How to Make Training Sessions More Effective

Mohamad Azmi Nias Ahmad
Nias Ahmad Abdul Ghani

ABSTRACT

Effective training is not something that could be easily achieved. It requires combination of many elements, such as well-delivered lecture, participation from trainee, sharing of ideas between trainers and trainees, and trainers' ability to retain the subject matter. This paper presents discussions and recommendations that will assist trainers in making their training sessions effective.

Introduction

According to Longman Dictionary of contemporary English, training is defined as the process of teaching or being taught the skills for a particular job or activity. Scholars believe that good teaching cannot be defined because the criteria differ for every instructional situation and every teacher (Perrott 1982). Normally, effective training requires combination of many elements, such as well-delivered lecture, participation from trainees, sharing of ideas between trainers and trainees, and trainers' ability to retain the subject matter. Trainer themselves should be competent to perform their duties (Mohamad Azmi Nias Ahmad 2004). To be competent, trainers should learn their trainees' needs and behavior. Several studies (Mohd Azhar 1999) found that effective teaching should stimulate students' curiosity and active learning, encourages students' analytical logical and creative thinking, and increase both their desire and capacity for future learning.

Training is assumed to be beneficial to the

129

organisation because it is crucial to the organisational success. On the other hand, trainers will need to defend their credibility by providing justifications that are more convincing and deliver more measurable results. The world is rapidly changing. As a result, the role and form of training as a business function will need to change. The time has come for trainers to understand the strategic business issues and to see themselves as part of the business solutions. Trainers must focus on gearing their training towards outcomes that organisational need.

Techniques for Effective Training

Multiple training objectives may be appropriate to promote active learning (Becker and Watts 1996; Bonner 1999; Ahmad Daud Marsam 2000). Training objectives vary according to the conditional needs of the trainees. Thus, methods chosen are primarily based on the objectives set (Bonner 1999). To choose among many training methods, a trainer needs to consider, trainees' preferred teaching method, surrounding, availability of technology, trainees' learning style and motivation (Cottell and Millis 1993).

Though the above statement mentioned that the trainer should consider trainees' preferred teaching method, surrounding, availability of technology, students' learning style and motivation, little attention has been given to explore the cause of these aspects. This paper discusses various ways to increase the effectiveness of classroom training. In obtaining the information for the paper, secondary data were utilised from the published literatures, journals and articles.

Use a Variety of Media

Trainer can use different media such as books, posters, handouts and slide presentation to disseminate the knowledge in training. By showing to the trainees, subject

matters from different medias, they can understand people's perception on the topic and the influence of the media on people's mind. It can show the actual facts and results. Indirectly, the trainer creatively stimulates trainees' curiosity and active learning, encourages studens' analytical logical and creative thinking, and increases both their desire and capacity for future learning.

Figure 1 explains the process of selecting the appropriate medium for training. The process begins with trainer should know their training objectives. First, the objectives should be analysed. Then audience should be identified and analysed. Next, the trainer should understand the environment in which the training will be conducted. At this point, the trainer will know which media to use and also know any training limitations such as the size of classroom and teaching aids in that particular training environment. To be well prepared, the trainer should rehearse and learn to use any teaching aids available. After revising all the training needs and requirements, the trainer can conduct the training confidently and smoothly without any interruption.
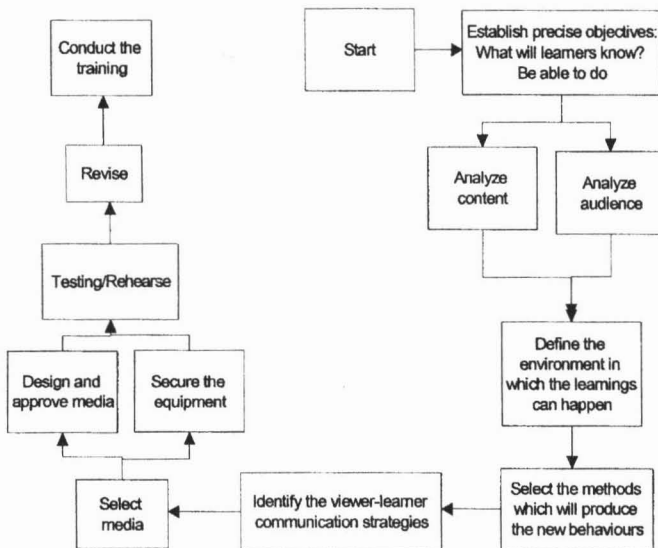

