

The Use of Narrative Technique during Evaluation at a Collaborative Centre

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Background

- Vodacom has been using Collaborative Centres for 8 years
- Positive results
- Some delegates feel that some facilitators are insensitive to their specific situation
- Some delegates feel that facilitators are inflexible
- Vodacom would like to optimise the learning process



Objective of the “Experiment”

To investigate the difference in experience for the Centre delegate between using narrative technique and using traditional Collaborative Centre technique

What is a Collaborative Development Centre?

A Development Centre where the delegate evaluates, with the assistance of a facilitator, own behaviour during a simulation. This happens directly after each simulation so that the delegate can apply learnings during the next simulation. Development needs are also jointly established and they agree on a Development Plan.



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Difference between a traditional Development Centre and a Collaborative Development Centre

- Process Differences
- Principle Differences

Difference between a traditional Development Centre and a Collaborative Development Centre (Continue)

Traditional Development Centres

Process:

- The delegate completes the simulations
- The assessors observe, note, classify and assess behaviour
- Qualified person writes the Final Report



Difference between a traditional Development Centre and a Collaborative Development Centre (Continue)

Traditional Development Centres

Process (continue):

- Qualified person gives feedback to the delegate and the line-manager after the Centre
- The Development Plan is done by the delegate and experts in the organisation

Difference between a traditional Development Centre and a Collaborative Development Centre (Continue)

Traditional Development Centres

Principles:

- Accurate assessment very important
- Focus is on obtaining high quality behavioural information
- Assessors and delegates do not interact outside the simulations during the Centre



Difference between a traditional Development Centre and a Collaborative Development Centre (Continue)

Traditional Development Centres

Principles (continue):

- Delegates receive no feedback on behaviour during the Centre
- Doing – reflecting ratio is 90%:10%
- Amount and type of feedback given based on assessment of the delegate's ability to cope with it (*Scott Kerr*)



Difference between a traditional Development Centre and a Collaborative Development Centre (Continue)

Collaborative Development Centres

Process:

- Each Simulation is followed by immediate, comprehensive feedback and open discussion
- Helpful, objective, relevant comment provided by the facilitator
- Mutual agreement on rating for behaviour, based on “checklists”



Difference between a traditional Development Centre and a Collaborative Development Centre (continued”)

Collaborative Development Centres

Process (continued):

- The delegate writes own Final Report, with the assistance of the facilitator
- The delegate designs own Development Plan, with the assistance of the facilitator
- The delegate, with the assistance of a consultant, gives feedback to the line-manager
- Implementation of the delegates Development Plan is monitored

Difference between a traditional Development Centre and a Collaborative Development Centre (continued”)

Collaborative Development Centres

Principles:

- The delegate encouraged to experiment with new behaviour, styles, approaches
- The facilitator actively challenges and guides the delegate
- The emphasis is on learning from experience and feedback
- Concern for detail and accurate assessment is less



Difference between a traditional Development Centre and a Collaborative Development Centre (continued”)

Collaborative Development Centres

Principles (continue):

- Time spend in simulations (doing) versus time spend reflecting is 40%:60%
- The delegate is responsible for own development, the employer creates a conducive framework



Objectives of the Collaborative Centre at Vodacom

- To create an awareness of the competencies needed by a manager-leader at Vodacom
- To identify objectively a profile of leadership-management strengths for each potential or existing manager
- To generate individual commitment to, and involvement in the whole development process
- To create more buy-in from the delegate in terms of own development areas and actions
- To ensure that the development process is completely transparent
- To design a targeted development plan for each delegate



What is Narrative Technique?

- Narrative Therapy is a social constructionist model that proposes that problems are maintained through language-based belief systems.
- If you change your view of a problem, the problem in essence will also change

What is Narrative Technique (continued)?

- **Underlying assumptions of social constructionism:**
 - People participate in the construction of their reality
 - Construction takes place within a context that influences the individual
 - Construction is a constant activity
 - Common understanding is socially constructed and negotiated
 - The ways in which humans commonly understand the world are historically and culturally specific

What is Narrative Technique (continued)?

