ITP LINK

The Newsletter for Members of the Institute of Training Professionals

專業培訓實務證書課程
New Certificate in Training Practice

In the past six months, the Institute has successfully conducted several training programs/seminars for trainers in the Mainland China, among which two are Train-The-Trainer Programs held in Guangzhou and another in Beijing respectively.

Drawing on the past experience and catering to the current needs of some trainers in Hong Kong, the Institute will now launch a new training program entitled "Certificate in Training Practice" in February 2001 for trainers and executives with responsibility in training, and aspiring to become qualified training professionals.

The Program will cover the following areas: Managing Training Functions, Learning Theories, Assessing Training Needs, Training Objectives, Training Methods, Program Design, Program Development, Presentation and Facilitation Skills, Training Evaluation, and a Training Project.

All participants are required to submit a work-based training project. Participants who successfully complete the program will be awarded a Certificate in Training Practice by the Institute and are eligible to apply as Associate Member (AMITP) of the Institute.

One special feature of this program is the Managing Training and Development Hong Kong – a 1,200 pages manual by CCH will be actively used as a working reference throughout the program. As a matter of fact, five members of the Institute are consultant editors of this manual.

Several veteran training professionals from the Institute have been invited to conduct specialized topics of the program, and the emphasis of the program will be on training practices. Details of the program will be available shortly.

Learning processes and styles

How people learn is a complex topic but there are effective methods of determining learning styles. We learn through a complex interaction of reading, cognitive process, experience and what we are told or see. Some prefer to try out new processes (hands-on training), some prefer to read and assimilate the knowledge, thinking about the processes and identifying the problems in a conceptual manner; others will prefer a mix of both of these processes.   There are five major views on the learning process, which **are:**

(1) ***Behaviourism***.   This theory was founded on the study of learning in animals mainly through the animals' response to stimuli (stimuli-response theory); learning being further developed through conditioning. This theory suggests that we learn through receiving a stimulus that provokes a response. The response is repeated provided that it is reinforced (usually by acquisition of food).   Watson further elaborated and believed that "the human being is no more than the sum of his experiences" (Curzon, 1985).

(2) ***Neo-behaviourism***.   This theory took that above one step further, considering the human mind to be selective in its actions, and simply not responding to stimuli. The belief was that behaviour must have a purpose. It was suggested that understanding, rather than conditioning, was the essence of learning. Great importance was placed on "operant conditioning" where an operant is a series of actions that the trainee completes; hence it is a specific response to a particular stimulus. The reward is only given if the required response is given. This type of conditioning has more impact on learning as it concentrates on the consequences of behaviour, not the causes of that behaviour.

(3) ***Gestalt***.   This term implies that "the whole is greater than the sum of its parts", that the whole possesses a "quality in addition to the sum of the original sensory data" (Sahakian, 1970). This viewpoint directly opposes that of the behaviourists and neo-behaviourists, believing that the learning process can only be analysed in organised complex forms. Learning is viewed as a pattern of activities, an understanding of those activities is known as insight and occurs when the trainee becomes aware of the relevance of their behaviour to a purpose.

(4) ***Cognitive theory***.   This theory focuses on how humans gain and organised knowledge. "Knowledge is a process, not a product" (Sahakian, 1970). Cognitive theorists are concerned with internal processes such as knowing and perceiving. They believe that trainee behaviour is based on cognition, knowing or thinking about the situation in which the behaviour occurs. This process is defined as "learning to think" and is based on the perception that the process of learning is not just doing something, but also includes reflection on, and learning from, that experience.

(5) ***Humanist theory***.   From a trainer's viewpoint, the trainer has to deliver what needs to be learned in an effective manner to maximise the potential benefit of both the financial and time outlays. This means, usually, in the shortest possible time at the least financial cost.

Learning styles - general descriptions

Activists

Activists involve themselves fully and without bias in new experiences. They enjoy the "here and now" and are happy to be dominated by immediate experiences. They are open-minded, not sceptical, and this tends to make them enthusiastic about anything new. Their philosophy is: "I will try anything once". They rush in where angels fear to tread. They tend to throw caution to the wind. Their days are filled with activity. They revel in short-term crisis fire-fighting. They tackle problems by brainstorming. As soon as the excitement from one activity has died down they are busy looking for the next. They tend to thrive on the challenge of new experiences but are bored with implementation and longer-term consolidation. They are gregarious people constantly involving themselves with others but, in doing so, they hog the limelight. They are the life and soul of the party and seek to centre all activities on themselves.

