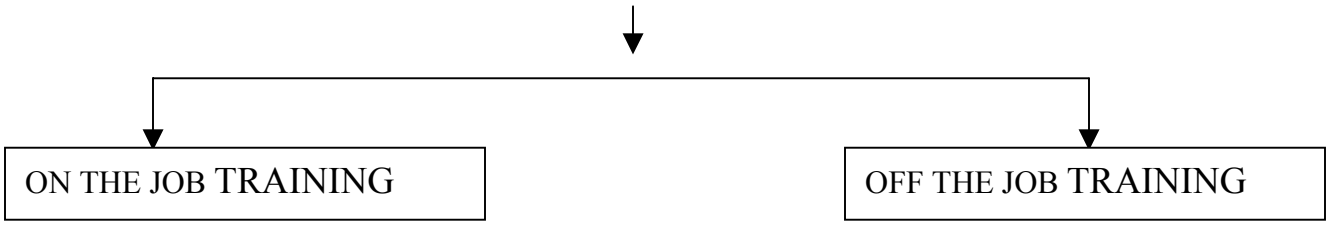
LESSON 20

ON THE JOB TRAINING

Friends,
In previous lessons you were explained about the methods of training. The methods explained in previous lesson can be broadly classified in to two head



After reading this lesson you will be able to

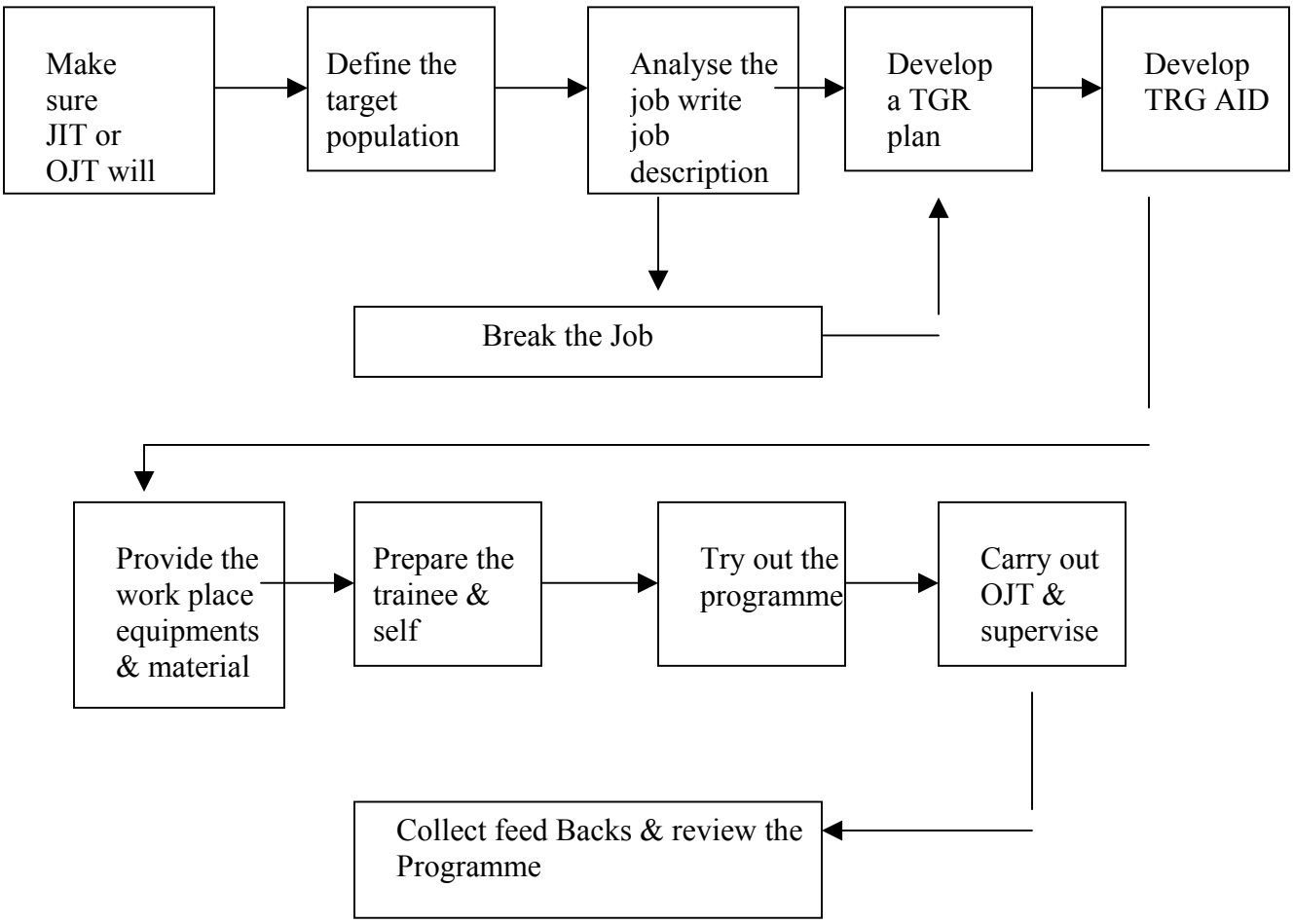
1. Define What is On the job training
2. Know the merits and demerits of on the job training
3. Explain various methods used under on the job training
4. Make effective use of the on the job training.