- **Within this constructionism**
 - Narrative Technique (NT) is context/situation sensitive
 - NT works with the individual's specific reality
 - NT provides a context for reflection
 - The narrative mode does not lead to certainties, but to varying perspectives

Narrative Themes

- Respectful, non-blaming approach
- Centres on the individual as the expert in own life
- Views problems as separate from people
- Assumes people have the competence to change
- There are many possible directions a conversation can take
- The therapist assists from a not-knowing, non-expert stance,



Key Concepts in NT

- **Problem-saturated stories**
- **Externalisation**
- **Unique outcomes**

Basic NT Techniques

- **Deconstructive Listening**
- **Deconstructive Questioning**

Differences between NT and Collaborative Centres (CC)

NT	CC
Focus initially on exploring behaviour independent of the delegate	Uses specific behavioural criteria in specific context
Focus on situation and impact of behaviour in context	Facilitator assists delegate to gain insight why a specific approach would be effective
Focus on exploring alternative outcomes	Delegate's behaviour must meet certain criteria
Aim is to co-create an alternative outcome and approach for the future	

“Experiment” Structure

Start with In-Basket

- **Divide evaluation session in half**
 - **First half of evaluation uses NT**
 - **Second half of evaluation session uses traditional CC technique**
- **Ask delegates for feedback on their experience of the two techniques**

Example: CC Observer Report Form

Information Gathering			Judgement		Empowering
Ask Info	Detail	Links	Good	Limited	
Ask info on what Gladys wants to study	Note own absence	Link to EE	Involve HR	Immediately decide to go ahead	Delegate to Maletsatsi to decide

NT Documentation Version 1

- **Ideal Scenario**
 - Why is it ideal?
 - What are the elements making it ideal?
- **Scenario 1**
- **Scenario 2**
- **Scenario 3**



Delegate evaluates own behaviour



NT Documentation Version 1 Problems Experienced

- **Evaluation time tripled compared to using CC technique**
- **Fatigue**



NT Documentation Version 2

- **Ideal Scenario**

- **Why is it ideal?**
- **What are the elements making it ideal?**

Delegate evaluates own behaviour

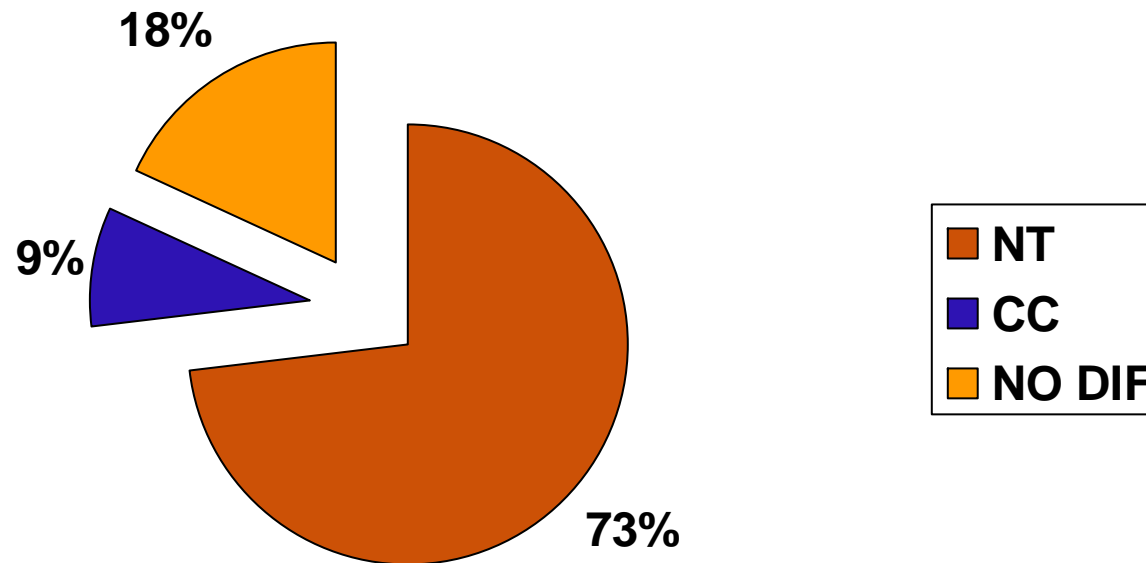
NT Documentation Version 2 Problems Experienced

