
Course Learning Outcomes for Unit I

Upon completion of this unit, students should be able to:

1. Describe the phases in the training processes model.
 - 1.1 Describe the components of a general open systems model.
 - 1.2 List and describe the interrelationships among the five phases of the training processes model.

Reading Assignment

Chapter 1: Training in Organizations

Unit Lesson

Everyone in an organization is affected by training at some point in their careers. Significant budget dollars are allocated to training employees on an annual or biannual basis. Although the U.S. economy has suffered significant losses over the last several years, companies still dedicate substantial resources to employee training and retraining.

Why do companies continue to invest in training, even in the most difficult economic times? According to Blanchard and Thacker (2013), "Evidence shows that companies investing more in training produce improved financial results in terms of higher net sales, gross profits per employee, stock growth, and ratio of market to book value" (p. 3).

However, training does not always lead to an improved bottom line. Many companies report that they perceive little value from their training initiatives, but this is not true for all companies. Those that have reported positive improvements within the company also report they have effective training systems and practices in place; thus, what is the difference?

Effective training is a process that consists of five distinct phases: analysis, design, development, implementation, and evaluation (ADDIE) (Blanchard & Thacker, 2013). It is not just running employees through various programs to satisfy yearly training mandates. Blanchard and Thacker (2013) also state, "Training provides employees with the knowledge and skills to perform more effectively" (p. 4). Properly training employees means not only can they perform at the expected level and do what the job demands, but it also gives them the knowledge, skills, and abilities or attitudes to be flexible and meet the challenges of today's dynamic work environment.

Learning also requires the elements of knowledge, skills, and abilities or attitudes. Let's talk about the meaning of these three terms in and of themselves. *Knowledge* could be referring to the ability to store information and recall that information when necessary. Thus, not all employees may have the ability to "learn" or "store" information presented in training as well as others, but may be held to the same accountable outcomes as all other employees.

Case in point: As a young college student, Mary took a student job at a local office helping with secretarial duties. The location was on the Gulf Intracoastal Water Way in which barges would pass through on a daily basis. The operators had to log in all the information about the barge and its contents on paper. At some point, the computer was introduced as a way of collecting and logging in this data. An employee at the home office was sent to the field location to introduce the software in one day.

Most of the operators grudgingly made the change from paper to computer. However, one operator was very resistant to the change. He would call in sick more than he had ever done in the past. When trying to type the

information into the format, he would sweat profusely and become very agitated. Mary offered to help him for an entire eight hour shift. Through talking to him, he revealed to Mary that he had been diagnosed with early onset Alzheimer's. Thus, it became very clear the reason for his difficulty in retaining the instructions. Once he revealed this to the supervisor, accommodations were made to assist with his computer work.

Had he had told the supervisor this ahead of time, perhaps training could have been tailored to his needs separately. Trainers can never truly know the problems that each person in the audience may have with learning; thus, he or she should offer the information in the typical three learning styles to cover all bases: auditory, visual, and kinesthetic.

Skills could be genetic or learned as most of the reading indicates. Another issue that trainers may encounter is that not all employees have similar family backgrounds where certain skills that society assumes we all possess were taught. Think of the past generations that pulled their children from schools in fourth and fifth grades in order to help with the family farm. The average reading level for many in society is only eighth grade. Some families train their children in academics; others train their children in religion; yet, others train their children in crafts and skills. Thus, perhaps an anonymous survey of employees could and should be retrieved before any training takes place in order to assist in content delivery.

Abilities can also be interchanged with skills in that these include heredity and environmental factors. Some of us were taught basic survival skills from our parents such as hunting, fishing, or camping. Others have never seen the forest except from a car window. Some have academic abilities inherently and others have to work for average grades. Thus, again, trainers must be aware of the ability level and the training to be delivered, especially in today's technological age.

The challenge for training units is to align their resources with activities that provide the best match with strategic objectives. With changing demographics and diverse learning styles in today's marketplace, employers must research to find the best types of training for their employees, the right environment to offer such training, the most "learner friendly" facility for training, and the proper implementation of said training. Training is only effective when the trainer can relate to his or her audience. The best training material/scenarios available can be delivered in such a way as to not produce intended results and become a complete failure for employees and budgets.

