

The Walkabout: A Cool Way to Take a Summer Training Break.

From: *The Ten-Minute Trainer*.

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You've got a long summer of teaching or training ahead of you. You know how difficult it is for your learners (and for you!) to stay indoors while sunshine, blue sky, and fresh air beckon just a window away. Yet you have an intense amount of information to cover and can't extend break times to allow learners to take advantage of the bright summer days. So you decide to experiment with a Walkabout, an instructional strategy which will give your learners a little exercise and fresh air while reviewing newly-learned material.

What Is It?

Based loosely on the idea of an ancient aboriginal "walkabout" in the Australian desert, a Walkabout is simply a way to get learners walking while talking about material they have just learned.

The idea for the activity came from learning expert Diane Cheatwood, member of the Board of Directors for Teaching for a Change, Inc., a conference-planning organization located in Denver, CO (log onto <http://www.teachingforachange.com/> for information about their educational and training conferences). Diane first used the idea as an "action plan" closing activity in which learners "walked about the classroom, while talking about how they planned to use what they learned."

What Does It Do?

By participating in a Walkabout, learners can:

- * **Take a topic-related break** that includes exercise plus a review of material already learned.
- * **Ask topic-related questions** of each other as they walk.
- * **Get some fresh air and exercise** while reviewing course material.
- * **Make action plans** (how they plan to use the material learned) and share them with each other as part of a closing activity.
- * **Share best practices** with each other as they move.
- * **Stay interested, motivated and awake** during long training sessions.

Room Set-Up and Materials Needed:

If done indoors, there needs to be enough space for the group to walk around the furniture. If done outside, there needs to be space and a place to walk (parking lots will do as will lawns, sidewalks, or any open area). Otherwise, no special set-up or materials are necessary.



Activity Instructions

1. Direct learners to form standing pairs (triads or four-somes are okay too - make sure no one is left out).
2. Tell them they are going to do a Walkabout where they walk about the room (or outside). On the first half of their journey, one person talks and the other listens. On the second half of the journey, the listener becomes the talker.
3. Let your learners know the length of time they have to do the Walkabout (from 3 - 5 minutes is usually enough time, but if you want the break to be longer, 10 minutes will do).
4. Tell them what they will be talking about as they do the Walkabout (examples: how to use what they've learned; the most important facts they remember from the material; questions they have; best practices they use pertaining to the

topic; a topic-related problem they want help with; etc.).

5. As they do the Walkabout, you walk and observe, or you can join in and listen to a few of the walking discussions. Be sure to get some fresh air yourself!

6. Process the activity when done by asking the whole group what was the most valuable “take-away” from the activity (some will say the exercise, others will say the chance to talk over the material learned).

Activity Variations

1. Inside, learners can walk from one side of the room to the other and back. Or they can walk in a circle around the room until they reach their starting place.

2. Outside, learners can walk around the building, or to a designated location (tree, lawn, flowerbed) and back.

3. Learners can stretch while they walk. If outside, they can pause and breathe deeply for a few seconds, enjoying the fresh air.

4. Learners can do half of the Walkabout with their partners and then join up with another

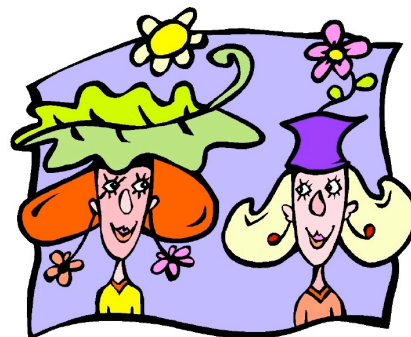
Walkabout pair to collaborate on ideas already shared.

5. Learners can write “Walkabout Reflections” (what they learned from the activity) after they return to the room.

6. Learners can repeat the Walkabout during the training, deciding for themselves where to walk, the topic each time they walk, and what the results should be.

Final Thoughts

Standing, moving, walking, talking, sunshine, fresh air, blue sky - all these can be part of a learning experience. You don't have to sacrifice content to include walking, talking, and fresh air! The Walkabout is one way to bring the summer into your training - and to keep yourself and your learners awake, alert, and happy all the while.



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“*The Walkabout*” is an excerpt from Sharon Bowman’s newest book *The Ten-Minute Trainer! 129 Ways to Teach it Quick and Make It Stick*, to be published by Jossey-Bass/Pfeiffer in 2005, and printed with permission. Please cite the source when downloading this material. You can contact www.Bowperson.com for more information about *The Ten-Minute Trainer*. Read on for a brief description:



Got a minute? Choose from over dozens of **60-second activities** to help your learners review, repeat, and remember. Or select a number of high-energy, **5 - 10 minute activities** to move information into long-term memory. Use the **Power Hour** templates with your own training topics. And best of all, discover the most useful training tool around to speed up both design and delivery – **The Training Compass**. The bottom line?

**Create a lot of learning
in a little time!**

The Ten-Minute Trainer is a “grab-it-and-go” book – with loads of back-pocket ideas you can use immediately with little or no preparation. To be notified when the book is published, send your contact information to: Sharon@Bowperson.com. Be sure to log onto www.Bowperson.com for selected excerpts of *The Ten-Minute Trainer*.

Author and traveling teacher Sharon Bowman helps educators and business people “teach it quick and make it stick,” - fine-tuning their information-delivery skills and turning their passive listeners into active learners.

Over 40,000 copies of Sharon’s 6 popular teaching, training, and motivation books are now in print. Titles include: “*Preventing Death by Lecture*,” “*Presenting with Pizzazz*,” “*How To Give It So They Get It*,” and “*Shake, Rattle, and Roll*.”

For more information about Sharon Bowman and her books and training, log onto www.Bowperson.com, or email her at SBowperson@aol.com.

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