

SECTION ONE

What is training?

A training program can serve a range of diverse purposes, and organizations initiate training programs for many different reasons. In broadcasting one of the strongest motives is the need to respond to challenges presented by new technologies. As our technology changes at an increasingly rapid pace, it requires new skills. The resulting changes in job descriptions frequently blur boundaries between previously distinct jobs, producing greater demands for a multi-skilled staff. In any event, many persons will need to be trained in the new skills required by technology changes, and some of that retraining will be conducted within their organizations.

Improving efficiency and performance to ensure that the organization is capable of responding to the challenges of its competitors will sometimes require a very different kind of training program. But in striving for enhanced efficiency and levels of performance, training should also be seen as a part of individual professional development. An organization can increase the likelihood that it will keep valued employees if it demonstrates that it is willing to invest in their professional development, by helping them gain new skills and expertise through organizational support for their training.

The symptoms of a lack of proper training are many. The most self-evident are haphazard work, delays and malfunctions because of errors or mistakes, performance and quality standards not met, excessive wear of equipment, and failures to follow established rules and procedures. Other more subtle signs include a lack of interest in work, untidy work, lack of a sense of responsibility, absenteeism, and poor communication. Effective training imparts not only a way of doing but also a way of thinking. A well trained person when faced with a problem should be able to respond quickly and wisely. Appropriate training should lead to a better and happier person on the job, an individual who is able to function as part of the organization's team.

Where an organization has dispersed operations, perhaps with production units located in several different locations, a central training program can even help to promote a sense of "esprit de corps" throughout the organization. Employees who attend training programs will have met people working for other units and made contacts that can be maintained as part of an enriched working environment. Common working practices among employees also ensures that they can work together more efficiently and effectively. Moreover, when demands at one location require personnel to move temporarily to another job site, the time it takes to

assimilate them into operations at the new location will be significantly reduced if they have had previous training.

In all cases a training program needs to match the broader goals of the organization. The costs of providing training need to be compared to the benefits it brings. Unless the outcomes of the training move the organization forward in ways that match its larger organizational plan the costs will outweigh the benefits. Therefore, training programs need to be developed as an integral part of a broader organizational strategy.

What trainers do

It may not be obvious what trainers are expected to do in connection with their daily work. Of course they are involved with instruction in the training room, but it is important to recognize that they must assume a number of additional entirely different roles. Although the main concern might be conducting training activities, there is actually much more work to be done “behind the scenes.” Most of this occurs prior to entering the training room or after trainees have gone back to their regular jobs. The following pages will describe many of these tasks, but some aspects of trainers’ duties are beyond the scope of this basic reference guide. For example, we will not get into detailed description of the techniques of using various types of training aids, nor will we get into a full discussion of instructional design. These complex topics require additional, more advanced preparation than we can offer here.

Generally, we can identify five separate categories of responsibility. These tend to occur in a sequence and tend to be repeated again and again in the way training is usually carried out in broadcast organizations. Trainers must be capable of managing all five, although the precise demands in each of these areas depend on the policies and operational practices of the organization to which trainers are attached. For instance, some organizations have planning departments that assume certain training roles, notably ones involving needs assessment and management consultation. Needless to say, where planning departments have been assigned these roles, it is important that there be close coordination between the planning and training departments.

The starting point of training is usually a training needs assessment. In this stage, the trainer is expected to be able to properly identify and determine training requirements. This exercise usually must include current deficiencies and the projection of future requirements. In this process the trainer must also be able to lay out specific training and development objectives. These objectives must be directed toward the requirements of the organization and must be appropriate for the capabilities of staff members who will receive training. Often in needs analysis

the trainer must assist in judging staff members' readiness for training and in selecting trainees from among a pool of persons nominated by their supervisors.

Second, the trainer is required to design courses and programs—including evaluation schemes—according to the most appropriate modes and media (i.e., methods and means). This is done by taking into account the specific subject matter, participants, and trainers. Included in this category of responsibility are tasks such as sequencing of instruction, preparation of all required course materials such as handouts, OHP transparencies or PowerPoint® presentations, and planning of course activities. In designing practical exercises, the trainer must make arrangements to obtain all resources required including equipment, materials, and support staff.

