UNIT 3   TRAINING AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT FOR DISTANCE EDUCATION: A STRATEGIC PERSPECTIVE

Note:
This paper by Bernadette Robinson was originally written by way of an introduction to “Training and Professional Development of Distance Educators: a resource book of articles” published by the commonwealth of Learning (COL) in 1997. Robinson has raised some basic issues related to staff development in distance education in general. An understanding of the issues discussed here will help formulate your own strategic perspective and plan for staff development in your organization. After having gone though this paper, you could try to relate as many relevant issues raised here to your situation and see at what stage your organization is, with regard to staff development.

Introduction

The need for training and professional development for staff has received growing acknowledgement as open and distance education has expanded, diversified, made use of an increasingly wide range of new technologies and established itself as a legitimate field of study. There is now greater understanding of training needs and the role that training can play, especially in the achievement of good quality. Despite this, training for distance educators is still seen largely as a cost, not an investment. It has frequently been given low priority in organizational plans and funding allocations. Furthermore, even when training has been provided, organizations and projects have not always been ready enough to utilize the new learning. This means that opportunities for capacity building are lost.

One problem, especially in developing countries, is the lack of information on training and staff development. Information can be difficult to get, since the literature is scattered across a range of sources. This resource book should help solve that problem. It contains a substantial collection of papers drawn from journals, books and reports on distance education in several countries.

This book has three main aims:

• To improve access to information about staff development for distance education;
• To share experience, illustrating a range of contexts and practices;
• To identify key issues for consideration in your own particular context.

The papers provide a rich collection of experience in developing staff for open and distance learning. They cover key areas of operation in distance education:

• Planning, Management and Administrative (Section I);
• Course Design and Development (Section II);
• Using Technology in Distance Education (Section III);
• Student Support and Tutor Training (Section IV);
They describe a broad range of practice, provide case studies and illustrate a variety of approaches. They also identify problems and issues for debate and describe difficulties that you may be familiar with in your own context, whether your organization is large or small, a permanent institution or a time-limited project. So far, relatively little research has been done on training and staff development in distance education.

This introductory chapter has two main aims:

- To provide a brief orientation to staff development in general;
- To highlight the strategic perspective and organizational context, as aspect which is sometimes neglected.

Lessons from experience

The papers in this book contain useful lessons from experience so far. They illustrate a diversity of training needs and highlight the concerns that revolve around the task of providing staff development for distance educators—a term which encompasses a variety of roles.

Diversity of training needs

The practice of distance education generates a variety of roles needs. Staffs are often required to learn new work practices and skills. As the following papers show, individuals and groups have to:

- Take on new roles, especially in countries where distance education is unfamiliar;
- Adapt to new ways of teaching and communicating;
- Use new technologies which alter familiar processes of teaching and communication;
- Manage dispersed and decentralized organizations or complex processes;
- Be responsible for supporting learners at a distance;
- Develop better skills in teamwork, co-ordination, and the management of schedules and records;
- Take on unaccustomed roles as trainers.

The papers also describe experiments in collaborative (sometimes international) for staff development and the growth of professional academic courses (at Diploma and Masters degree level) as distance education has become a field of study in its own right. These diverse training needs require a variety of provision, which immediately raises issues of resourcing (financing it and providing good trainers) and selecting priorities.

Categories of staff

The papers here identify the broad categories of personnel requiring training. Around these a coherent policy and programme for staff development has to be constructed. The categories can be grouped as:

- Newly-appointed staff, whether full-time, at the centre (headquarters) or in the field, needing routine induction and orientation to open and distance learning in general;
- Individuals or groups of staff taking on new responsibilities and roles, or staff in traditional institutions adapting existing knowledge or skills to open and distance education applicants;
• All staff periodically, to ensure the maintenance of skills and standards and their continuing professional development as individuals and groups;

• Staff (individual and groups) who face specific changes in their work as a result of change within the organization as a whole (changes such as the introduction of new systems or new technology).

