

# An Evaluative Study on Building the Bridge Between the Training Room and the Workplace

**Brian Chaloner**

*AirBusiness Academy, Blagnac, France*

A study is reported of the use of a personal journal as a tool for transferring learning from the training room to the workplace. The targeted learning event was an English for Communication training programme. This programme was an intensive four-day course that grouped together participants from the non-UK sites of the aircraft manufacturer Airbus. The methodology centred on measuring the extent to which the learners' autonomy increased over time. The global focus of the analysis was a qualitative evaluation of learner perception of autonomy and of the relative value of the evaluated transfer task. The results from one specific session of the course were compared to three other sessions that did not use the personal journal.

**Keywords:** autonomy, communication, evaluation, learning, motivation, transfer

## Introduction and Aims

The impetus for this investigation came from the basic question of how to ensure that learning is transferred back to the workplace. The aim was to afford learners the opportunity to accompany their learning with clearly indicated moments of individual reflection. This personal narrative parallels the method of dialogue journals outlined by Kreeft Peyton (1993), where dialogue journals are intended to focus on meaning rather than form and on real topics and issues of interest to the student. It is also clearly of value to teach learners how to learn so that they can gain in autonomy and continue the learning process beyond the confines of the training room. Indeed, for Nunan and Lamb (1996: 12), the important factor in learning is precisely such autonomy:

By systematically educating learners about what it means to be a learner, learners reach a point where they are able to make informed decisions about what they want to learn and how they want to learn.

They see this as being 'learning centred'. There is therefore a clear foundation in favour of devoting time and energy to the question of how learners learn.

Another key idea in support of such a focus on autonomy comes from the notion that a learner is thus able, within a community of practice, to measure and improve on his/her own understanding and ability in the chosen field:

... as opportunities for understanding how well or poorly one's efforts contribute are evident in practice, legitimate participation of peripheral kind provides an immediate ground for self-evaluation. (Lave & Wenger, 1991: 111)

This implies, of course, that the learner needs to evaluate himself/herself during practice within the situated community of the normal workplace. For this to happen, the learning act must go beyond the end of the training session, and be evaluative.

An extension of this point was to consider the community of practice not only as that in which the learner normally worked, but also the extended work community formed by the training session group. Could the survival of this group be fostered through the use of a personal journal (see the Appendix), and the subsequent transfer task that it invites learners to perform? The reasoning behind this interest was that, if it is possible to enable the learning group itself to continue to function as a learning community, sharing experiences of what happened back in the workplace, this could in turn provide support for each individual. Such support is especially important if, like Hiebert *et al.*, the trainer or course designer believes that one of the keys to successful learning is: 'to recognise that learning means learning from others, taking advantage of others' ideas and the results of their investigation' (Hiebert *et al.*, 1996: 17). This would imply that there is a distinct value in the continued collaboration of a learning group even after the traditional session has ended.

The aims for this investigation therefore can be expressed in the following three questions:

- (1) How far can a personal journal assist in the development of learner autonomy and a learning-centred approach to training?
- (2) How far does the use of a personal journal help learners to develop the ability to critically reflect on their experiences and adapt future strategies?
- (3) How far do a personal journal and the transfer task it contains enable learners to apply their learning to the context of their workplace setting?

## Rationale

The drive behind the use of a personal journal and the transfer task that it contains was that, if the individual's self-perception is affected and affects the learning process, it is possible to argue in favour of individualised language teaching (Sawar, 2001). In order to truly engage the learner and his/her self, the learner must be actively involved in the learning and its outcomes, with a focus on 'meaningful tasks' and 'the use of authentic, from-life materials' (Li, 1998: 694). By directing questions at individual learners and allowing them to use examples from their own experience, the personal journal is a clear source of 'individualised language teaching'. The individual is given the opportunity to be engaged and concerned by his/her learning both during and after the course. Using a personal journal implies that the learner will construct a memory of the learning experience and how it can be applied to the workplace by using a personal narrative. Through such an individualised and personal approach, it is hoped that the learner will be motivated enough to assume the autonomy that he/she is being offered. For Foley (1991), any methodology which fosters learner autonomy sustains momentum to continue learning; it becomes 'a catalyst for learning'. The implication is that this 'catalyst' will

enable the learner to be the architect of the links between the training room and the workplace, making him/her central to the learning act.