Third, naturally, the trainer must be prepared to conduct training in courses. This obligation typically includes presentation of instruction, management of practical sessions, leading discussions, coordinating trainee evaluation and feedback, and oversight of incidental matters such as refreshments, parking, security, accommodations, and the like. Trainers need to be proficient in the use of training aids and materials. Needless to say, trainers must be skillful communicators, able to present complicated ideas in an understandable and easily understood fashion.

Fourth, the end of the activity produces responsibilities in training evaluation and analysis. This means collecting from the trainees their appraisal of the training, both its adequacy and its results. Also required is a systematic assessment of the performance of trainees, in order to refine and improve the results obtained in future offerings of the training program.

Fifth, trainers should be expected to participate in consulting with management on overall training requirements as well as particular organizational deficiencies that training might be able to address. Today, organizations' view of training has evolved into a more complete view of staff members. Instead of considering each person as an individual cog in the overall mechanism of the organization, enterprises now recognize staff as the most important of its assets. Any organization can acquire equipment and facilities—given the right amount of funding—but its human resources are priceless. For most broadcasting organizations, replacing staff members with individuals having comparable experience and abilities would be extremely difficult. Consequently, managers generally work hard to retain their staff and to develop them in ways that make them more useful and productive, while also attending to individual staff members' personal needs. Clearly, to satisfy this objective, trainers must be made a part of the management team. When this is done, the trainer's role is enlarged to what is commonly termed a human resource manager.

The broad responsibilities that are assigned to trainers in the modern

organization mean that they must exhibit greater levels of skill and professionalism than previously. As before, trainers must have communication and instructional abilities and a knack for explaining. But today trainers must also play significant roles as managers, providing problem-solving, counseling, and leadership functions to their organizations. On top of this, trainers must keep abreast of the state of the art in training and human resource development—a field that is constantly evolving and changing. The human qualities of leadership expected of trainers also has grown; today trainers are expected to exemplify the highest standards of professionalism. Collectively these demands represent a very tall order for persons who take up training responsibilities, but this is offset by the knowledge that the influence of trainers on their organizations has never been greater. Whether it is recognized or not, most organizations' futures depends on their human resources (or training) departments and on the effectiveness and productivity of trainers who work in them.



Training compared to education

This manual is based on two fundamental beliefs about training that have shaped our approach and the suggestions we make.

Training is different from education

Clearly there are overlaps, and the boundary between the two can sometimes be blurred but Milano & Ullius (1998, p.4) summarized the distinction very well when they wrote that: “Education focuses on *learning about*; training focuses on *learning how*.”

Education has broader goals than training and the material covered is intended to be used in many different contexts. This distinction is clear if we contrast broadcast education with broadcast training. In addition to including courses to learn skills in such areas as production or management a university's undergraduate curriculum in broadcasting will also include courses in topics such as the history of broadcasting, its social purpose, the legal and regulatory frameworks that shape its performance, and the ways its output has been critiqued. The graduates of that program will move on to many different occupations and they will use what they have learned in a variety of ways.

While training may, of necessity, occasionally touch on these more inclusive areas of knowledge they will be less central to the activity. Fundamentally, training helps someone do something better and the skills it develops are usually specific to a particular task. Therefore, the objectives in training are more specific than those in education. In training it is usually easier to state the goals in a clear and ultimately measurable form because the expected outcome is more easily defined. In education the objectives are less specific and thus determining whether or not those goals have been achieved becomes much more challenging.

Because of the difference in aims between training and education, the strategies and techniques each uses in instruction is different. A common problem for trainers is to “unlearn” teaching methods they have acquired without thinking during their schooling years. Breaking habits of instruction that teachers use can be the first step toward becoming a highly effective trainer.