ON THE JOB TRAINING

OJT training, sometimes called direct instruction, is one of the earliest forms of training (Observational learning is probably the earliest - see Albert Bandura). It is a one-on-one training located at the job site, where someone who knows how to do a task shows another how to perform it. In antiquity, the kind of work that people did was mainly unskilled or semiskilled work that did not require specialized knowledge. Parents or other community members, who knew how to do a job necessary for survival, passed their knowledge on to the children through direct instruction.

On-the-job training is still widely in use today. In fact, it is probably the most popular method of training because it requires only a person who knows how to do the task, and the tools the person uses to do the task. It may not be the most effective or the most efficient method at times, but it is the easiest to arrange and manage. Because the training takes place on the job, it is realistic and no transfer of learning is required. It is often inexpensive because no special equipment is needed other than what is normally used on the job. The other side is that OJT takes the trainer and materials out of production for the duration of the training time. In addition, due to safety or other production factors, it is prohibitive in some environments.

DESIGN & CONDUCTING OJT PROGRAMME



FORMAT FOR DETERMINING THE TARGET POPULATION

JOB REQUIREMENT	Skill	Previous Experience	Education level
EXPECTATION FROM TRAINEE	Skill --	Knowledge n	Performance level
EQUIPMENTS	Place	Time	--
MATERIAL AVAILABLE			

All this while, you've been plodding along blissfully, getting the job done and doing your little bit to maintain profitability. All along, you have firmly believed in the fact that the end justifies the means and have followed this adage in letter and spirit. All through, you have been patting yourself on occasions when you have deserved credit or recognition and your bosses have been too busy to notice. Till the words 'training session' entered the workplace to plague your life!

It's a sad day in the life of any productive employee when the management decides to conduct something called a 'training session'. Admittedly there are some industries, which require, and even warrant regular training sessions for up-dating skill-sets. But it is my personal belief that for a vast majority, the training session is a means for the management to kill time and harass the lower levels of the hierarchy.

Phase I: Power Point (less) Presentations & OHPs (Oh Help Please)! You will agree that it is not a pleasant experience to be accosted by your manager who has his hands filled with slides and a wicked twinkle in his eyes. You will also agree that this can mean only one thing - hours (or days!) spent cooped up in a claustrophobic room, while the aforementioned manager draws from his extensive repertoire of personal experience, power point presentations, OHP slides and powerful jargon to bombard you with fabulous theory of how things *ought to* work.

Unfortunately, if you and your equally tortured colleagues have learnt one thing from time, history and the failed dot.com debacle, it is that - theory may sound brilliant and

even path breaking on paper - but there's a world of difference between bookish knowledge and real-world excellence. But alas, as none of you can voice this concern without seriously compromising your employment, you grin and bear the torture like a martyr.

Emboldened by what he construes as your total commitment and favour towards the cause of professional development, your manager delves deeper into his session with gusto. His personal experiences get exaggerated by the minute. His power point sessions get more animated by the session. His OHP slides get more and more colourful. And his jargon reaches a new bombastic high forcing all of you to furtively flip through your pocket dictionaries and industry primers.

Phase II: Role-Play & Play-Safe

Phase I might have been bearable but Phase two of the training session ventures into a sadistic territory called role-play. Here is where your manager (who else!) will come up with a situation where he/she pretends to be this skinflint (what else!) customer who is trying to browbeat you into offering discounts. The uninitiated make the mistake of enthusiastically participating in these to the extent of haranguing the manager till he makes up his mind to personally flush the remainder of their careers down the drain. However, those who have had a previous taste of these sessions offer but the meekest resistance before successfully proving to the gathering that their petty, local college knowledge is no match for the manager's B-School intellect.

If you're confused, remember the thumb rule. Although these sessions are declared to be skill-updating workshops to give you a taste of things in the real world, they are little more than an in-house opportunity for your manager to showcase his/her superiority. By establishing his/her superiority, you are not making an ass of yourself. You are, *'stooping to conquer'* . The enthusiastic employees however have stood up, been hacked to their lowly place in the hierarchy and are successfully on their way out of the company!

Phase III: Group Study & Group -ism?

After role-play, phase three will entail having the participants (if you can term those being coerced or even threatened at that, to participate) split into groups to tackle projects or deal with case studies. On paper, this is intended to build-up teamwork and ensure the kicking-in of lateral thinking processes to solve a problem. In practice, it will have the opposite effect. It will bring to the fore all the petty, personal problems you have with the members of your team ensuring that you hate the sight of each other at the end of it all. And the best part is, no one could have come up with the right solution, pre-occupied as you were with fighting amongst yourselves! This is the 'divide-to-rule' policy of the manager and is meant to make his life simpler!

Feedback & Payback

If you are getting depressed wondering how you can deal with a situation like this, relax! All is not lost. At the end of each training session you will be given a form to be filled wherein you can anonymously provide feedback on the session. Your manager or the person conducting the session has to submit this form to his higher-ups to keep them

posted on the benefits of the activity. (This is probably the only part of the session that works practically in real-life, as it does theoretically on paper. So take advantage of it!) Use the opportunity to spew venom on the manager and deride the futility of the entire exercise. This will ensure that the higher-ups will think twice before giving him another opportunity to conduct a new training session.

But ensure that you don't overdo the cribbing. For who knows? The higher-ups might just rely on the feedback to boot the manager and they might simply pick one of you for promotion to fill his post. In which case, you just might be offered the distasteful job of conducting the next training session!