Such autonomy also needs to be combined with learner motivation. The personal journal work should tap into the learner's internal drives, without which there is little chance of learning being transferred back into the workplace with any success. This factor is underlined in the following quotation from Nunan and Lamb:

Even if the stimulus comes from outside, the sense of discovery, however, and the motivation which that brings has to come from inside driven by the basic human desire for self-realisation, well-being and growth. (Legutke & Thomas, 1991: 269, in Nunan & Lamb, 1996: 10)

There is, therefore, a need to engage the learner in the learning. If this notion is placed in parallel with Kathleen Graves' (1996: 185) concept of 'language as not just something one learns but something one *does*', it seems clear that the best way to measure the success of a corporate course on English communication skills is to measure those skills in action and in context. It is therefore essential to empower learners to not only measure their individual progress but to be implicitly included in how and against what standards the evaluation should be carried out. For Breen and Candlin (1980: 111):

evaluation need not be regarded as external to the purposes of the curriculum or external to the actual process of learning and teaching. In recognising that relative success or failure in the sharing of meaning, or in the achievement of some particular task, is most often an inter-subjective matter, the communicative curriculum would rely on shared and negotiated evaluation.

The ultimate goals of the learning event and the use of the personal journal are, therefore, to direct the learner not only towards a position of autonomy but to transform him/her into a strategist for whom critical reflection of communication ability is a recognised aspect of workplace practice. Learners need to know how to formulate and measure and improve strategies in communication. They need to become the expert learners whom Ertmer and Newby (1996: 1) define as individuals who 'deliberately select, control and monitor strategies needed to achieve desired learning goals'.

Perhaps the greatest obstacle to an investigation into the use of personal journals is the question of confidentiality. Orem (1997: 154) states that:

for a journal to be truly an instrument of transforming personal learning, ... the learner may need to be convinced of the safety of expressing what could be critical comments to someone who has power to award a grade to their overall performance.

This creates tension between the learner and the task and between the learner and the trainer. The double benefit of writing about learning how to communicate in English, in English, is dulled by the fear that the form rather than the meaning will become the focus of evaluation. There is, therefore, a choice to be made when using personal journals, whether the trainer is to contribute and have access to the text or not. This investigation chose to use a

journal that only the writer would have access to, although the final work was shared with the trainer for the benefit of the research.

In order to measure the extent to which transfer occurs in this investigation of the use of personal journals, the research was grounded in Kirkpatrick's (1996) third level of evaluation. This level looks at the transfer of learning, or whether the learner changes his/her behaviour as a consequence of what has been learnt. It is this behaviour change that the personal journal hopes to address by preparing the learner to take control of his/her learning, apply it directly to his/her own setting and critically reflect on his/her performance.

## **Context**

The context that provided the backdrop to this investigation was that of an intensive course on English communication. The course aimed to improve participants' ability to use English effectively within their company. The total number of participants was 13. They all came from the large manufacturing company Airbus. Their professions ranged from secretary to aeronautical engineer to accountant. A similar variety of language ability was also present in the group. All the participants were experiencing the effects of attempts to integrate five original companies into one single unit, with one official language (English). The participants came from France, Germany and Spain and from over seven different company sites, each with a historically distinct company culture. A key objective of the course was to enable participants to become effective communicators across linguistic, national, company, professional and hierarchical boundaries.

## **Methodology**

The methodology was centred on the learner's perception of autonomy. The data collected were primarily qualitative in the form of questionnaires and interviews. The aim was to gain a global view of how the learners experienced the question of autonomy during the work they carried out and how they reacted to the tasks. The extensive use of qualitative methods was justified by the focus on learner perceptions. The structure of the questionnaires was based on a series of statements which learners then marked to indicate their level of agreement.

The learner interviews followed the 'adaptive structured' model identified by Slimani (1992). The start-up questions were the following:

- (1) How useful was the personal journal to you?
- (2) In what ways would you say the personal journal helps learning?
- (3) How clear was the information in the personal journal?

The same questions were used to interview an observer colleague. The method was intended to allow the interviewees to go beyond the constraints of the questionnaires and provide unexpected information on the subjects being investigated.

### **Survey process**

The approach to the research process was layered. The first questionnaire to be sent (Questionnaire 3) was destined for participants who had already participated in previous sessions of the targeted course. Questionnaire 1 was given to the participants on the targeted session at the end of the session itself. Questionnaire 2 was sent to the participants of the focus session seven weeks after the end of the focus session.

The personal journal itself was used to provide information on how participants worked with this tool during the session. Four volunteers were chosen at the end of the focus group session to provide a copy of their personal journal for analysis.