- **Evaluation time double compared to using the CC technique**
- **Fatigue**



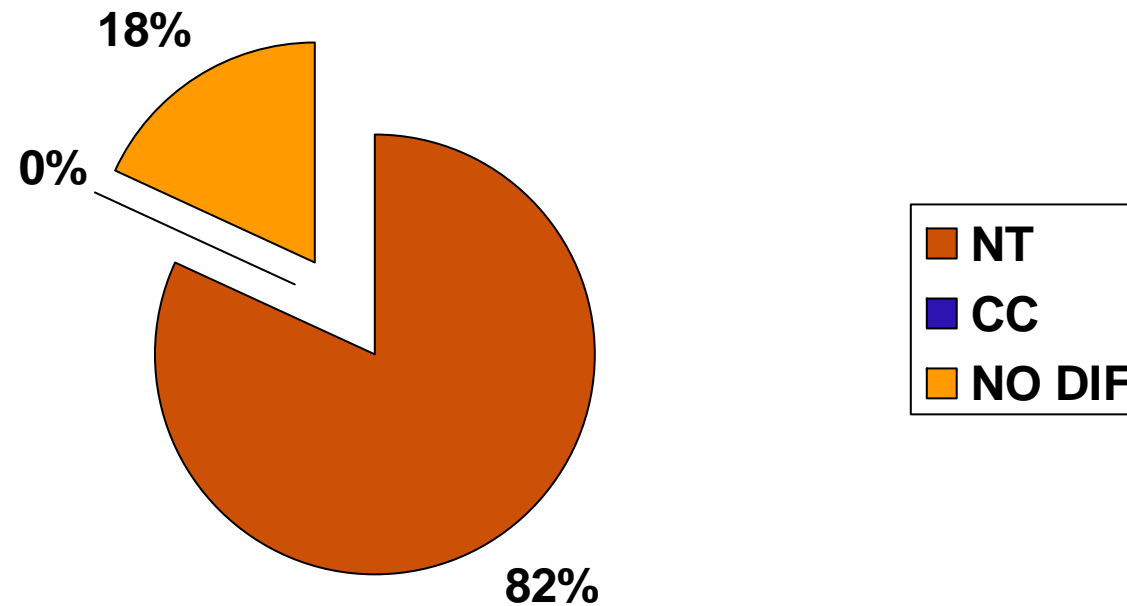
Delegate Feedback – Question 1

When was the link to your current work environment more evident?