Although many view employee training as a necessary evil and expense that must be tolerated, a well designed training program pays for itself and increases the bottom line. Such a program teaches new employees to "do it right the first time," thus minimizing down time, equipment damage, and personal injury while maximizing productivity and profits. A training program as recommended in this web site ensures consistency of training and provides a means to objectively measure employee performance as training progresses. And, the best news is that a quality job-task-training program doesn't have to cost an arm and leg to design, develop, implement, and maintain!

There are several good models for developing training and this site does not attempt to introduce a new model or endorse any particular model here. It does, however, offer suggestions relating to the three essential and critical areas of any model:

1. Designing and developing materials used in the program
2. Implementing the program (using the materials to train new employees)
3. Maintaining the program so that training materials are always correct and reflect the latest changes in production processes. This also includes upgrading the training for "already trained" employees when production process changes are implemented.

Types of courses, or course delivery systems, most often associated with job-task training include:

- Lecture and lecture/lab
- Self-paced instruction, including print-based self-study, web based training (WBT), and computer based training (CBT)
- Structured on-job-training (OJT).

This site has four categories of Tips:

1. General Tips (for all Training)
2. Tips for Lecture and Self-Paced Instruction
3. Tips for Computer Based and Web Based Training
4. Tips for structured OJT

To view the tips in sequence, simply scroll down or use the Table of Contents to go directly to the category of your choice. Suggestion: Don't skip "General Tips."

I am in business to provide help to businesses in their job-task training design and development endeavors. I invite you to click on "Services Offered" on the left side of your screen.

You are welcome to adopt, modify, or ignore the tips you find at this site, depending upon the particular demands of your business. Please do not republish them, they are protected by copyright.

General Tips (1-9)

Tip 1: Don't be too quick to select course delivery mode.

Don't jump to the decision on course delivery medium until you have complete and accurate definitions of three things:

- What the learner must be able to do at the conclusion of the training (performance objectives - obtained during task analysis).
- What the learner must know to be able to meet the performance objectives. (identified during task analysis)
- What the learner already knows and can already do before the training begins (audience analysis).

For instance, if the worker must be able to operate a certain piece of equipment, then structured OJT or lecture/lab would be reasonable delivery systems, at least for the final part, of the worker's training. Lecture by itself, print-based, or computer based training would fall far short. In short, select the delivery medium that permits adequate testing of

the performance you expect of the learner at the conclusion of the course or training module. For many job-tasks the only way to determine if the worker can actually perform the tasks in the job setting is to observe the performance, on the job. For that reason, structured OJT becomes a logical choice for at least part, if not all, of the worker's training. For knowledge level skills that support task performance, pre-requisite training delivered by lecture, lecture/lab, print-based self-study, or CBT may, in some circumstances, be practicable. In other circumstances, it may be more prudent for workers to gain the required knowledge, at the job-work-place while actually learning to perform the task. This is addressed further in the tip on Task Analysis.

Tip 2: Document the Audience Analysis and make it a part of the training design documentation.

When doing an audience analysis, concentrate on the characteristics of the new-hire for the job, but don't completely ignore the workers who are currently performing the job. In many cases, job processes are simplified over the years and the incoming skill requirements for new-hire change accordingly. Failure to look closely at the current new-hire audience can result in a program that works well when tested on existing workers but falls flat on its face with new-hires.

To conduct the audience analysis for a new-employee training program start by examining the skills or experiences mandated by the human resource department for the job. However, investigate carefully to ensure that what is documented as hiring practices, and actual hiring practices are the same. In some cases, documented hiring criteria simply cannot be met due to a tight labor market. Design training programs based on actuality and not on good intentions!

In many businesses, hiring practices seem to have a habit of changing over the years. And those changes can show up in training programs by lengthening the time required for a new worker to complete training. If, after a few years, the time required for new learners to become productive seems to lengthen, check the audience characteristics at that time against the audience analysis you originally documented to make sure that the original audience assumptions are still valid. If the audience changes, training will have to revised or altered accordingly.

Tip 3: Make sure the Task Analysis is complete and accurate.

Simply stated, a task analysis is determining and listing all of the tasks performed by workers in the process of performing the job for which they were hired.

An accurate and complete task analysis is, in my estimation, the key to effective and efficient training. Weaknesses in the task analysis can result in wasted time, wasted money, and poor worker performance. Task analysis is not the place to cut corners!

Training programs that fail, usually have roots in erroneous or "fuzzily-worded" tasks and performance standards.

Tons of paper have been devoted to task analysis methodologies, and I won't try to duplicate those writings here. I would suggest, however that the general areas of responsibilities (duties) for a job be defined first and the tasks comprising each duty be developed next.

For some jobs, it makes more sense for a new worker to be trained and become proficient in one duty and then move to the next. In other jobs, a new worker might have to learn the tasks associated with multiple duties simultaneously.

Be consistent with your working definition of the word "task" and how you articulate task statements. For example,

- Tasks are usually considered meaningful units of work for which an employer is willing to pay.
- Tasks have beginning and ending points; for continuous process tasks, this might be the beginning or ending of a shift.
- Tasks are independent of each other, can usually be observed, and the task or its results can always measured.

  For instance, changing the oil in an automobile can be considered a task. However, draining the old oil is not a task because it is part of the task of changing the oil and is not therefore done independently.