The final layer of investigation involved interviews with one observer colleague and with three focus group participants. The interviews with participants were conducted at the end of the focus session. The colleague observer was interviewed both at the start and at the end of the focus session. At the end of each interview, the interviewee received the notes from the interview to comment on and modify as needed.

The selection of participants for both the personal journal copies and the interviews was based on evidence of enthusiasm for the personal journal task. This evidence was collected from casual conversations during the course and after a preliminary examination of the second questionnaire issued at the end of the session. The objective was to obtain the broadest possible range of opinions in a relatively small sample.

### **Method of Analysis**

The questionnaires were analysed by using Excel tables and compiling groupings of comments. The data from interviews were compared to the results of the questionnaires and further information was gathered by telephoning participants who did not return questionnaires. This was also analysed against the information from the questionnaires.

The personal journal analysis focused principally on the second page, which asked participants to analyse their progress over the course. This information provided an indication of how participants approached the tasks in the journal. Otherwise, the confidentiality of questionnaire responses was maintained, apart from the final questionnaire to participants after the completion of the transfer task. The logistics of this did not allow for anonymous return. Furthermore, the need to follow up non-returns meant that it was essential to contact individual participants. This lack of anonymity was unfortunate for the integrity of the investigation, but it did allow some unexpected viewpoints to come to the surface.

### **Results and Discussion**

This section will examine and discuss the combined results through the optic of the three stated aims:

- How far can a personal journal assist in the development of learner autonomy and a learning-centred approach to training?

- How far does the use of a personal journal help learners to develop the ability to critically reflect on their experiences and adapt future strategies?
- How far do a personal journal, and the transfer task it contains, enable learners to apply their learning to the context of their workplace setting?

### How far can a personal journal assist in the development of learner autonomy and a learning-centred approach to training?

The question from the personal journal that is focused on in this part of the discussion is the following:

Draw a picture, graph or diagram to illustrate your progress through Day 1

When you have finished, do the same to indicate where you think you will be at the end of Day 4. If you prefer, you can describe your progress using words. You might find it useful to consider some of the areas mentioned in the questions at the start of this journal.

Four examples of how participants dealt with this question are presented in Figures 1–3.

The choice of how to represent progress produced three very different approaches. Figure 1 shows a linear and general progression. In Figure 2 there is an 'Action' axis on the diagram. The explanation written by the participant suggests that he/she intended to measure the specific aspect of contribution and participation, rather than, for example, language level: 'At the end of day 4, I hope to have the same level in all activities, especial[ly] to understand the