The following papers identify the common core skills and knowledge needed by all staff working in distance education as well as specialist skills and expertise. ‘One-shot’ initial training is seen as inadequate. Instead, training has to match the changing needs of individuals, jobs and groups. A coherent programme of provision for staff is seen as important though not always achieved, even by established institutions. There are several possible reasons for this: lack of resources, weak commitment, or low priority and value placed on it. However, regional and national collaboration and resource-sharing offer potential for overcoming at least some of these problems, as a few of the papers illustrate.

Concerns

The papers reflect a number of concerns and contain useful lessons for planners and trainers. They highlight:

• The difficulty of getting institutional commitment and resources, particularly (though not exclusively) in developing countries where resource (financial and human) may be very scarce;

• The inconsistency in training and staff development provision within organizations;

• The slowness of organizations in general to develop staff development policies and plans, particularly for part-time support staff and field-based staff, and the political nature of such activities;

• Weak integration of training with institutional policy and plans to avoid piecemeal or ad hoc provision;

• Uncertainly about where best to locate the responsibility for staff development within distance teaching organization;

• The status of training and perceptions of its value (some staff do not recognize the need for it, so they resist it; some managers do not support it).

These concerns point to the need for improvement in three respects at least: the status of training and staff development activities, more coherent planning at an organizational level and better use by institutions of the learning resulting from training. Unfortunately, the following situation at a mature distance education institution is still not uncommon:

‘It has no existing institutional staff development policy or plan, either for central academic or regional staff (full-and part-time)...there does not appear to be a budget for staff development and training; the finance for each event has to be negotiated separately...At present each regional office has its own arrangement for tutor training but no agreed national policy or system in place. The quality of training available for tutors is therefore variable, dependent on local circumstances...’ (From a consultancy report by the author).
One way of addressing some of these concerns is for distance education organizations and projects to adopt a more strategic perspective on the role of training and staff development. The rest of this chapter examines this approach.

A strategic perspective on training

‘Strategy’ is the means by which an organization chooses to reach its objectives. The term comes originally from military stage and usually refers to a thought-out plan of action or a consciously formulated policy for achieving an objective. But it can also mean the posture or stance an organization adopts to its staff, structure, operations, competitors, students, the processes of learning, the public, the wider world of education around it and to itself as an organization. Strategic decisions are those which significantly affect the organization’s ability to achieve its objectives (an organization also makes decisions in the normal course of functioning which are not strategic). Strategic management is the process of managing change to reach an organization’s objectives (Bowman and Asch, 1987). Where is training and staff development located in this? Unfortunately, and especially in higher education, training is sometimes seen by senior managers as peripheral to the achievement of institutional objectives rather than central to it. The role of training in achieving institutional objectives in distance education is too often underestimated, partly because open and distance education is seen as just a small variation on the practice of traditional forms. How can this view be changed? What is meant by training and staff development any way?

What is training?

Though a convenient short-hand term, ‘training’ is regarded by some as too narrow to describe the range of learning involved in training experiences or in continuing staff development, education and training, for example:

‘Development is the all-important primary process through which individual and organizational growth can through time achieve their fullest potential. Education is a major contributor to that development process, because it directly and continuously affects the formation not only of knowledge and abilities, but of character and of culture, aspirations and achievements. Training is the shorter-term, systematic process through which an individual is helped to master defined tasks or areas of skill and knowledge of predetermined standards’ (Stewart, 1988, p.5).

Though defined separately here, these are in practice overlapping categories. Also, they are difficult to divorce from their organizational contexts. ‘Training’ involves changes and development in knowledge, skills and attitudes in work groups as well as individuals. Staff development includes the institutional policies, programmes and procedures which provide staff with the means of meeting their own and their organization’s needs in carrying out their work.