Adults learn differently from children

This is the second fundamental belief about training that has shaped our approach to this manual. At its core is the recognition that to be successful adult training must show that it values the experiences adult learners bring to the training situation and build on those experiences. Ideally, a visitor happening upon a training session should find it difficult to identify immediately who is the trainer and who are the trainees. The session should be more of a dialog among all involved.

Clearly, there will be times during almost any training program when the role of trainer and trainee is well defined. For example, it is sometimes very appropriate for the trainer to be at the front of the room facing in one direction with the trainees sitting facing him or her in the familiar lecture format. The problems arise if this is the only format. In our teaching we all tend to teach using the techniques that we encountered as students. If those experiences were limited to sitting neatly in rows and trying to remember as much as possible of what the teacher said we may try to adopt the same approach in our training. Many would question how successful this approach is even with children, but it will certainly be less successful with adult learners.

While we would never suggest that even the youngest child brings no prior experiences to the classroom it is obvious that adults will bring more. Training programs need to build on those experiences and incorporate them into both the initial design and the final presentation. To do otherwise is to miss a wonderful opportunity. In planning your training programs avoid only asking yourself what they need to know. Also consider what they already know and find ways to incorporate that into the sessions. Even the conventional lecture format can be converted into much more of a dialog. By doing this you will also demonstrate to

the trainees that you respect them and value the experiences they bring to each training session. Since, as adults, we are all largely a product of our prior experiences your recognition of their worth is one of the ways to increase motivation among adult learners. This idea will be developed more fully in section six of this manual along with other suggestions to increase motivation.

Three principles that guide our approach to training

From these two fundamental beliefs:

- (1) that training is different from education, and
- (2) that adults learn differently from children, three principles emerge that have guided the approach to training we have adopted in this manual.
 - (1) We need a learner centered approach because:
 - (a) The trainees are adults,
 - (b) Recognizing that they are adults improves learner motivation, and
 - (c) It enhances the potential of achieving long-term gains from training.
 - (2) It is crucial to recognize the distinction between adult training and our prior learning experiences in school as children and adolescents.
 - (3) Planning training is a circular rather than a linear process. It includes the potential for an unlimited number of revisions based on feedback from prior presentations.

A learner centered approach

The shift to a learner centered approach involves several changes from the more traditional teacher centered model with which many of us are more familiar from our school days. First, the role of the trainer changes from being the source of all knowledge for the trainees. Instead, the trainer is seen more as a facilitator or guide to the learning process. As their guide you create opportunities for learning to occur. Although the term “empowerment” has been so overused recently as to render it almost meaningless, you are to a very real extent empowering the learner. Birchall and Smith (1999, p. 357) make the following observations about the assumptions behind the learner centered approach.

Generally, adult learners are now assumed to learn most effectively when:

- Use is made of ‘authentic’ learning tasks seen as meaningful by the learner.
- Use is made of discovery learning methods where the learner constructs his or her own understanding, rather than instruction by the teacher . . .
- There is an emphasis on learning how to solve problems rather than learning facts.
- There is support for collaborative learning and problem solving.

Evident in these four assumptions is the idea that the role of the learner also changes. Instead of passively absorbing material the learners now play a much more active role, taking responsibility for their own learning.

Adult training is different

The distinction between learning in children and adults is so important that experts have assigned them different names. Pedagogy is the word used to describe learning by (and instruction of) children. “Ped” is taken from the Greek word for child and “gogy” is taken from the Greek word for learning, hence pedagogy means the art and science of teaching children. Unfortunately, many people use the term pedagogy more generically, denoting any kind of instruction. It is more accurate to use the word to mean instruction only of youngsters. Adult learning has a different name, andragogy—“andra” from the Greek word referring to man.

Pedagogy is biased toward education rather than training and is associated mainly with the development of knowledge on topics where no previous learning exists. When a baby is born, its brain is a “blank slate” and all of the child’s learning is new. Gradually, the youngster grows into adulthood and the process of learning changes from one of new learning to learning that is incorporated into an increasingly complex bank of knowledge. Pedagogy has as its goal the shaping and formation of a well-adapted human being. Adults, of course, are already fully developed human beings and therefore their learning needs are more about adaptation and restructuring of knowledge.