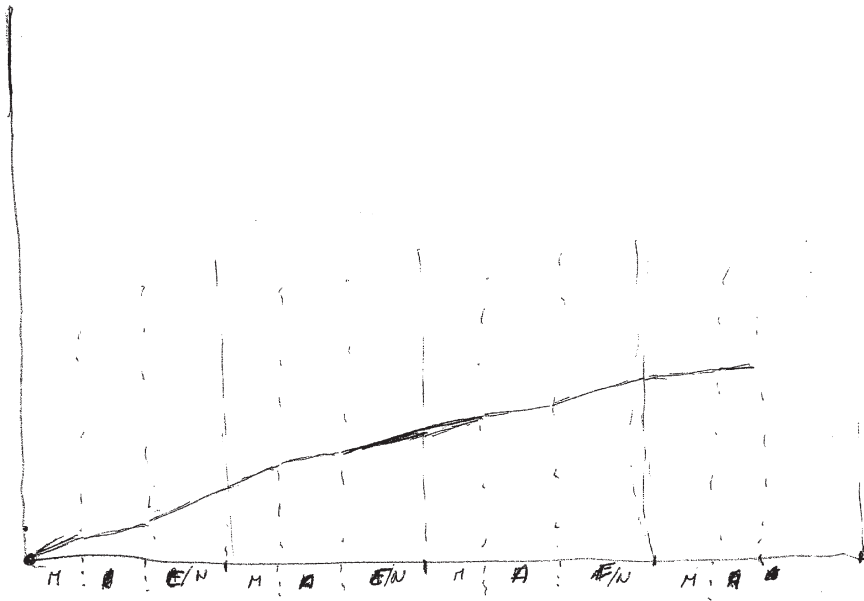


Figure 1 Steady progress

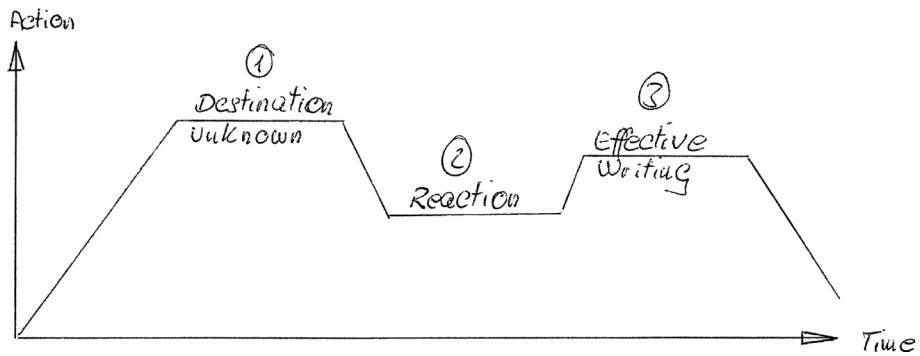


Figure 2 Actions

- speaking
- listening
- understanding / Com
- reading
- writing

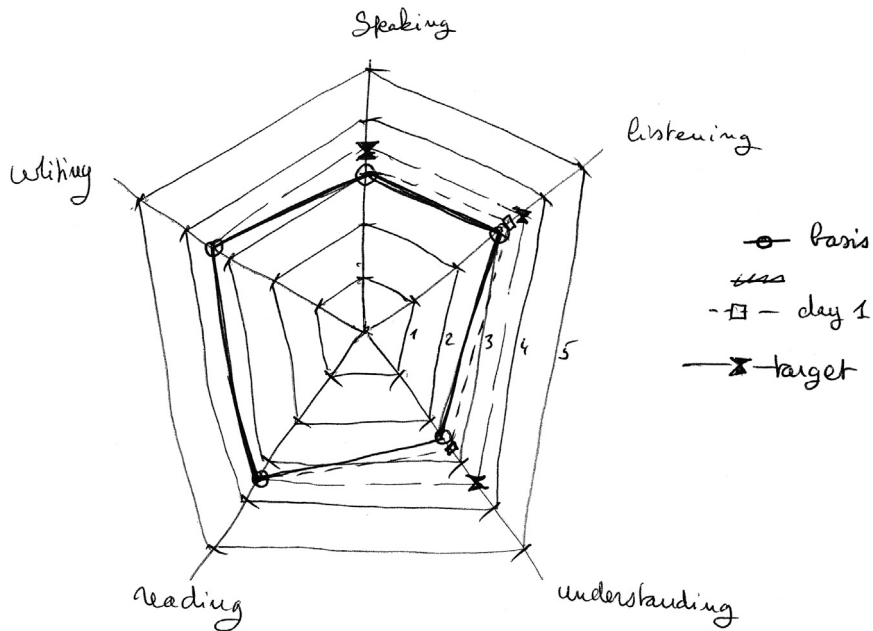


Figure 3 Radar

sense of the phrases'. In Figure 3 there is a focus on broad skills (speaking, listening, etc.). The range the learner can choose to focus on in response to the personal journal is huge, as is how he or she decides to measure this.



In measuring progress, some participants set specific and isolated target levels (Figure 3), whereas others worked on general improvement objectives (Figure 1). The graphs were not completed due to a lack of time in the training session. This error in evaluating the time needed for the whole exercise meant that the key moment of coming back to the original level and analysing the perceived progress was not completed in the session. Participants were invited to continue this part of the exercise after the training session, but this was not monitored in the investigation.

The very act of keeping the journal is a first step towards a learner-centred approach to training. The learner's thoughts are given a structure that is based on personal criteria and within which the learner can construct individualised learning goals. As was stated by one participant: 'It is good to question oneself about the way one learns and what one expects personally from the course' (Questionnaire 2 response, after completion of transfer task). The benefits of such an approach are available to the teaching of any subject matter. The added dimension on a language course is that the writing itself is in the target language, thereby providing practice in reflection and in the target language. The learner's thought processes can be said to be positively influenced by such an approach: 'When attention is caught, focused and practiced, reflection becomes organised' (Welsh & Dehler, 2004: 15). The learner-centred approach, fostered by the personal journal task, provides differing responses to one single question, both in terms of content and style. This suggests that broad guidelines in a personal journal can allow learners to express motivation and attitudes in a highly individualised way. Perhaps the key advantage, however, is that the personal journal structures training room time so that the possibility for learner-centred tasks becomes a reality, couched in the overreaching goals of increasing learner autonomy and laying the foundations for building a link to the workplace by creating a personal and individual discourse in which the learner can construct and critically reflect upon past and future experiences of communicating in English.