Traditionally, in educational institutions, training has most often been seen in terms of benefits to individuals whereas, to improve organizational performance, it has to become more closely linked to organizational goals (such as providing all students with timely and useful feedback on assignments, or producing self-study materials or radio programmes to defined standards). If seen only in terms of individual benefits, training provision may lack coherence and result in a programme composed of ad hoc events. Some individuals may do very well from this kind of approach, others will do badly, missing out on any share of the training resource. In
any case, minimum standards for training provision and individual entitlement across the organization as a whole will be impossible to achieve. Some definitions of training therefore highlight the connection between individual learning and organizational effectiveness, seeing training as: ‘any organizationally initiated procedures which are intended to foster learning among organizational members in a direction contributing to organizational effectiveness’ (Hinrichs, 1976, p.211).

Such definitions of training combine the following key notions:

- Training is a systematic process with some planning and control rather than a wholly random learning from experience or randomly chosen learning events;
- Training is a way of changing the knowledge, skills and attitudes of people as individuals and groups;
- Training aims to improve performance at several levels: the individual, the work group and the organization;
- Training should be aligned to organizational goals as well as individual needs.

However, a perennial tension exists between institutional and individual needs in staff development, as is reflected in polarities in the literature generally on staff development. There is a view that ‘Adults are not “human resources” for organizational efficiency. Organizations are resources for human development’ (Mezirow, 1984, p.226), so staff development, as a consequence, should cater for individual differences and interests. Staff development directed wholly on organizational goals is seen as a form of managerial control development at only one or other end of the institutional-individual continuum is likely to be ineffective. An appropriate balance between the two is needed what is ‘appropriate’ will be defined by the context and culture.

**Does training make a difference?**

Many benefits are claimed for training but not all training is effective. Training can fail to achieve its purposes for several reasons:

- The trainers have inadequate knowledge and skills;
- The content is weak or irrelevant or the design and conduct of the training are not underpinned by sound learning theory;
- Preparation by trainers, organizers and institutions is inadequate;
- The wrong people or location are selected for training;
- The length of the training period is inappropriate for the objectives set (for provide practice and feedback opportunities):
- Participation by staff is intermittent (especially when workshops are provided on-site and work-demands interrupt);
- A mis-match exists between training methods used and the training goals;
- Too long a time-lag is left before applying new learning to ‘real work’
- Training is provided as an activity detached from the ‘real work’ context or organizational realities;
- The institution has not prepared well enough to make use of the training outcomes.
Some of these failings are easier to put right than others. A training intervention (whether an event or the provision of materials) can be deemed ‘successful’ (having good trainers, high levels of participation, soundly-based content, well-designed learning activities or materials, positive reactions from participants, and so on) yet have little impact or transfer outside of the training situation. Why should this be? How can this lack be overcome?

Training as organizational change

The planning of training and staff development sometimes starts with the wrong set of questions, largely about the training event or activities to be provided. It needed to start instead with a set of organizational questions, put to all those involved, about organizational goals (short-term and long-term) and priorities. The overall goals of an organization and the standards for achievement of the tasks leading to those goals should determine the main training provision, especially where resources are scare.

In aligning training effort with strategic goals, senior managers are an important element in making training effective. As some papers in this book confirm, they need to play a significant role but do not always do so. They have the responsibility for ensuring that:

- Staff development is harnessed to the goals of the organization as a whole;
- Training has status and is resourced adequately;
- A purpose, policy and plans for staff development are established;
- Needs are systematically analysed and prioritized within an institutional plan;
- The investment of time, effort and finance in training is carefully evaluated and used as a basis for planning future staff development.

This applies to large institutions involved in distance education as well as small project organizations.

Improvements in individual skills and work performance cannot easily be divorced from the organizational context in which the individual works. In my experience of leading workshops on distance education, the organizational issues surface fast when training involves the transfer of learning to ‘real-work’ contexts. These can present considerable obstacles. Procedures, role boundaries, communication routes, systems and other people are often affected by changes in individual work practices. The converse is also true: changes in individual work practices are affected by these things, being either constrained or enabled by them. The organizational setting determines to a large extent whether or not the training given and new skills learnt will be put to use. Organizations themselves, whether at the work-group or departmental level, play a significant role in the utilization of learning from training, either consciously or unconsciously. Putting an individual’s new skills and learning to use involves other people and may be additional resources. It needs the support of a respective and prepared organization.