When doing the task analysis:

- Articulate all task statements with short sentences (usually two to seven words) that succinctly and accurately describes the observable, measurable performance, for example, "Produce widgets" or Perform monthly maintenance."
- Don't include references to knowledge, training, skills, or attitudes in the task statement itself.
- Don't include modifiers unless absolutely necessary to ensure universal understanding. For instance the second example "perform monthly maintenance" contains the modifier "monthly." This would be appropriate in a situation where there might be multiple maintenance schedules with "monthly" being one of those.
- For each task, develop as many statements of performance standards as necessary to explicitly describe the "yardstick" that an observer must use to determine if the task has been performed to the standards set by the company. Accurate statements of performance standards, including references to safety procedures, ensure that the same yardstick measures all workers. Don't use subjective terms such as correctly, in a timely manner, and appropriately that may be interpreted one way by one person and another way by someone else. This eliminates potential inconsistencies in training and worker claims of unfair evaluation.

When you think you have all of the performance standards listed for a task, ask yourself (or a subject matter expert) this simple question: "If the worker performs this particular task and meets all of these standards, do we know that that task has been done correctly?" If the phrase "yeah, but" comes up in answer to that question, then the performance standards are not complete! Don't stop until the answer is a unequivocal "yes."

After you are sure that the list of performance standards for each task is complete, ask the following question for each performance statement: "Is there any logical way that this statement could be interpreted one way by one person and another way by another person?" If you get any answer other than a solid "no," the standard of performance needs tweaking at best and a major overhaul at worst. Quality statements of performance standards are vital in ensuring consistency of training and evaluation.

- Develop a list of any particular safety precautions or procedures associated with the performance of the task to ensure that safety is included, in context, throughout the training program. Safety precautions should also be automatically included in the performance standards of respective tasks to ensure that everyone knows how to perform the task safely as well as efficiently.
- Develop a list of condition statements that describe the setting for either teaching or evaluating performance and include safety equipment, tools, materials, processing-equipment, and supplies required for the task. Condition statements serve several purposes. In the structured OJT environment, they remind worker/trainers to make sure that all of the conditions are ready before teaching or evaluating the task.
- Rank each task as to:
    1. How difficult it is to learn
    2. How frequently it is performed
    3. How critical it is that the task be performed correctly (to the performance standards)

  Use these rankings to identify where job aids or refresher training might be needed. These rankings will also help match development efforts to the real-world needs of the business. Another benefit might be a clue to the sequence of content for training, with simpler, non-critical tasks being taught before more complex and critical ones. However, keep in mind that in some structured OJT environments, training must follow the sequence dictated by the real-time events on the production floor.

- For each task, list the skills and knowledge that a worker must have before starting to learn how to perform the task in a hands-on laboratory or on-job environment (prerequisite skills and knowledge). This information, in conjunction with the knowledge/skill information identified in the audience analysis dictates the learning experiences required before the worker can begin hands-on laboratory or workplace learning for this particular task.

Tip 4: Be specific when defining prerequisite skills and knowledge.

In many programs, prerequisite skills and knowledge are defined in such ambiguous terms or at such a high level that the prerequisite training developed (or purchased) is far more than is needed or prudent. Personal experience: after closely examining one prerequisite knowledge course that resulted from such ambiguity, one training manager exclaimed, "my goodness, we should be developing maintenance people, not brain surgeons!"

Ask the question, over and over, must this knowledge be gained before "hands-on" or can it be incorporated with hands-on learning. Where possible, lean heavily toward incorporating knowledge with hands on. In many cases, knowledge courses must be scheduled administered so far ahead of hands-on training that content is forgotten by the time it's applied. Although my purpose here is not to reinvent nor dwell on learning theories, keep in mind that knowledge is retained when it is applied. If you learn a set of facts today but do not use those facts for a month or even a week, from now, they probably forgotten by the time you need them!

Tip 5: Document course maintenance plans early in the design process.

In most businesses, continual process improvement is pre-requisite to being in business tomorrow! Process improvement means that tasks, as well as task performance standards, must also change. These changes arbitrarily dictate corresponding changes to training.

A company's operating procedures, their training program, and the way they actually do things must be absolutely congruent or the training program has no credibility in the eyes of employees and trainees. In companies where absolute congruence is not maintained, training is considered a joke (and a rather expensive one at that) by most employees!

The following items are among the things that I recommend addressing when developing plans for training-program maintenance. While not a complete list of things you may wish to consider, it serves as a good starting point.

- Who, or what department will be charged with the responsibility for training material maintenance? Will that department be a keystroking function that responds to input from someone else, or will they be charged with making content-type decisions?
- How will changes to the production process be communicated to those charged with course maintenance?
- Who will make the actual changes to the wording in existing material?
- Who will have review and approval rights for alterations to the training program? (Safety Department? Environmental Impact Department? Other departments?)
- When anyone proposes a change, how and to whom will that change be submitted, and who must approve and initiate the change?

- How will proposed changes be circulated to those who must review and approve?
- What resources such as computers, software, and personnel are required to maintain the training program? And where will those resources come from?
- What plans will be implemented to keep the training program lock-stepped with operating procedures in a controlled-document environment?

Tip 6: Make decisions, in the design phase, concerning document control.

If your company's operating procedures are controlled documents, the company will have to decide if trainee/trainer guides should be controlled documentation and how to implement and maintain control on these documents.

Tip 7: Plan, in the design phase, how to track training and certification.

This tracking system must be able to accommodate "update" training when production processes change. For companies that use standard operating procedures that are regularly revised, the tracking system must be able to tie task training to specific revision levels of operating procedures.