As far as the focus group was concerned, the questionnaire comments suggest that the motivation and progress in communication were clearly linked to independent reflection and confidence:

I am just back from a meeting at Airbus with British, German and Spanish colleagues. I've had the great pleasure to actually experience in that very typical situation the progress I have made with respects to my objectives for the course. I think the very positive approach of the multicultural communication in the course is an excellent way to feel more comfortable in the Airbus context when back to work. (focus group transfer task report)

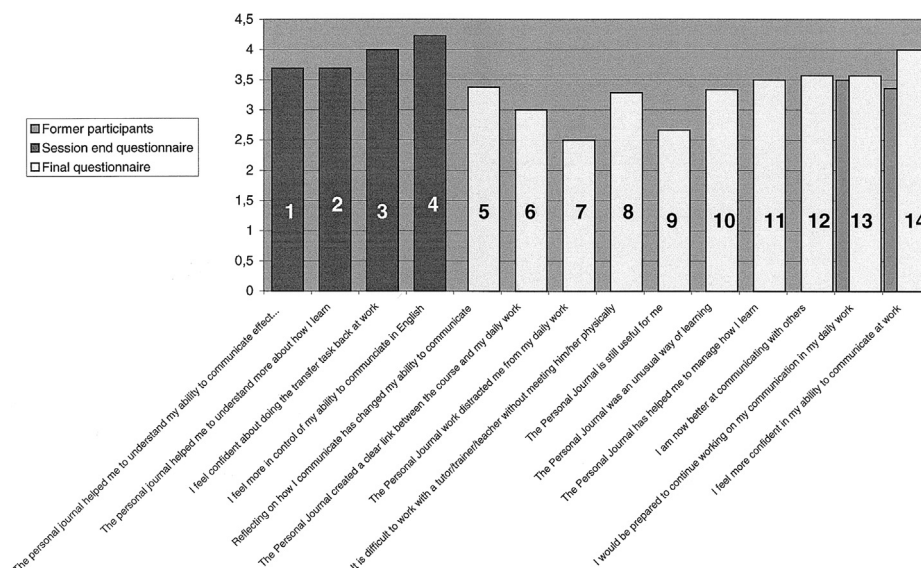
The work on the personal journal is not directly referred to in this example but the analysis of the experience is the direct result of completing the transfer task that is integral to the work in the personal journal. The participant expresses his/her raised awareness concerning personal learning objectives, and is able to reflect upon and evaluate the progress that was achieved back in the workplace. The result is one of heightened awareness of motivation, for which the journal work is the catalyst. It has led to the clear expression and clear reflection of how



training room learning can have a positive impact on the workplace. Such post-session communication between learners in the group, or between the learner and the trainer, within the framework of a context-based transfer task creates a discourse about the learning itself. The dialogue that is established transforms the personal journal work into a broader discourse that draws in professional experience based on the learning from the session. The participant takes control of the discourse and fixes it within his/her own context. As one participant stated, the journal was: ‘very useful as a tool to “rationalise” our objectives and write them’ (Questionnaire 1, end of focus session).

**How far does the use of a personal journal help learners to develop the ability to critically reflect on their experiences and adapt future strategies?**

Replies to Statement 5, on whether reflection helped to change communication behaviour (see Figure 4), and Statement 6 on whether the personal journal created a clear link with the learner’s workplace (Figure 4), suggest that learners in the focus session do recognise and adopt the benefit of a metacognitive approach to learning. The scores remain too low, however, to be certain that the personal journal alone is the catalyst in this process. Comments from the participants did illustrate a certain level of metacognitive processes: ‘I thought I would be nervous during the presentation, but I wasn’t. I now feel more confident about the presentation itself and less nervous about how I will look’ (personal journal on presentation skills work). The participant is communicating about communication and probing the internal drives mentioned by Legutke and Thomas. The end result is the formulation of a forward-directed and personalised strategy from the learner him/herself.



**Figure 4** Average combined participant reactions

This shift in role and expectations created by the use of the personal journal was not unanimously welcomed by the participants in the focus group. In an interview, one participant described the personal journal and transfer task as 'useless'. He stated that he felt an obligation to use his personal time to complete the task and that he had no desire to combine professional (including training) and personal worlds: 'I came here to speak English, not to do personal stuff'.