The organization’s responsibilities in the training process

Effective training depends on more than the quality of the trainers or the training event or materials. It also depends on the organization’s attitudes and response to training. The organization has a role to play before, during and after training events or courses in the following ways.
Pre-training
• Clarify the precise objectives of training and the use to be made of participants’ learning afterwards.
• Selected appropriate participants
• Build positive expectations and motivation in participants; prepare the ground
• Plan for any changes that improved performance will need (such as organizational or equipment re-arrangements).

During-training
• Protect participants from job/work demands; provide adequate cover for participants’ work and responsibilities during the training period.
• Show interest, possibly through contributions from senior staff to course sessions, where appropriate, and maintain contact with staff on training, particularly during long or overseas courses.
• Ensuring adequate resourcing and facilities.

Post-training
• Provide opportunities for participants to discuss the training experience with others and to identify ways in which it could contribute to work practices.
• Make a breathing space for re-entry (not presenting returnees with an overwhelming backlog of work).

As can be seen, this view of training embeds it in the organization and work context. Does this reflect the situation in your own distance education organization or project? If not, how is it different? To what extent is training linked to strategic goals in your organization?

You might find it revealing to spend a few minutes going through the checklist in Table 3.1 and thinking about your own distance education organization.

Table 3.1: How far is training linked to strategic goals in your organization?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Checklist</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Is there a training/staff development policy? Is it widely known?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• How are decisions made about training provision? Who decides? Who are consulted?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• What methods are used to identify staff development needs in your organization or project:</td>
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<tr>
<td>– at the organizational level?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– at the job level?</td>
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<tr>
<td>– at the person/individual level?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• How well are these levels integrated? Which dominates? Why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• In what direction does the balance need to change, in your view?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How are priorities decided? On what basis?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What is the effect of this on training provision?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• In what ways is staff development provision linked to organizational objectives?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How well is it linked? How could it be strengthened?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Who is responsible for this? Who should be responsible at the different levels, in your view?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Do training objectives and programmes change as soon as there is a change in the organization’s strategic decisions?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• When did this last happen in your organization? What was the outcome?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
What did you find? What conclusions did you draw? What gaps or weak links did you identify? How could you strengthen the links between strategic goals and training in your particular context? What obstacles in doing this can you envisage?

**Developing a strategy**

A starting point for the development of a strategic perspective on staff development is gaining the support of senior management, then defining a purpose, policy and plan for training. The purpose express the general reason for it. The policy gives the guidelines to be followed in planning activities, clarifies responsibilities, identifies types of training, resources and goods. The plan explains in details what will be done to translate the purpose and policy into practical action. The defined purpose and policy together set the framework for the development of training and staff development of a training and staff development plan. Although ideally this world come after an institution-wide audit of training needs which could inform it very specifically, and modified later.

However, training may also have to be provided to respond immediately to major problems or changes. In this case a ‘problem-centred’ strategy can be used, where purposes and policy are agreed for a specific situation, and where planning is on a rolling and short-term basis (reviewed frequently) instead of over a longer-term span of time. The starting point for action is the same in all cases-discussion and agreement with managers and other stakeholders about the explicit purposes and policy needed to guide action.

**Implementing a strategy**

Whatever strategy is adopted, the same steps are involved in implementing it, as Table 3.2 shows.

**Table 3.2: Steps in implementing a training and staff development plan**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Define and degree within the organization the general and particular needs for training (based on a systematic needs analysis).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Review possible ways of meeting needs and the availability of financial resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Establish what the priorities are</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Select appropriate training events and interventions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Construct a coherent training plan in the light of available financial resources, in consultation with the other stakeholders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Communicate to all concerned and build a positive climate towards training.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Prepare an evaluation approach and plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provide the training and evaluate its efficiency and effectiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Use the evaluation data to assess its impact, to improve training provision and to inform future plans.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This last step in Table 3.2 leads you back to the first one again, to start the cycle a new with more reviewing and adjusting the second time around. Of course the process of following these steps is not so clear-cut and neat in action as on paper. Agreeing training provision is likely to require wide consultation, the confrontation of vested interests and clashing claims on scarce resources. Nonetheless, the sequence offers a framework to guide a systematic approach, and lays the groundwork for a cyclical process of review and improvement over time. The next step is to set a time frame on the process and allocate responsibility for achieving it.