Andragogy takes into account the learning needs of adults in a number of different ways. The most important concern is that by the time people reach adulthood, they have accumulated a wealth of experience and knowledge. Andragogy stresses the importance of building on the foundation of previous learning gained through life experience. Another issue is that adults neither need nor will they readily accept learning imposed on them by other persons; but adult learners will act maturely and responsibly as partners with their instructors in the learning process, if the need and benefits of learning are clearly spelled out. Andragogy therefore emphasizes the participation of learners in setting instructional objectives and defining their own learning needs. Other aspects that distinguish adult learning from pedagogy include the greater need among adults for applied learning and for immediately useable knowledge.

Pedagogy’s perspective is centered on the teacher, because the child learner is a highly dependent being and is expected merely to follow the dictates of the instructor. Andragogy, on the other hand must be centered on learners because they are expected to participate in the definition of their own individual needs and objectives. Pedagogy attempts to mould children to make them into socially adapted adults and therefore learning must follow a somewhat rigid, hierarchically structured pre-determined syllabus. This is contrast to andragogy that aims to match

learning to the individual requirements of each person and so must remain flexible and adaptable according to their needs.

Comparing children and adults, Hart (1991, p. 15) includes the following in a list contrasting the differences between children and adults as learners. During our time in school as children and adolescents we rely on others to decide what we will learn. Children “rely on others to decide what is important to be learned.” Adults “decide for themselves what is important.” Children “accept the information being presented at face value” while adults “need to validate the information based on their beliefs and experiences.” Children “expect that what they are learning will be useful in their long-term future.” Adults “expect that what they are learning is immediately useful.” Finally, at least in our abbreviated list, children “have little ability to serve as a knowledgeable resource to the teacher or fellow classmates.” By sharp contrast, in the adult training situation the trainees “have significant ability to serve as a knowledgeable resource to the facilitator and group members.”

Again, evident in the final quotation from Hart’s list is the idea of a change of roles for both the trainer and the trainees. The “teacher” becomes a “facilitator” and the child with his or her “fellow classmates” becomes a member of a group. Training programs designed for adults must take all of these differences into account if they are to be successful. A training program that simply tells the participants that this is what they must learn and fails to involve them actively in the learning process is failing to acknowledge that adults learn differently. Achieving this kind of involvement does not require complex structures. Something as simple as building into the design of the training program several points where decisions can be taken either individually or collectively about where the emphases should be placed in covering the material, and perhaps inviting suggestions for additions, would be a good starting point.

This idea of a training program as something that is not fixed in stone, but rather capable of changing and improving brings us to the last of the three principles that guided us in the approach we have taken to adult training in this manual. It refers to the need for, and importance of evaluation and feedback.

Planning training is a circular rather than a linear process

One textbook on the design of training programs suggests that there are five stages (Milano & Ullius, 1998, pp. 17-20). Summarizing their ideas, the sequence is:

- (a) Set the “goals and objectives” based on an earlier needs assessment
- (b) Identify the “key topics” that need to be covered
- (c) Select the “training flow”—that is, the optimum sequence to present the topics that you think will be most successful.
- (d) Design the “training materials” to be used
- (e) Create a strategy for evaluation and design the “evaluation tools.”

It is evaluation, the final part of the sequence, that concerns us here. Those who design training programs know that their task is never over. Each presentation of the program provides an opportunity to collect feedback from the participants that can be used to improve future presentations. But evaluation of the program need not be limited to those who have participated in it. For example, you might also want to investigate whether what they learned really matched the requirements of the units from which they came? What had happened to the trainees six months, or a year, after they returned?

The topic of evaluation will be covered in section seven of this handbook. The remaining four stages, and several other topics will also be covered. But in the next section we begin with an explanation of why the planning process should begin with a careful assessment of what training is needed.

References

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