This insistence on the separation of personal and professional worlds illustrates the extent to which learning tasks can tap not only into feelings of nervousness but into the intrinsic values and motivations of learners. As far as the development of critical reflection is concerned, it is precisely this blurring of the boundaries between the various arenas of the learner's experience that is one of the signs of a truly effective learner. This is the 'intersubjective matter' and the 'shared and negotiated evaluation' that Breen and Candlin (1980: 111) describe. Although negative in his evaluation of the task being performed, the task itself enabled the individual in question to demonstrate clear signs of being one of Ertmer and Newby's strategists, actively engaged in taking charge of their own learning and applying it to their own contexts for their own benefit.

The questionnaire findings suggest that most of the participants felt in control of their communication. For Statement 4: 'I feel more in control of my ability to communicate in English' (Figure 4), participants showed the highest level of agreement. The reflexive nature of the personal journal work means that such a high level of confidence can be considered as nurturing both the learner and the learner's communication. It seems likely therefore that such confidence in one's control would be applicable beyond the confines of the training room. This should in turn be catered for by the transfer task in the personal journal, which draws on the learner's learning and how to approach and evaluate the next key moment of communication in the workplace. This is what Cunliffe (2002: 37) calls 'practical reflexivity': a thinking and questioning about the self by the self. In the journal work, this practical reflexivity was expressed in how participants chose to measure their communication back in the workplace: 'If I cope with a whole meeting', 'I'd like to be able to write a perfect technical report ALONE', 'If "they" can forget how long it takes me to talk and concentrate on the quality of the work provided', 'evaluation through feedback from others: did they understand?'. The objectives that are being set are clearly strategies that are context driven and specific to each individual learner, albeit often dependent on a specific community of practice, such as a meeting group.

A number of participants also stated that they recognised the personal journal and the tasks it contained as a valuable tool to aid individual reflection and learner progress: 'I thought about *my* way of communicating, it was *personal!* This is a very good exercise' (focus group student comment).

There is here an element of agency in the learning process. The learner does not only feel in control of the communication, but he/she is thinking about the nature of their own communication. The use of the personal journal leads to self-evaluation of the act of communication and the appraisal is clearly grounded in a system of values that is personal. This comment and the discussion on learner autonomy in the previous section show a parallel to criteria that demonstrate learner agency as outlined by Bandura (1989: 1180):

affective self-evaluative reactions to one's performances rooted in a value system . . . self-appraisal of personal efficacy for goal attainment . . . self-reflective metacognitive activity concerning the adequacy of one's efficacy appraisals and the suitability of one's standard setting.

Self-awareness, critical evaluation and metacognitive strategies are clearly central to the success of focusing learners not only on learning but on developing strategies for future encounters, thereby building the link from the training room back to the workplace. Comments from participants indicate that the personal journal did bring to the fore aspects of self-appraisal and learner autonomy. Practical reflexivity can be seen, therefore, to be key not only to the transfer of learning to the workplace but also to the accomplishment of the learning itself. It is an integral part of a learner's self-perception, which will have an effect on learner motivation and self-esteem and ultimately on the learning act itself, be it in the training room or the workplace.

### **How far does a personal journal and the transfer task it contains enable learners to apply their learning to the context of their workplace setting?**

The aim of the personal journal was to develop autonomy through a learner-centred approach and to start a process of critical reflection concerning learners' communication abilities. In order to investigate in more detail whether such autonomy and reflection were in fact transferred to the workplace, this section will look at two aspects: the time that participants spent reflecting on their communication after the session and the initiatives that they took to continue communicating with the other members of the focus group.

Two significant points emerge from the question of how much time participants spent reflecting on their communication ability. Time spent reflecting on communication ability after the training session was higher in previous sessions than in the focus group. This may be due to the fact that the focus group was initially contacted relatively soon after the end of their session. The former participants had completed their sessions in March, April and May, whereas the focus session was held at the end of June. The likelihood is that the former participants spent more time reflecting on their skills simply because they had more time to do so. The reflection itself can be supposed to have come from the design of the journal. The questions asked throughout the work on the personal journal were aimed at starting the process of 'self-doubt' identified by Dewey (1933), in order to lead to the process of critical reflection. Even if there is no guarantee that the journal is the sole catalyst in such a process, it certainly plays a part in structuring the work done during the training room session. It is in effect the tool that frames the tasks in an effort to develop self-directed learners who are autonomous and able to access and use a wide range of learning approaches in order to transfer learning to new and previously unknown contexts (Kerka, 1997).