**Identifying training needs**

So far, ‘needs analysis’ has been mentioned several times and is referred to in a number of the following papers. This is an important element in designing effective training. However, it is often sketchily done and trends to be linked too little to priorities within the organization as a whole and to concentrate only on the individual. This can result in piecemeal provision with no clear priorities to guide choices in the face of competing claims and scarce resources.

A training need refers to an observable gap or discrepancy between an individual or group’s present knowledge and competence and the levels or standards identified as necessary or desirable to do the job effectively. A training need should not only refer to an individual’s expression of preference for or interest in a particular event, programme or training opportunity, though this tends to be the most frequent interpretation of ‘training need’ in an education setting. Of course, individual interest, motivation and preferences have to be taken into account in negotiating, designing and providing training programmes, but they are only part of the story. Heavy reliance on a needs analysis which is only based on expressions of job-holders wishes is likely to lead to training provision which is not well aligned to organizational goals and to the unfair allocation of resources. However, the priorities identified at the individual, job and organizational levels may coincide too.

Training needs analysis refers to the systematic process of identifying the standards of skills, knowledge and attitudes required in a job and auditing present competence to establish where and in what respects they need improving. It is also worth noting that a gap in knowledge or performance may not always be solved by providing training; other factors may be responsible, such as the organizational structure, systems, culture or reward systems. Training of itself will not solve these problems.

Training needs analysis should be done on three levels: the organizational, the job and the individual (McGehee and Thayer, 1961). A summary is given in Table 3.3 of the focus of analysis is often restricted to Level 3, that of individual needs, and fails to link these with organizational goals. A more effective strategy is to start at the organizational level (Level 1) and work towards the individual (Level 3), though diagnosis of training needs at an organizational level requires quite sophisticated skills of analysis, evaluation and diagnosis as well as access to a wide range of information.
To do a comprehensive training needs analysis for a large organization can be costly and may generate an amount of data which is never used. The funds to meet the expectations raised are also unlikely to be available. An alternative approach is to identify ‘priority problems’, which can be assisted through training provision, and to concentrate effort around these. In arriving at decision about training, costs need to be weighed against anticipated benefits and alternative modes of developing staff.

**Transfer of training to ‘real work’**

Even if training needs are soundly analysed and appropriate training provided, it may still fail to have an impact on what people do in their work, as mentioned earlier. Learning from training may fail to transfer to ‘real work’. Much training and staff development proceeds as if knowledge and its application in the work-context are inevitably related. This is often not the case. Transfer of learning from training is not an inevitable consequence of training given.

Perhaps this can be illustrated by looking more closely at two different views about learning from training (see Table 3.4), which view do you think your distance education organization holds? What evidence do you base your conclusions on? Which view of training do you think has most chance of transferring learning to the ‘real work’ context?
Table 3.4: Two views of training; which is most likely to result in the transfer of training?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>View A: ‘Insular’</th>
<th>View B: ‘Contextualized’</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acquision of knowledge (the content of training given) leads to application of it in the real-work context; knowledge about skills is enough to ensure competent performance of skills.</td>
<td>Knowledge and mastery of skills can sometimes lead to application in the real-work context. Skills are acquired through practice and feedback on performance, and motivation to learn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants on courses learn what trainers teach.</td>
<td>Learning is an outcome of several factors: the motivation and capability of individuals, the norms of the training methods and skills of the trainers, the climate of the organization, the support given by the organization, the perceived value of the training.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If participants apply what they have learnt, then improved results in job performance will occur.</td>
<td>Improvement at the job is a result of several factors: the level of individual learning, the norms and attitudes of the work group, the climate of the organization. Learning from training, if unused, often leads to forgetting or frustration or both on the part of the learner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The responsibility for training belongs wholly to the training provider; it begins and ends with the training event or intervention.</td>
<td>Training is the shared responsibility of three partners; the organization, the trainer or training provider, and the learner or trainee. Training events or activities need to take place within a three-phase sequence, of pre-training preparation, training event, and post-training support.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Adapted from Lynton and Pareek, 1990, p.6)