Reflectors

Reflectors like to stand back to ponder experiences and observe them from many different perspectives. They collect data, both first hand and from others, and prefer to chew it over thoroughly before coming to any conclusion. The thorough collection and analysis of data about experiences and events are what counts, so they tend to postpone reaching definitive conclusions for as long as possible. Their philosophy is to be cautious, to leave no stone unturned. "Look before you leap"; "Sleep on it". They are thoughtful people who like to consider all possible angles and implications before making a move. They prefer to take a back seat in meetings and discussions. They enjoy observing other people in action, they listen to others and get the drift of the discussion before making their own points, they tend to adopt a low profile and have a slightly distant, tolerant, unruffled air about them. When they act it is as part of a wide picture which includes the past as well as the picture which includes the past as well as the present and others' observations as well as their own.

Theorists

Theorists adapt and integrate observations into complex but logically sound theories. They think problems through in a vertical, step by step, logical way. They assimilate disparate facts into coherent theories. They tend to be perfectionists who would not rest easy until things are tidy and fit into their rational scheme. They like to analyse and synthesise. They are keen on basic assumptions, principles, theories, models and systems thinking. Their philosophy prizes rationality and logic. "If it is logical, it is good." Questions they frequently ask are: They tend to be detached, analytical and dedicated to rational objectivity rather than anything subjective or ambiguous. Their approach to problems is consistently logical. This is their "mental set" and they rigidly reject anything that does not fit with it. They prefer to maximise certainty and feel uncomfortable with subjective judgements, lateral thinking and anything flippant.

Pragmatists

Pragmatists are keen on trying out ideas, theories and techniques to see if they work in practice. They positively search out new ideas and take the first opportunity to experiment with applications. They are the sorts of people who return from management courses brimming with new ideas that they want to try out in practice. They like to get on with things and act quickly and confidently on ideas that attract them. They do not like "bearing around the bush" and tend to be impatient with ruminating and open-ended discussions. They are essentially practical, down to earth people who like making practical decisions and solving problems. They respond to problems and opportunities "as a challenge". Their philosophy is: There is always a better way and if it *works* it's good.

ENSURING HONG KONG BUSINESS SUCCESS
THROUGH MANAGING TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Excerpt of an address by Mr. Denny Chow at a Seminar on Managing Training and Development organized by CCH on October 25, 2000.

What we are – assessing our current strengths and weaknesses in terms of your human resources, products/services, and markets (local, regional and global).
- Human resources – strategies, performance management, TNI, and people development plans for employees at various levels.
- Products/services – provided through well-trained employees.
- Markets – sufficiently explored by professionally qualified personnel.

What our future beholds – the impact of China's entry to WTO, and market changes upgrade the above areas or risk being phased out.

What need we do – to ensure business success through viable people development plan.
- Senior Management to provide corporate direction, strategies, leadership, incentives, etc.
- Management personnel to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills I management, leadership, teambuilding, motivation, etc.
- Front-line employees to possess the requisite attitude, knowledge, skills, technology for the provision of quality service to clients/customers.

People Development Areas – following the:
- Leaders of Fortune 500 – local, regional and global.
- Attitude toward colleagues, customers, work, material, machine, efficiency,
- Skills – retail, F & B (greeting, presenting, thank you, come again even if there is no transaction).
- Knowledge – Six W's of job/product/service. i.e. What, Why, Who, When, Where, and How.
- Technology – in work process – new machine, equipment, internet, intranet, security and risks.
- Conceptual skills – perception, purpose, why, consequence, market changes.

Trust me on this … How leaders destroy trust at work:

Act inconsistently in what they say and do:	69%
Seek personal gain above shared gain:	41%
Withhold information:	34%
Lie or tell half-truths:	33%
Be closed-minded:	29%

Source: Manchester Inc. October 2000.

Aligning HR and Training Objectives with Mission and Business Objectives –
- For new Hires – core areas – cross cultures training.
- For existing employees – skill gaps, advancement.
- Management development programs.
- Retraining programs.
- To cope with new products/services.
- To keep in pace with new technology and changing market needs.
- To be a trend setter or industry leader.

Make or Buy Decision – People Development.
- Develop your own people development plans for various levels and implement them.
- Consider joining hands with your business associates and form your people development partnerships.
- Outsource part of all of your people development programs to certain trustworthy service providers that could meet your training and development needs.