All four of the session end questions illustrate that self-directed learning appears to have been achieved. The need for continued improvement was also recognised:

I think it is always useful to work on an ongoing improvement of communication abilities: I am now quite confident in using English, but I

feel there is still work to be done to use correct English! (former participant comment)

The implication is that critical reflection is indeed occurring in the workplace. The personal journal is a tool used to engage learners in critical thinking and to carry this over as a process to be used in the workplace. This combination between learning, the self and work is not only the sign of a capable learner, but what Maslow (1998: 1) considers as being the sign of an evolved individual: 'highly evolved individuals assimilate their work into the identity into the Self'. The learner evaluates the language use in the work context and critically appraises both the level and the need for future improvements. The question remains however, whether this has been achieved through personal journal work or through already acquired behaviours of an already evolved participant for whom the personal journal made no difference.

Although questionnaire comments implied that there was recognition of what was learnt and that it was worth taking this back into the workplace, individuals also questioned how 'ready' they were to do this:

I have learned or reviewed a lot of good things and opened my eyes on good learning, but I don't think I am ready to have it yet really 'operational'. (former participant comment)

The participant describes an appreciation of the metacognition developed through personal journal questions on the communication act, but what is lacking is the impetus to put the learning into practice. It is as if using the journal has built half of the bridge. The learner has focused his/her attention on the workplace finality, but the foundations for the bridge within the workplace are not there or not strong enough to allow the link between the training room and the workplace to be an effective one. Continuing the learning that starts on a training session is not guaranteed, even if the direction, autonomy, critical reflection and the linking structure are provided to the learner, through the personal journal tasks. For increased success, there may need to be a shared approach to journal writing, so that participants can further build self-esteem and understanding within their workplace community, or within their learning community, if that is transferable to the workplace.

One aspect of critical evaluation that did seem to be taken up in the workplace by the focus group is that of using others in the learning process. The target group participants contacted each other more than had occurred on previous sessions. This is even more remarkable when one considers that they had less time to do so than former participants and that this communication occurred around the holiday period, when many of the participants were absent from their workplace. The trainer also noticed that there was a significant increase in the correspondence he had with participants from the target session. Some of this correspondence was more due to the investigation than to the personal journal work alone. It is encouraging, however, to observe that participants on a training course can remain in contact after the end of a course. 'Learning from others' (Hiebert *et al.*, 1996: 17), within a learning community, is therefore a factor that can be transferred to the workplace setting. This aspect needs to be fostered with activities such as the personal journal. The

community of practice exists and could be the added element needed to ensure and maintain the 'readiness' of learners back in the workplace. In the investigation, the larger community of practice of native English speakers also became a reference for non-training room critical evaluation for one participant: 'In July I spoke with English people in a bed and breakfast and felt more confident and able to adapt' (questionnaire 2, after transfer task).

## **Conclusion and Improvement**

The use of personal journals in the training room helps learners and trainers to structure and personalise what they learn, without sacrificing a planned syllabus. It enables learners to fix and prepare individual objectives. This step allows for a learner-centred thread within the course structure. Although guided, the personal journal offers learners the freedom to take control of a personal discourse that is context-driven and focused on the end of the training session and the return to the workplace. There is perhaps a need for more sharing in the exercise than was achieved on the target session. This was stated by one of the focus session participants: 'we should share our information at the end of the four days'.

Such sharing could further heighten the sense of community among the learners and provide them with a wider variety of examples to consider their own communication and learning, thus heightening the critical reflection that was fostered by the journal work. The journal would seem therefore to be a means of giving shape to learner motivation and learner self-appraisal. It also serves to nurture an analytic and strategic approach to future communication situations. It offers a tool for learners to evaluate their behaviour in the workplace and it gives them a forum in which to discuss this. Several participants clearly stated changes in communication behaviour and the personal journal at least contributed to a heightened awareness of this by crystallising the act of communicating at work into an evaluated and distributed report on the experience itself.

Blurring the lines between the individual learners, the learning, the workplace and the trainer enables the learner to be an agent of his/her learning. Negotiating this role allocation is aided by the use of the personal journal, which becomes the link between the training course syllabus, the learner, the trainer and the learner's individual work context. As a tool, it also leads to the possibility for increased collaboration between learners beyond the training room. To take full advantage of the personal journal, it deserves to be firmly cemented into the training course structure, to provide the foundation for learner-centred training, with the learner as agent and the objective being that of a change of behaviour back in the workplace.