Once trained, employees will need retraining or refresher training to continue the growth and learning process of the company as a whole. One occupational example is the realm of criminal justice. Training is essential, but retraining is vital for survival. If police and correctional officers only received training at the beginning of their career, think of the chaos, lawsuits, and abuse of power this could bring about. Thus, in this field alone, the need for ongoing training, in-house or in-service training, and outside training is vital for legal purposes—both to protect society and criminal justice employees.

While reviewing Chapter 1, think back to the last training you completed at your place of employment. What do you remember about the training, the trainer, the atmosphere, the interactions or non-interactions, the facility, and your overall impression of the training you received?

Reference

Blanchard, P. N., & Thacker, J. W. (2013). *Effective training: Systems, strategies, and practices* (5th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Learning Activities (Nongraded)

Nongraded Learning Activities are provided to aid students in their course of study. You do not have to submit them. If you have questions, contact your instructor for further guidance and information.

Read the case study titled "Taking Charge at Domtar: What It Takes for a Turnaround" in the textbook on pages 1-3. On page 23, answer case question #4.

Course Learning Outcomes for Unit II

Upon completion of this unit, students should be able to:

2. Examine how training relates to human resource development (HRD) and strategic process planning.

Reading Assignment

Chapter 2: Aligning Training with Strategy

Unit Lesson

Training in companies must be aligned with the company's strategy in order to be effective. This chapter focuses on the strategic planning process and the relationship of human resources development (HRD) with that process. The strategic planning process begins with the organization's mission, which then influences the design of the internal strategies aimed at reaching that mission. Core technologies, organizational design, decision autonomy, and the division of labor are important factors influencing internal strategies. Many external environmental factors play into the design of internal strategies as well. Some of these factors that may threaten the training from the beginning are the employees' values, norms, technological levels of comprehension, and various educational backgrounds of the employees (Blanchard & Thacker, 2013).

The role of HRD is to provide information for the development of internal strategies in order to offer the most effective training to employees to obtain the mission/purpose of the training. One key to the internal strategy is understanding that many folks are simply resistant to ANY type of change. Organizational change is a standard piece of the puzzle when developing and implementing internal strategies.

Change can be difficult for those involved and some resistance is to be expected. In most cases, this resistance can be overcome through communication and employee involvement in the change process. Employees must have some stake in the changes occurring in the organization. If they feel that they are not involved in the decisions being made in the organization that affect them, they will not "buy into" any changes being made.

It is crucial that organizational development professionals and training professionals work together to implement change in order for it to be effective. If each group has an understanding of each other's roles and competencies, and how each is beneficial to the process, success will be easily achieved.

Effective training in an organization can be delivered in a number of ways. Some organizations begin with in-house training resources while others prefer to outsource all training requirements. Still other organizations will use a mixed strategy of some in-house training and some outsourced training.

One of the issues with using in-house training resources involves the people offering the training. Sometimes organizations appoint employees in the organization, who have no experience or training in learning styles, to offer training just to meet deadlines or accreditation purposes. HR personnel must research the people who are appointed and make their opinions known to those in charge. If a person is appointed to train other coworkers about a new technological device to be used at the facility, he or she MUST have the skills to speak in front of groups, take criticism in a positive manner, know how to reach all learning styles in the group, and most importantly, know his or her subject matter.

An example of this is when a local sheriff office wanted to offer domestic violence training to investigators and patrol officers in order to review the major steps to be taken when called to one of these incidents. The department decided to use in house personnel for this training. The trainers decided to use video as well as to

incorporate role play scenarios to make major points of what actions should and should not be taken on the scene of a domestic call.

The department made great effort to research who should play each role represented at the scene of a domestic call. The role players were interviewed to ensure they felt comfortable in the role they would play in a domestic call. Had the trainers simply just picked random people for the roles to simply to get it done without the research, there could have been a tragic effect on the role players and the entire training group.

Thus, in many organizations, due to personalities or the different social groups around the organization, they choose to outsource all training. Others prefer to offer training through online vendors in order to save time and productivity.

One additional note is that in order to implement the training received by employees, they must have the capabilities to put their training into action. Improved capabilities do not translate into improved performance unless that performance management system is aligned to support those capabilities (Blanchard & Thacker, 2013). Therefore, any skills or technologies offered in the training, and expected of employees once back on the job, must be available in order to meet those training expectations.

Reference

Blanchard, P. N., & Thacker, J. W. (2013). *Effective training: Systems, strategies, and practices* (5th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

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Read the case study titled "CASE: Strategic Planning at Multistate Health Corporation" in the textbook on pages 50-52. On page 53, answer case question #3.