Tip 8: Plan how to handle training and/or certification of existing skilled workers.

Develop a strategy for how to handle employees who have been around for some time and are already performing the job. Do you "grandfather" all existing employees? Or do you force them to be re-trained? Or do you require them to pass a task evaluation? The question of how to handle existing employees must be addressed early on to avoid serious personnel and attitude problems in your new training program. A word of caution: Beware, you can't bypass this one and it can be a barrel of snakes!

Tip 9: Continually monitor training quality.

Establish and maintain a system of collecting data including trainee reaction, training times required, training efficiency, and training consistency monitor the training effort and detect any slippage in training quality. The longer the program is in place the more this becomes an important issue. Left unmonitored, I can just about guarantee quality slippage.

Summary of General Tips
(Click to review entire tip.)

End of General Tips

Tips - Lecture & Self-Paced Courses (10-17)

Note: All General Tips (1-9) apply to lecture and self-paced courses.

Tip 10: Explain the relevance of each course segment, at the beginning of the segment.

Explain how the information in this section is necessary to perform the task or tasks for which the learner is going to be held accountable. In the job-task training arena, this is probably the most effective way to satisfy Gagne's first condition of learning, Gain attention. Studies indicate that when the relevance of information is known prior to exposure to that information, retention is higher.

Tip 11: Always state (or write) objectives in the terms that the learner will be measured in the training environment.

For instance, a properly worded objective in a self-study, CBT, or even a lecture course might read something like "Match a column of words commonly associated with the framus to their respective definitions."

An example of an improperly worded objective statement is "this lesson will teach you the definitions of the words associated with a framus." Unfortunately this type of wording is all too often used when writing objectives. Statements worded like this may be the goal that the designer had when the material was written but from a learner's viewpoint, it is simply not an objective.

Tip 12: Disclose the respective objective(s) at the beginning of course segments (preferably immediately following the explanation of relevance).

Let learners know exactly what they will be expected to do at the end of the segment or training session. This enables learners to start preparing to meet that objective from the beginning of the segment.

Tip 13: Maintain congruence between objectives and job-tasks.

When defining the objectives for any course, ask yourself, is this objective parallel to job requirements, and does it really support worker performance on the job? For instance, let's suppose a learner is being trained to operate and maintain a machine we'll call a "framus." When the framus breaks or does something wrong, the worker is supposed to follow a written procedure to isolate the failing electrical circuit card and then replace the entire card. An objective (with supporting content) that requires the learner to identify the number of circuit chips on each circuit card my be a great exercise in trivia but is not congruent with the job that person is expected to do at the job-site. Nor does the objective contribute to the performance of job-tasks in any way. Failure to maintain congruence between job-tasks and training objectives invites the design and development of long courses that often fall short in producing required results.

Tip 14: Maintain congruence among content, learner interactions, and objectives

Make sure that the content of learning events, practice interventions, tests and objectives are all congruent. Developing content, practice interactions, or test questions that dwell on identifying the types of circuit chips on a circuit card when that information is not necessary to meet the stated objective is a waste of time, both from a design and development viewpoint, and also from a learner's viewpoint.

Tip 15: Restrict content to that required to meet objectives and perform job-tasks.

It seems to be a natural phenomenon that many (maybe most) courses seem to have lots of information in them that is really not needed to support the objectives and tasks. If you don’t need it, I'd suggest taking it out.

Sometimes (many times?) designers or developers are pressured to "Put this in - they need it!" If you find yourself in an argument with a subject matter expert (or anyone else) about whether or not you should take something out, be careful. Don't be too eager to win the argument. Ask the person, who insists that the information be included, what would happen if learners were not given that information. What would they not be able to do that they should, or what would they do that they should not? If the answer to both parts of that question is "nothing," then the content should go. Any other answer to that question may lead you to a redefinition of a task or a performance standard for some task that really should have been there all along, and the content stays. Notice verb in the question is "do;" it is not "know." That's not an accident on my part. Keep your focus on performance.

Tip 16: Don't mix and match terms

In other words don't call a device a framus on one page (screen, slide, or transparency) and a dealybop on the next - unless you specifically tell the learner that dealybop is another name for framus - or something like that. Very often in business environments

there are many terms used to describe the same object or action. Interspersing new or different terms without properly introducing them degrades the training and gives some learners bad headaches. (It also, justifiably, wreaks havoc with "happy face" evaluation sheets!)

Tip 17: Integrate Job Aids and other support tools into the training.

Job aids and support tools including documentation and electronic performance support systems are put in place for several reasons. Among the reasons is to reduce the time spent on training someone to perform certain tasks. It's somewhat surprising that many training designers seem to shy away from incorporating those job aids in applicable training and "hand those job aids out at the end of the class (or course)." Most of the time the excuse is "but I want then to really understand it." OK, think that through - maybe you have a point in your particular circumstance. Maybe they do need more detail. (I'd suggest you review the tip on restricting content.) But before you declare total victory on this one, keep in mind a couple of points. Some job aids, while being simply great, are not intuitive as to exactly how and when to use them. When those job aids are not included in the training, they can go unused thus eliminating the savings and efficiencies that justified their development. Don't fail to integrate teaching job aids or performance-support-tools and provide practice in using them.

Summary of Tips for Lecture and Self-Paced Courses

(Click to review entire tip.)