## **Correspondence**

Any correspondence should be directed to Mr Brian Chaloner, AirBusiness Academy, 19 avenue Léonard de Vinci, 31700 Blagnac, France (brian.chaloner@airbusiness-academy.com).

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## Appendix

### Personal Journal (layout altered from the original, for reproduction purposes here)

NAME:

Personal Journal for the Course  
**Effective Communication**  
Using English in Airbus

AIM:

This document is a tool that will enable you to identify what you can do to continue improving your communication skills when you are back at work.

This journal is for your personal use. Some pages will be collected by your tutor. The rest of the journal can be completely personal or, if you want to, you can give a copy to your tutor.

All information contained in the journal will remain strictly confidential

#### DAY 1: THE STARTING POINT COMMUNICATION EXAMPLE

Use the questions below to indicate what key difficulties you encountered in this exercise

- (1) How did you feel about the type of communication that took place (e.g. spoken vs written English, formal presentation or casual conversation)?
- (2) How would you describe your contribution to the communication (taking turns, making links between the various subjects, maintaining and pursuing themes and topics)?
- (3) How did you manage the tone of the communication and the relationships between the people who were communicating (politeness, offers, requests, suggestions...)?
- (4) How could you have been better prepared or have planned ahead for this type of communication? (vocabulary, context, types of language structures...)
- (5) Were you able to use your current knowledge of the English language in order to communicate?
- (6) What risks did you take in this communication example? What difficulties do you think were caused by misunderstandings (cultural, meaning...)

Draw a picture, graph or diagram to illustrate your progress through Day 1. When you have finished, do the same to indicate where you think you will be at the end of Day 4. If you prefer, you can describe your progress using words. You might find it useful to consider some of the areas mentioned in the questions at the start of this Journal.



## DAY 2

## OBJECTIVES

There were 3 main objectives in Day 2

- Improve presentation skills
- Improve negotiation technique
- Create awareness of how cultural difference affects communication

How would you describe your progress on each of the three objectives?

- (1) How have your presentation skills changed?
- (2) How has your negotiation technique changed?
- (3) In what way(s) do you feel more aware of how cultural difference affects communication?

## DAY 3 &amp; THE FUTURE

What did the personalised scenario teach you about how you communicate?

What obstacles (if any) are you likely to encounter back at work that might prevent you from using what you have learnt on this course?

Reread what you wrote in this journal for Day 1. What changes can you see/feel in how you communicate?

## PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

NB: THIS SECTION WILL BE PHOTOCOPIED BY YOUR TRAINER

Choose 1 real life communication task that you will encounter in the near future, and that you think you can now improve because of what you have learnt during this course.

Describe it

When will the task take place?

How will you change your performance to improve how you communicate in the task. You can use the guidelines below to help you.

## GUIDELINES

Think about:

- (1) The type of communication (e.g. spoken vs written English, formal presentation or casual conversation)
- (2) How you expect to contribute to the communication (taking turns, making links between the various subjects, maintaining and pursuing themes and topics)?

- (3) How you will manage the tone of the communication and the relationships between the people who were communicating (politeness, offers, requests, suggestions, ...)
- (4) How you will prepare yourself for this type of communication (vocabulary, context, types of language structures ...)
- (5) What you already know that will help you to communicate?
- (6) What risks there are that the communication will break down and how you can prepare against these (cultural background, clarity, meaning ...)

What, in your opinion, would be the best way to measure whether you are successful or not in improving your performance?

#### THE NEXT STEP ...

You will now be asked to carry out the task with the improvements and to report back to at least one of your colleagues and to the tutor on how well you perform the task.

You can present your results using the form on the next page as a guide.

#### OUTLINE FOR REPORTING DATA

- (1) The type of communication
- (2) Your contribution to the communication Your personal objectives
- (3) How you managed the tone of the communication and the relationships between the people who were communicating Criteria for defining success
- (4) How you prepared yourself for this type of communication
- (5) What you already knew that helped you to communicate?
- (6) What breakdowns in communication occurred and how did you manage them?

#### DAY 4

Now look at what you drew/wrote in this journal at the end of Day 1. How close are you to achieving the progress that you initially predicted?

Think about the experiences from the course that have most affected your ability to communicate. Note them down, so that you can remember them.

Thank you for your time, and good luck with the future!