View A (I’ve labeled this the ‘insular’ approach) presents a ‘trainer-centred’ view of training, where training is isolated from the organization context. The transfer of training is seen as unproblematic yet research tells us that the transfer of training to ‘real work’ situations is complex and depends on a number of factors, as identified in View B (which I’ve named the ‘Contextualised’ approach).

Factors affecting the transfer of training include:

- The nature of the skills learnt (e.g., interpersonal skills transfer less well than psychomotor skills);
- The time lag between learning something and using it in a ‘real-work’ applied fairly soon after learning (probably within three months at the most) then there is deterioration of learning and more limited transfer. This is more true of skills based on cognitive or knowledge processes which can deteriorate markedly within a few weeks than the learning of perceptual-motor skills which persist for longer;
- The number of elements common to the training provided and the job situation (the greater the number, the stronger the transfer). This clearly has implication for the quality of preparation and material for the training event or course;
Perceptions of the relevance and quality of the training by participants;
The attitudes of colleagues, departments and the organization as a whole
towards training.

Taking a strategic perspective, any training provided (in-country or overseas,
on-site or off-site) needs to be set within arrangements for its utilization.
This also requires dialogue between trainers and managers to share
information and to develop joint plans. The extent of transfer of training and
its effectiveness or value need to be judged on the basis of evaluation data.

**Evaluating training and staff development**

Evaluation plays a key role in developing a strategic perspective on training
and staff development. Yet relatively little is written in the distance
education literature on the evaluation of training and staff development.
Though an essential part of the process of improving the quality of training,
Evaluation tends to be neglected or restricted to a limited part of the training
outcomes (usually at the level of participants reactions to be training event
or programme). It is not often enough linked to the longer-term impact of
training on ‘real work’.

The purpose of evaluating training and staff development activities is to
provide feedback on:

- The effectiveness of the training methods and approach;
- The extent of achievement of objectives set by the trainers and
  participants;
- The extent to which the needs identified at both the organizational and
  individual level were met and reflected in improved practice.

**Key questions to ask about training**

- Was the training efficient? Has the training achieved its objectives at
  acceptable costs?
- Was the training effective? Was the training well done and was it worth
  while to provide? What did it contribute to the achievement of
  organizational goals?
- Was it cost effective? Did it achieve most of its objectives in a reasonably
  economy way? Was it the most cost-effective way or were there better
  alternatives?

Questions about efficiency are the ones asked most often (perhaps because
they are easier to answer than the other). One consequence is that training is
evaluated mainly in terms of satisfaction with the event or course. However,
the other questions are equally important in evaluating changes in four
areas: individual learning, performance on the job, work-group change and
organizational change. Stopping at evaluating the training event alone is to
evaluate within a closed loop; this is because the objectives for training are
also to be found in the work and organizational context which gave rise to
them. So to break out of the closed loop, the evaluation needs to go beyond
the training event or activity itself.

A broader approach to evaluating training and staff development is needed.
If learning from training is to be viewed as a part of organizational
development, then there are four aspects of it which need to be evaluated: context, inputs, reactions and outcomes. The CIRO model (based on Warr et al, 1970) is helpful in doing this (see Table 3.5).