End of Tips for Lecture and Self-Paced Courses

Tips - WBT and CBT (18-28)

Note: All General Tips (1-9) as well as the Tips for Lecture and Self-Paced Courses (10-17) apply to CBT courses.

Tip 18: Strive for stand-alone content, screen by screen.

Try to design screen content to avoid having to use several screens to present text on a single concept or thought. Many developers write material for screen presentation just as they would for printed material. While the writing effort, in this case is the same, the reading effort is altogether different.

In books, readers can easily scan previously read text on the page and even flip backwards several pages without a major break in concentration. With CBT screens, this becomes, for lack of more descriptive terms, a real pain in the neck! Although providing an easy means for "backing up" is essential to any CBT course, writing large amounts of text that spread the content of a single subject over many screens is simply not a good idea. Reading screen text (especially large amounts of it) is more difficult, for some people, than reading printed material, especially for those who wear bifocals. Minimize it where you can.

A good example of what not to do is this particular web site. I've presented many ideas, or tips, on this site and they are all in text. If you have tried to back up to review an idea or tip and then tried to get back to your original place, you probably have some idea of what I'm talking about. Where your course-media needs include sizable amounts of text, consider printed matter as supplementary material for the course.

Tip 19: Design course navigation so that it is as intuitive as you can make it.

Keep this in mind -- each time learners must think about what they have to do next to move ahead in the course, they break concentration with content. Make navigation and the structure of the course as transparent as possible to the learner. For instance, such cues as "click NEXT to continue" are great if you have a button labeled NEXT. That same cue is questionable if your "next button" has only a right-pointing arrow.

Tip 20: Where possible, avoid automatically timed screen changes, unless those changes are timed to follow an audio script.

An example of what-not-to-do is a silent screen where the designer want to reveal points one at a time and chooses to do so with automatically timed changes. There is absolutely no way to know the reading speed of the learner. Here the learner is, midway on the first point and you pop on the second point and distract attention. But that's not enough - the learner is midway through the second point and here comes the third or maybe the forth point popping on. Or even worse, situations that prompt learner's to say to themselves, "this thing is as slow as molasses in January!"

Automatically timed screen changes can disrupt concentration. Don't do it. Give the learner control over screen changes and presentation rate.

Tip 21: Provide clues so that he learner will have some idea of what will happen when they do something.

For example telling learners such things as "Click Next to continue" is great. But how about the situation where the next screen is the first screen of test? In this situation, directions such as "Click Next to continue to the section test" at least prepares the learner for what will happen next. Having surprises when taking CBT courses can result in learner anxiety. Anxiety is no friend of concentration. Consider potential learner anxiety with respect to the course itself and design to reduce that type of anxiety as much as possible. (Zero is a good and reasonable goal!)

Tip 22: Select screen and text colors for a reason, and use those colors consistently throughout the course.

Much has been written about using colors in CBT and I won't even attempt to cover all of that material here, there is simply too much. Just be sure to devote sufficient attention to color choices when designing content for CBT or WBT.

Tip 23: When applicable, display the screen's relative location in the learning event so the learner has an idea of "how much more before I'm finished with this section?"

Usually in either a CBT or WBT environment, learners may, at any time, look for answers to questions such as "can I finish this assignment or lesson before lunch?" In cases, where learners know they are one or two screens from the end of a learning event, they may decide to complete the lesson before lunch. If, on the other hand, they know they have been on the lesson for a half an hour and are only half-way through the learning event, they may decide to sign off the course and pick up where they left off - after lunch. Unless you provide some guidance as to where learners are within the learning event, decisions of this sort are essentially made by a flip of the coin and may not be in the best interest of either the learner or the learning event. I believe that continually having to make coin-flip decisions can produce stress which is no friend of learning.

Tip 24: Provide "resume" function so that learners can restart from where they were when they signed off.

Not having a restart built into learning events mean that learners must essentially "start over" when the learning event is interrupted regardless of the cause of that interruption. While lost time is an obvious result, there also can be a degradation of attitude and thus a secondary a loss in learning.

Tip 25: Don't let the aesthetics of screen design compete with the message of the learning event.

A fancy border and background may look great at a distance but make text harder to read and small pictures more difficult to see. Don't let a zeal to produce Rembrandts get in the way of good instructional material. If you must rely on "bells and whistles" to maintain interest in your course, it could be a sign that there are severe problems with the course itself. Certainly, on the other hand, the lack of attention to screen aesthetics can very well impede learning.

Tip 26: Be cautious of humor.

Most humor is regional in nature. Keep in mind that what plays well in one region may be completely offensive in another. There is a fine line between humor and sarcasm. One elicits a smile, the other - anger. In most cases, we can detect the difference because of the body language, facial expression, or vocal inflection of the communicator. In a CBT environment, these distinguishing characteristics are usually not available. As a result, a comment intended as humor can be interpreted as sarcasm resulting in a combative attitude that can get in the way of learning. Most folks do not do all that well at learning when they're upset or angry. Don't let your course get between your learner and the content!

Tip 27: Provide easy access to a glossary throughout the learning event where applicable.

Will your CBT learning event introduce terms that may be new or have new definitions to all or part of your audience? If so, consider using hyperlinks to so that learners can display definitions of new terms when necessary. In cases where it is reasonable to expect a term to be new to your entire audience, define and explain the term when you first use it. However, in cases where terms are new only to part of your audience, consider using a hyperlink that pops up a definition only when the term is clicked.

Tip 28: Consider DazzlerMax as an authoring system.