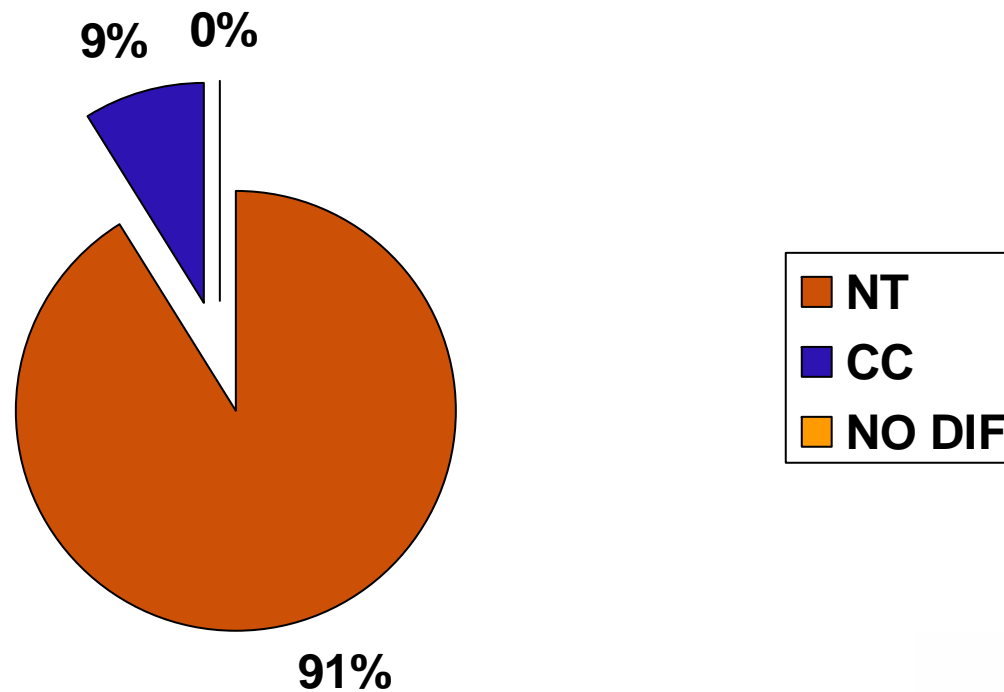
Delegate Feedback – Question 2

When was the facilitator more practical?



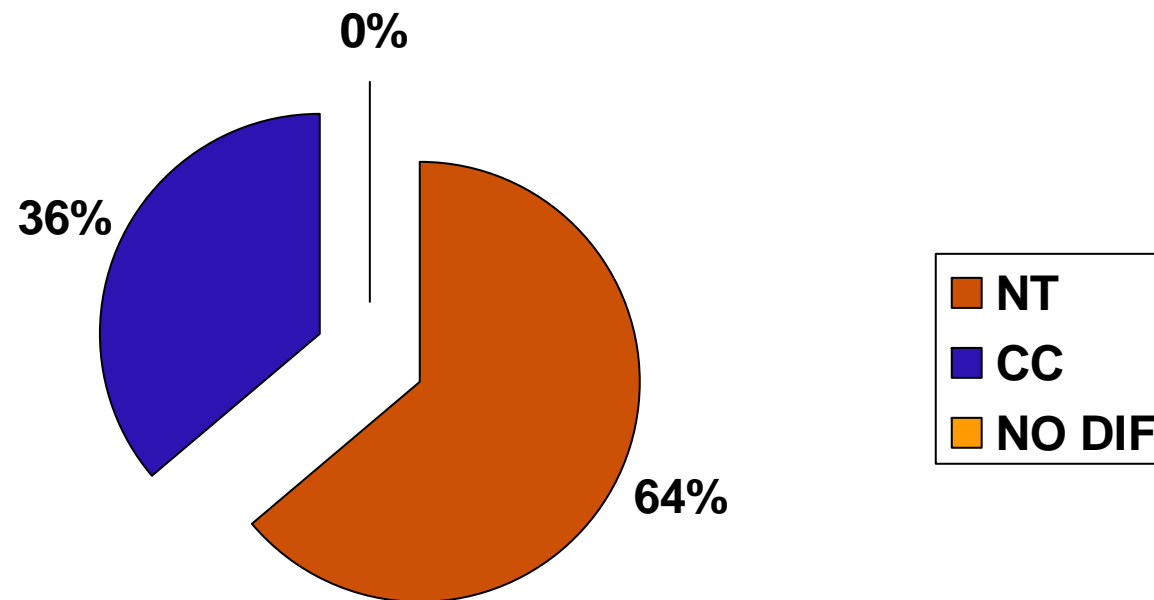
Delegate Feedback – Question 3

When did you learn the most?