Figure 1: Selecting a Medium for Training
(Source: Laird 1985)

Use Interesting Graphic Presentations

Giving explanation appears to be much more difficult than making factual report. However, the trainer might use visual aids to assist them in explaining their points. If the trainer uses media such as posters, handouts or slide presentation, the text should be concised. Do not cut and paste from article into one poster, handout or slide. For example, the ideal number of words to be included in one slide is 6 x 6 or six words per line, and six lines per slide. The trainer could use graphs, images, videos or symbols to disseminate message more effectively as illustrated in Figure 2 below.
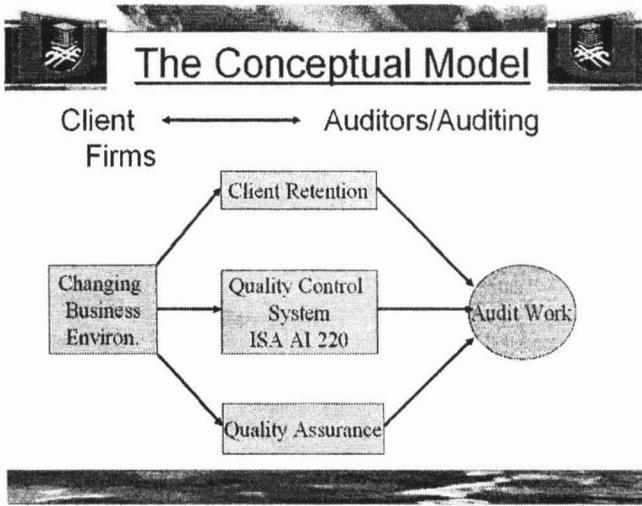

Figure 2: Graphic Presentation of a Conceptual Model

Slide presentations should be kept simple, easy to read, and appropriate for the content. Use appropriate fonts, font color, font sizes and background color. The suggested background colour is white, light blue or light yellow with black or dark blue font color. Trainer should choose attractive colours that make the slide easy to read. For example, to make materials interesting, trainer can use graphics as show in Figure 2.

Another graphic presentation that can be used is shown in Figure 3.

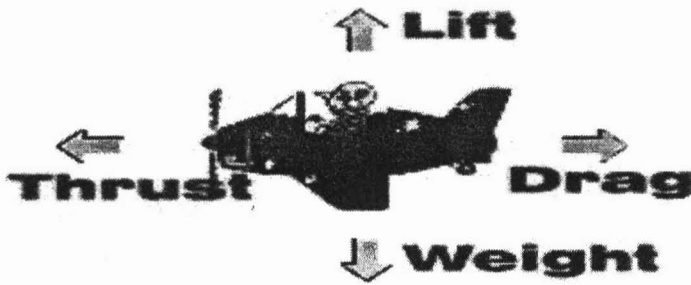132

⬆ Lift

⬅ Thrust **➡ Drag**

⬇ Weight

Figure 3 : Graphic Presentation to Explain the Theory of Flight

Trainer can also add humor into the materials to facilitate learning and make training session less boring as shown in Figure 4 below.

This Situation Lead to :

'Right' people choosing Non-accounting career and 'Wrong' people becoming accountant.

Figure 4: Humor Embedded in a slide

Use Multimedia Presentation

Multimedia is defined as the presentation of a computer application, usually interactive, that incorporates media elements such as text, graphics, video, animation, and sound on a computer (Mohamad Azmi Nias Ahmad 2003). Multimedia presentation will improve your presentation by grabbing all sense of your audience. With text, graphics, video, animation, and sound, the presenter

133

will be able to affect the emotions of his audience. Communication will also be concised.

Use Plenty of Gestures (Acting)

To make the presentations more effective, the trainer can act the facts while discussing the topic. However, the acts need to correspond with the words said and stressed the importance facts. For example, in cabin crew training, when trainer talks about disable or senior citizen passengers, they can act like those people. Most of the times, the trainees will laugh at the acting, but indirectly, trainees will learn the facts about these type of passengers and learn how to handle them.

