



Course Learning Outcomes for Unit III

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

2. Compare and contrast the training implications of behavioral and cognitive learning in the training environment.
 - 2.1 Explain the conditions that must be present for learning to occur.
 - 2.2 Discuss the key aspects of each learning theory: reinforcement theory, social learning theory, goal theory, expectancy theory, adult learning theory, and information processing theory.
 - 2.3 Explain why self-efficacy is an important factor in learning.

Reading Assignment

Chapter 4:

Learning and Transfer of Training

Unit Lesson

As we continue our discussion on the training design process, emphasis must be placed on training that brings value to the organization by focusing on job performance. Performance is basically comprised of one's ability, motivation, and maturity. Motivation can be one of the most overlooked aspects of instructional strategy and possibly one of the most critical elements needed to meet the learners' needs. We find in many cases that trainees are being required to attend the class or attend to just pass a test in order to punch a ticket. Instructors must understand tools to achieve motivated learners.

Training management, as with any other management process, is a science and an art. Understanding motivation and how it relates to performance and learning is essential to any trainer. As with any science, theories apply. Theories are roadmaps to help us try to understand the complexities involved with learning, and they can help us simplify. John M. Keller (1987) defines four conditions that must be incorporated in any instructional design for a student to be motivated to learn. Keller's ARCS model of motivation, attention, relevancy, confidence, and satisfaction, when sequentially addressed and integrated, will encourage the students need to learn. *Attention* is the first and most important aspect of the ARCS model. Gaining and keeping the learner's attention and interest throughout the instruction is vital for the student to learn. To increase one's perception arousal, an instructor can use surprise, humor, incongruity, conflict, and participation strategies. *Relevance* asks the question, "What's in it for me?" Motivation and attention will not be maintained unless this question is answered. Benefits should be clearly stated. For example, for project management training, the benefit to users could be to make the user more productive or reduce their frustration by providing the user with a process that provides a logical approach to tackling a project. The whole idea of training is to make life a little bit easier for those that conduct projects, and that is what training should be all about.

Confidence provides the student with a belief they can accomplish what is being done. To do so, the instructor must develop confidence by enabling the user to learn. The instructor must provide a degree of challenge that allows for meaningful success under both learning and performance conditions. If students feel they are incapable of achieving their learning objectives, or that it will take too much time or effort, their motivation will decrease. Finally, learners must obtain some type of *satisfaction*. For example, a passing grade may be rewarded with a completion certificate. Even so, the best way for learners to achieve satisfaction is for the learner to find their new skills useful and beneficial for their job.

Other learning theories play a role in training and motivation as well. Vroom's expectancy theory has components of a mathematical equation in which Force = Valences x Expectancy (Instrumentalities). Force is the motivation it takes to get a person to do a task. The amount of motivation is based on how much self-

confidence the person has that he can do the task (expectancy), along with the reward he will receive upon performing the task (valence), and the perception that the completion of the task will actually equal the reward. The theory sounds a bit complicated, but it should make you realize as an HR professional that some rewards may motivate some employees, but those same rewards may not mean enough to other employees for them to work hard. For example, an employee who is a mother and does not feel she spends enough time with her children, may not be motivated by overtime pay on Saturday when it takes her away from watching her son's baseball game.

Bandura's self-efficacy theory is a little easier to understand. It proposes that students who believe they can achieve something are more likely to put forth effort to achieve it. Keller's Confidence step can be tied in to the self-efficacy theory. HR professionals need to keep in mind that one learning theory may not be the only theory to consider when designing training.

There is no one learning style or best style; we all learn differently. Some people need the details, others just need the big picture to get the learning point, and of course, all those in between who have a combination of both characteristics. How the trainer or instructor adapts to the learners' needs can be the difference between the success and failure of the learning process. It is a cyclic process as one provides the training, and the trainee or employee responds to the training. It all begins with those who are responsible for the training. It could be the training department in the organization, the human resources department, the executive management team, or a supervisor. Those responsible must ensure what they implement will be successful. Ensuring to effectively select and prepare the training site that the trainer selected, coordination of the many interrelated activities, and lesson plan design must all be taken into consideration.

Reference

Keller, J. M. (1987). Development and use of ARCS model of motivation design. *Journal of Instructional Development*, 2-10.