If you have the opportunity to select an authoring system, consider using DazzlerMax 5. It's powerful, it's easy to use, and you can download it for a 30 day free trial from http://www.dazzler.net. Material produced with DazzlerMax may be packaged for distribution via CD, the Internet, or a company intranet. All materials produced with DazzlerMax may be distributed royalty free. For a brief demo of the kinds of things that DazzlerMax can do, click here. (Please be patient, it may take 15 to 30 seconds to download.)

If you decide to take a look at DazzlerMax, be sure to also download the Quick Start training program. Quick Start is designed to show you enough about the program so you can make a purchase decision. If you live in North America, DazzlerMax Advanced Training is normally included for those who elect to purchase DazzlerMax.

Summary of Tips for CBT

(Click to review entire tip.)

End of Tips for CBT

Tips - Structured OJT (29-38)

Note: All General Tips (1-9) apply to Structured OJT.

Tip 29: Consider using structured OJT as the keystone of any job-task-training program,

While certainly not a universal cure-all, one of the most cost-effective ways to provide job-task training for new employees is through structured on-job-training (structured OJT).

For many industrial jobs, a well designed, implemented, and maintained structured OJT program is the most efficient and effective way to train new employees. Examples are jobs where employees perform repeatable tasks and include the jobs of manufacturing and packaging operators, food handlers, and many, many others.

As defined in this web site, and simply stated, structured OJT is on-job-training where an "already experienced and successful employee" uses a company-standardized-checklist of tasks and performance criteria to train and certify new employees. Be aware that in this web site, the term "certification" refers to an in-house, company certification, and not an industry wide certification.

The usual alternative to structured OJT is sometimes referred to as "Follow-Joe Training." In essence, "Follow-Joe Training" consists of a new employee simply being told to "Follow Joe and learn to do what he does." The next employee may be assigned to

Joe, or maybe Sam, Susie, or who knows. Without structure, there is zero assurance that training will be consistent, effective, efficient, or even adequate.

With structured OJT, on the other hand, any experienced employee given minimal "trainer training" can train new employees. In a well-implemented and monitored structured OJT program, all new employees receive consistent, effective, and efficient training regardless of the trainer assigned to them.

Tip 30: Document structured OJT implementation plans in the design phase.

A well thought out and developed plan, poorly executed, is practically worthless! This is especially true with training programs. You will probably find that your plans associated with implementation and maintenance will dictate how you handle some of the details in the design of the training material itself.

After the trainee and trainer guides, along with the signoff sheet have been developed, the next step is to implement the program and actually use it to certify new employees.

In well-implemented programs, several areas must be addressed. Each organization must decide how they will handle the individual areas. While the tips that follow may not be complete, it represents some of the major items that must be addressed. Organizations implementing a structured OJT program must decide other areas that must be addressed and prioritize the resulting list.

Tip 31: Decide if structured OJT trainers are going to be expert production workers first and trainers second ,or if, conversely, they should be trainers first and expert production workers second.

The decision must be made at some point (the earlier in the design phase, the better) about whether the people who train new employees at their work station should be production workers who normally do or have done that job, or people assigned to the training function. This is not an easy decision. There are pros and cons for either decision.

On one side, people formally trained and educated for the roll of trainer usually do a better that average in communicating. In addition, many production workers simply don't want to be bothered with having to train new folks. Production management is often unwilling or reluctant to authorize any loss of the skilled workers productivity due to that worker having to train a new-hire. (Don't let anybody kid anybody. There will be a loss of efficiency for production workers during the time they are training a new-hire. Face it, and deal with it; don't try to sell structured OJT as a painless cure-all.) In may cases, production workers are faced with the reality that there are no particular rewards, only grief, for training someone else. (In all too many cases, having training responsibilities in addition to normal production responsibilities is more of a punishment than anything else.

This is an extremely bad situation, and certainly does not have to be true. Most companies who use expert workers as trainers in a successful structured OJT program provide extra compensation or rewards for training responsibilities.)

So far I've painted the case for structured OJT trainers to be members of a training department. Well, that's not a complete rose-bed either. In many jobs, the only way to stay proficient and keep up with changes is to perform that job every day. And besides, the skills required to teach some to do something in a job-setting on a one-on-one basis does not call for normally accepted instructor-like skills. This clearly tips the scales toward having expert production workers conduct structured OJT.

I recommend that structured OJT be conducted by expert production workers who are adequately prepared to do so.

Tip 32: Develop simple, but complete trainee and trainer guides.

To keep things simple, trainer and trainee guides should be, for the most part, identical. They should both list all of the tasks addressed by the structured OJT program. Each "task" should normally includes the following four items:

- The task statement itself
- Statements of performance standards
- Safety precautions or procedures
- Conditions Statements

- For further explanation of each of these four terms, see the tip under "general tips" that address task analysis.

  Repeat these four items for each job-task addressed by the training program and include them in both the trainer and trainee guides. Providing this information to trainees helps them set performance goals, early on, and continually answers for them the question, "What do you expect of me?"

  An additional item I recommend including for each task in the trainer guide is a statement, or paragraph, listing areas to cover, or stress, when teaching the task. This is also a good place for any other task-related suggestions you might want to add. Corresponding items can also be placed in the trainee's guide to help them concentrate on the same salient points as the trainer.

Tip 33: Develop task sign-off sheets to record achievement for each trainee.

Don't underestimate how long it will take to do this, it takes longer than you might think.