### Table 3.5: A model for evaluating training (CIRO)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Context in which the learning event takes place.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• How accurately were needs initially diagnosed?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• What information was used and how was it analysed to establish these needs?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Was training an appropriate solution to the problem?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Why was this particular kind of event and form chosen?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• How were learning objectives selected?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What learning objectives were set? Which level of outcomes did they relate to (individual learning, performance on the job, departmental change, and organizational change)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How does this learning event link to others in the participant’s experience, and to other training events provided? Does it fit with an organizational plan for training?</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inputs to the training</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• What resources were available for the training event?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What were actually used (personnel, physical and financial resources, time)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What were the learning structure, content, media and methods? Did these incorporate sound principles of learning?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What was the final cost?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Was the selection of participants appropriate?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Did they attend the training provided? What was the take-up?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Was this the best and most appropriate way of training?</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reactions to the training</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• What reactions to the learning event did participants and trainers have?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Was it perceived to have achieved its original objectives?</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcomes from the training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Was it efficient?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Was it effective?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Was it cost-effective?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this model, outcomes refer to more than the reactions of participants to the learning event or training intervention. They also refer to longer-term impact and ‘real-work, changes. So what kinds of outcomes should be evaluated?

### Outcomes to be evaluated

Hamblin (1974) proposes a framework which lists five levels of outcomes for evaluation. This moves from the level of individual reaction to the training given, to change in practice (in the individual, the work-group and the
This requires assessing the impact of training over different periods of time, short-term and longer-term. Hamblin also argues that the different levels of outcome are linked together in a cause-and-effect chain, each dependent on the success of the previous one. It is easier to evaluating training outcomes at some levels than others. For example, evaluation of training at the ‘reactions’ level is easier than assessing effects on the achievement of organizational goals.

Level 1 Reactions which lead to….
Level 2 Learning which leads to…
Level 3 Change in individual behavior which leads to….
Level 4 Change in the department of work group which leads
Level 5 Effects on the achievement of organization goals.

To determine the outcomes of training at each of these levels, different objectives for each need to be identified and the extent of their achievement assessed. The objectives to be measured at each level of outcomes is shown in Table 3.6.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>What to measure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reactions</td>
<td>• Satisfaction with the event or course, tutors, materials etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Perceptions of the training’s relevance and value.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning</td>
<td>• Changes in specific knowledge, skills and attitudes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in work performance</td>
<td>• Key aspect and improvement in individual’s work behavior and job performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in the department or work group</td>
<td>• Key aspect and improvements in achievement at the work group, team or departmental level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effects on the achievement of organizational goals</td>
<td>• Achievements of some overall organizational goal or explicit changes (including changing an organization’s culture of values).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It gets more difficult and time-consuming to do the evaluation of outcomes as you move down the chain, but of course this need not be done for every single event (for example, a day’s workshop or an hour’s audio-conference training session). It is also difficult to demonstrate effects for complex areas of skill development which need to take place over time. However, difficulty is not an argument for not doing it. Measuring outcomes should be done on a regular but selective basis and for larger units of programmes as a whole. It is an area for research and development.

**Conclusion**

Training and staff development have an important role to play in contributing to the quality of distance education. Some problems in the functioning of distance education can be attributed directly to lack of training though, as the papers in this book show, there is a accumulating
experience and activity in the training of distance educators. Realisation of the value of training is growing though it still needs to be located more centrally within an organisation’s concerns and viewed as a process of organizational change. Actions needed to promote a more strategic perspective on training and staff development for distance education include:

- Negotiating organizational support, particularly at senior management level, and adequate resources;
- Developing a purpose, policy and plan at an organizational level;
- Aligning training effort with organizational goals;
- Using training goals to guide the choice of training strategies;
- Developing training systems instead of isolated events;
- Widening the trainer’s role to engage with the context beyond the training event;
- Evaluating training provision to assess its impact and effectiveness at several levels and to make improvements.

The papers in this book provide a wide range of ideas and illustrations of staff development in action. In transplanting ideas and practices to other countries, an important factor in their success will be the incorporation of the new and different culture. Again, the context affects the outcomes. While particular training activities and events may in themselves be effective, their organizational effects may depend for success on changes in reward structures, relationships between people and role-holders, and other aspects of the culture of the particular organization or society. The effectiveness of training is inevitably linked to the context of the organization and its culture though there are common principles of good practice.

REFERENCES