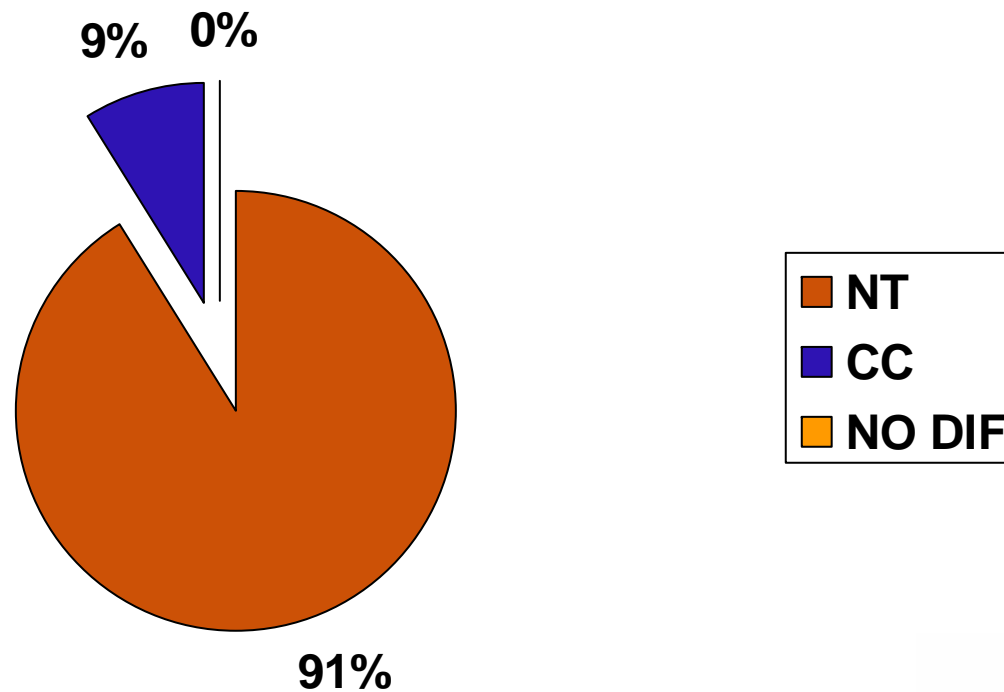
Delegate Feedback – Question 4

When did you see alternative approaches to your own?



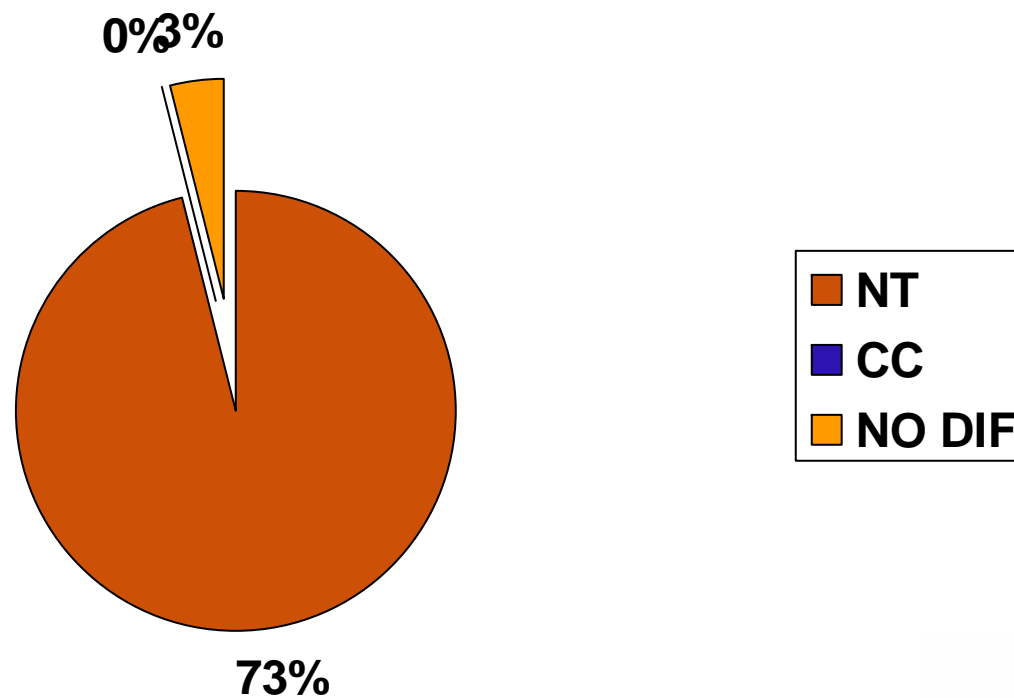
Delegate Feedback – Question 5

When did you understand the exercise the best?