Figure 5: Trainer is an award-winning actor

Use Appropriate Tone of Voice

Trainer should speak in different tone. This can make the message delivered more effective. For example, the trainer can stress the important points and soften the voice when necessary. Monotonous tone could result in the feeling of boredom among the trainees.

Maintaining Mood in Teaching

The ability to maintain mood in teaching should be practiced and developed. Trainer must internalize the natural mood in the topic taught in class and enjoy what they are doing in order to be creative in training. Sometimes, people perceived it as simple, but it is not, unless training is 'in' the trainer.

Use Simple and Creative Demonstration

The use of examples is basic to teaching and is commonly used in clarifying explanation (Perrott 1982). To be creative, trainer can use examples to help trainees to understand the new concepts they learn. As explained earlier, apart from using interesting graphic to explain the theory of flight, the trainer can use paper plane to explain the similar theory.
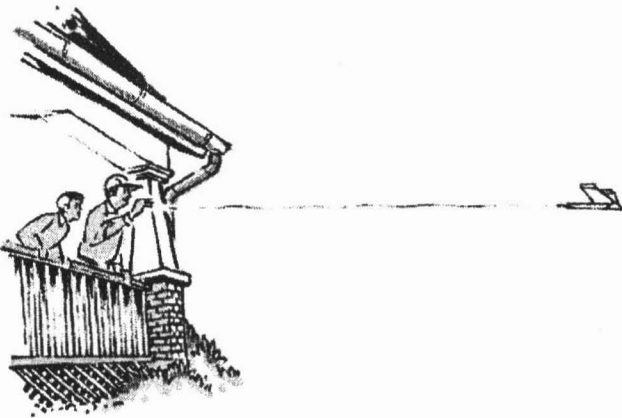

Figure 6: Using Paper Plane to Explain the Theory of Flight (*Source: Reilly 2004*)

Conclusion

Training involves the process of imparting knowledge from trainers to trainees. The sessions should be made interesting do that the process can be effective and bring benefit to the trainees. Employing the above suggestions can help to achieve this.

References

Ahmad Daud Marsam. (2000). *The Students' Perceptions on the Factors that Motivate Them to Participate in Accounting Class.* MARA University of Technology, Master Dissertation.

Becker, W.E., & Watts, M. (1996). *Chalk and talk: A national survey on teaching undergraduate economics.* The American Economics Review. Volume 86, Issues 2, pp. 448-453.

Bonner, S.E. (1999). *Choosing teaching methods based on learning objectives: An Integrative framework.* Issues in Accounting Education, Sarasota. Volume 14, Issues 1, pp. 11-39.

Cottell, P.G., Jr., and B.J. Millis. (1993). *Cooperative learning structures in the instruction of accounting.* Issues in Accounting Education, Spring. Volume 14, Issues 1, pp. 40-59.

Dictionary of contemporary English. New Edition. London: Longman.

Laird D. (1985). *Approaches to Training and Development.* Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company Inc.

Mohd Azhar Osman. (1999). *A Comparative Study on the Accounting and Non-Accounting Students' Perception on Teaching Performance of Accounting Subjects: The Case Study of ITM Sabah Campus.* ITM/Curtin University of Technology. Master Dissertation.

Mohamad Azmi Nias Ahmad. (2003). *Basic Multimedia Presentation with Microsoft PowerPoint 2000: Training Manual.* MARA University of Technology.

Moahamad Azmi Nias Ahmad. (2004). *Student's preferred teaching approach for FAR150.* Konferensi Akademik. UPENA Cawangan Pahang.

Nicholls. (995). *How to Master Public Speaking, a practical handbook for every occasion.* Plymouth: How to books Ltd.

Perrott E. (1982). *Effective Teaching, a practical guide to improving your teaching.* Third Edition. London: Longman.

Reilly M.O. (2004). *Build the best paper airplane in the world.* Online. http://ww.zurqui.com/crinfocus/paper/airplane.html. (November 2004).

MOHAMAD AZMI NIAS AHMAD, Faculty of Accountancy, Universiti Teknologi MARA Pahang. azminias@pahang.uitm.edu.my

NIAS AHMAD ABDUL GANI, Cabin Crew Training and Standard, Malaysia Airlines Academy, No.2, Jalan SS 7/13, 47301 Petaling Jaya, Selangor Darul Ehsan.