of the reasons why I refuse to use that term), with the rationale that it was better to take away the question, rather than have missing answers.

What seems more worrying, is that the advice was readily accepted. No one questioned the fact that surely, an employer must have some involvement in a work-based qualification. As a result, this provider ended up with a whole series of documents that traced their learners’ progress from induction through to the achievement of their apprenticeship and not once was this validated by the employer.

We must get back to a situation where we recognise the purpose of what we want to do and ensure that is what we actually achieve. Not be bound by what we think Ofsted want to see, by what someone else tells us they think we should achieve or indeed to keep other parts of the business such as support services, including finance and administration, happy.

Back to the image sent across to me; I can’t guarantee its accuracy, but isn’t it great when you see something that “just fits”.



Finally, if the expressions at the start of this still have you puzzled, drop me a line for a translation. Until next time, ta and I’ll sithee.

Kevin Dowson