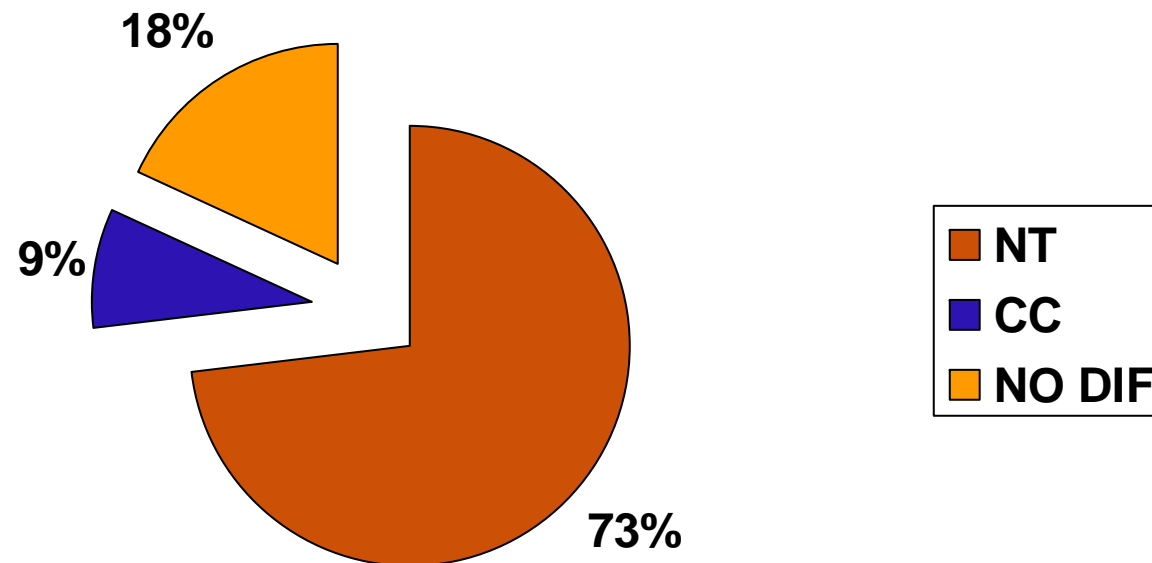
Delegate Feedback – Question 6

When did you feel the discussion was the most fair?



Delegate Feedback – Question 7

When did you gain more insight into your own behaviour's consequences?



Qualitative Delegate Feedback

- **Comments on CC:**

- Feels like a quiz; quick to score
- Complicated – preset guidelines does not allow for flexibility
- Detached – no option for discussion
- Was not a bad concept, but preferred other technique
- Highlighted the speed and effectiveness in addressing all issues



– More descriptive, highlighting certain problems



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Qualitative Delegate Feedback

- **Comments on NT:**

- More open to different approaches to same outcome
- Prompted more discussion
- Allowed for personal thoughts/style
- Easy to understand measures
- Gave specific structure of how it should be done and options
- Quite vague



Conclusions

- Initial delegate response seems to favour NT
- However results so far on a small sample

Challenges to overcome

- Designing a more effective Documentation Format
- Time frames during the Centre
- Facilitator competence to use NT

Road Ahead

- Initial positive delegate response warrants further exploration of using NT during Centres
- Continue refining using NT during the Centre process
- Obtain more delegate feedback
- Obtain facilitator feedback
- Compare Centre ratings



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QUESTIONS?

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