As part of a structured OJT program, someone must design and develop the Task sign-off record. The task sign-off record provides a place for the trainer to date and sign-off each task when the trainee is observed performing the task, without assistance, while meeting all of the performance standards listed for the task. Task sign-off records may be integrated in either the trainee or trainer guide, or they may be on a separate sheet that simply lists the task statements and refers to the expanded task list in the trainer and trainee guides. Another option is to make each task, including its sign-off, a separate document.

Companies may also elect to have a second person evaluate trainees before sign-off is complete. Or, perhaps the procedure might include an additional review by management. Another option is to have sign-off records designed such that a separate sign-off record is used each time a trainee goes for "evaluation." Unsuccessful attempts will result in a recorded "failure" with the reason, or reasons, for failure listed by the evaluator. The exact design of the sign-off records as well as the nature of the sign-off process itself should be given extremely careful consideration to eliminate exposures to favoritism, discrimination, unfair treatment, or false claims there of.

The evaluation process must, as well as the entire training process, be a manageable situation for the company, and that's one of the places where the difficulty comes into play. Deciding exactly who is going to sign the signoff sheets should be an extremely well researched and discussed decision. Should it be one person for each task? Two for each task? Should management sign off each task?

Every one of these possibilities could be the right choice for the right company. Here are a couple of things to consider when making these decisions:

The more the trainee is "tested," the more cumbersome the entire training process becomes. If left unchecked, skilled production workers, along with first line supervision can spend all their time evaluating new employees and production can plummet.

On the other hand, without "checks on the checker" a business is inviting eventual erosion of training quality. As one crusty, executive-level manager who I knew once said, "People do what you inspect, not what you expect!" That may be an overly cynical way to feel, but the older I get, the more I feel that way myself. You do what you think is best.

Tip 34: Identify the tasks and performance standards for the roll of OJT trainer for your organization.

People must be selected and adequately trained to perform the role of trainer. This means that tasks associated with the role of trainer, along with standards of performance for that role, must also be identified and documented. There are several companies offering training for non-trainers on how to train other people.

Tip 35: Consider requiring workers selected as trainers to demonstrate that they can perform the tasks associated with the roll of trainer and be company-certified as trainers.

Assuming you go outside your organization for help in training your trainers to train, they will probably be given some sort of completion certificate and maybe even a certification. However, that certification, although applying to the program they attended, may not address all of the things your company expects of its trainers. Consider establishing your own in-house, trainer certification program.

Tip 36: Consider requiring your trainers to be company-certified in the job they are teaching.

How to do this for the first wave of trainers will present some interesting situations that must be wrestled with and solved before trainer selection. Will Trainers certify each other? Will management do this? Regardless of who does it, I recommend that someone evaluate the job-task performance of prospective trainers and use the same criteria for certifying them that will eventually be used to certify new employees. Trainers should have a completed sign-off record in their training files before they ever attempt to train and certify others.

Tip 37: Consider assigning three areas of responsibility to structured OJT trainers.

As a trainer, a worker should be expected to perform three primary functions if the training program is to be an ongoing success.

- Teach new employees how to perform all tasks in the training program. Essentially, the teaching process for any task consists of:
    1. Briefly explaining what the task is and when and why it is must be performed. Where applicable, the trainer must explain the impact of failing to perform the task according to the standards listed
    2. Demonstrating how to perform the task according to the listed standards of performance
    3. Allowing trainees to practice performing the task under trainer supervision until both the trainer and trainee are confident that the trainee can consistently perform the task and is ready for formal evaluation.
- Evaluate trainee performance and sign-off each task when trainees perform the task without assistance while meeting all of the standards of performance.
- Report all training material deficiencies to those assigned the responsibility of course maintenance so that training materials are always up to date and complete. I wish I could tell you how to develop a perfect training program, first crack out of the box. The truth of the matter is that no matter how good you think the program is, it will never be perfect. Although excellence should always be a goal,

the real world of business needs and budgets will most likely not permit the endless days and months required for true perfection on the opening day of training. Having a workable plan for recognizing and quickly responding to problems is usually a workable strategy for maintaining quality of training.

One note about the trainer's responsibility for keeping the training materials up to date: This aspect of a trainer's responsibility must be monitored and enforced. There will be a temptation for trainers to add "their own" improvements to the training process. In each case, one of two conditions exists. Either the "improvement" is not really an improvement and no one should be doing it, or it is a true improvement and all trainers should be doing it. The only way to ensure and maintain consistency in training is to have all trainers accept their responsibility for keeping the training materials up to date. Perhaps an award or recognition system for training program improvements might help in this area.

Tip 38: Plan how to compensate workers who are given additional responsibilities of training and evaluation.

This issue must be addressed, head-on, by management and resolved.

Arguably, trainers and the design of the training program itself are the first and second most important aspects of any structured OJT program. When workers assigned the role of trainer do not diligently fulfill that roll, the training program falls apart at the seams. There are many reasons that any worker, even one assigned "trainer" duties, might not perform as expected and desired. Among these reasons are:

- There is no positive consequence for performance. *Why Employees Don't Do What They're Supposed to Do*, by Ferdinand F. Fournies, published by Liberty Hall Press explores this in depth. I recommend the book.
- Performance can actually be not only non-rewarding, it can also be punishing. *Analyzing Performance Problems* by Robert F. Mager and Peter Pipe, published by Lake Publishing Company elaborates on this in detail. I recommend the book.