Effective Training

إعـداد :

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Introduction:

Training is an ongoing process. A key part of that process is that there should be well planned programs. It is of two types: Preset and Inset. While the former refers to the preparation or training programs occurring in the various colleges in a certain university to prepare doctors, teachers, engineers, accountants etc…, the latter refers to that type of training of taking place inservice. This type is, in most cases, related to enhancing professional development, and improving performance. Such training must be conducted with careful attention to the needs of learners, the context in which learners perform and current evidence about what makes training effective.

Training is appropriate only when a performance gap is due to a lack of knowledge and skills. Because performance gaps often have multiple causes, the situation may require several integrated interventions.

Effective training requires training needs assessment (TNA) and designing training programs.

(1) Training Needs Assessment (TNA)

Training needs assessment is one of the first steps in the training cycle. It serves as the basis for planning and designing a capacity-building programme. It helps us to identify the current training needs of the prospective participants, as well as the problems they face and the root causes of these problems. We should prioritize these needs according to urgency and importance. The results of the

TNA can be the basis for identifying the skills and competencies needed by participants in order to perform their jobs effectively and efficiently.

(2) Designing the Training Program

Using the results of the training needs analysis, we should be able to carefully design a training programme in consultation with resource persons. In designing the programme, our collaboration and discussion should result in a programme that has realistic objectives and outcomes leading to the satisfaction of the trainees' needs that we have identified.

Objectives of the training

The overall objectives of the training should state what we expect the training programme to achieve in terms of the final outcomes. These overall objectives can be broken down into more specific ones. The latter provide a sense of direction for the attainment of the expected outcomes.

The specific objectives should be stated clearly and according to order of priority. They should also be stated in the form of learning objectives that match the expected competencies to be acquired by participants. These objectives must be specific, measurable, achievable, results-oriented and time-bound (SMART).

(3) Content and presentation

Training content should be need based. Want-to-know content helps trainees become interested and motivated. Also, it becomes meaningful and retainable. There are some demonstration and presentation and techniques. These are as follows,

1. Demonstration Techniques

Learning through our own experience is very effective. We learn a lot by observing and trying things out

on our own, which can also be fun. During training, presentations give people an opportunity to share experiences, and demonstrations give them a chance to see or even experience new things. Through demonstration techniques, visual items such as pictures, charts, models and natural objects can be used for the purpose of learning. Demonstration helps to make learning both meaningful and realistic.

2. Presentation Techniques

OHP and PowerPoint presentations

OHPs (overhead projectors) and PowerPoint (Microsoft computer software for presentation using texts, graphs, pictures, etc.) are very popular in current training programmes. We can use them in our programmes to visualize our main points and present them in an attractive way. This will help to make our training sessions successful and interesting. OHP sheets and PowerPoint slides can be easily used even for a large number of participants.

3. Worksheet

This technique helps participants to put theory into practice, and to adapt and apply the knowledge and information they have acquired to actual problems and situations.

(4) Training Methods and Techniques

There are several training methods and techniques. These include the following,

1. Discussion

Group discussion is a technique in which the participants are divided into groups to discuss certain issues or topics. They share their opinions and experiences while discussing the topic within a given time frame. Some group discussion techniques, such as case study, role-play and the gallery technique, require advance preparation (e.g., printed

materials or display board). Discussion methods are very useful:

• for developing logical reasoning

• for analyzing problems, finding causes and defining strategies

• for learning about or better understanding the previous knowledge and experiences of the participants

• for improving people's ability to express themselves

• for learning to respect and tolerate the opinions of others

• for developing the analytical skills of the participants

• in areas where group dynamics and the perspectives of the participants are required • in areas where the active participation of the trainees is required

2. Brainstorming

Brainstorming is a training technique generally used for problem solving or generating a number of possible solutions to a problem. Brainstorming is a process in which the maximum number of ideas related to a certain issue are generated in the shortest possible time by means of collective thinking. In this process, participants are encouraged to express their views openly. Initially participants accept all ideas and later on reach a decision after their analysis.

This method is employed to generate more ideas in less time. It stresses the use of "open-mindedness" or "free thinking" without criticism of any ideas expressed. The goal of brainstorming is to come up with as many ideas as possible without regard to quality, with as many team members as possible contributing their thoughts.

Here the quantity of ideas is far more important than their quality. Even the wildest idea is accepted as well as recorded. The specific objectives of this technique are to

develop the ability to arrive at a decision quickly and to help consolidate previous learning.

3. Station technique

This is a technique where the topics of the training session are divided into several parts (or subtopics) for detailed discussion in order to elaborate different views and ideas related to the issues identified. The participants are divided into groups depending upon the number of subtopics to be discussed. If the topic is divided into three parts, then there are three "stations." If it is divided into four parts, then there are four "stations." Participants are then required to move from one station to another.

Each part of a topic should be one that participants can discuss independently from other parts of the topic. Any separate part should not be dependent on the discussion results of other parts. For example, the SWOT (strength, weakness, opportunity, threat) of an issue are good subtopics for independent discussion., However, the objectives, outcomes, and activity plans of a project are not appropriate subtopics for this technique, because activity plans should be discussed in connection with objectives, and outcomes and activity plans need to be matched.

4. Role-play

Role-play is a structured activity, usually in the form of a dramatic performance that recreates a situation from reallife. The participants in a training programme take part in the role-play and act out a situation for the purpose of further analysis and discussion. Through role-play we can analyze a problem and identify its causes and solutions. Role-play is also useful for making comparisons between ideal and real-life conditions. To reduce preparation time and avoid observer boredom, a role-play exercise should not be too long. The "script" or scenario should be prepared with a clear focus on the selected topic or theme.

5. Case study

A case study is a detailed description of events that either really happened or are products of the imagination. Its purpose is to take the participants closer to the real context of a situation or problem. Through a case study we can analyze a problem to identify its causes and solutions based on the experiences of the participants. Case studies can also draw comparisons between ideal and real-life conditions.

Case studies can be used for different purposes:

• to increase awareness of a problem

• to exchange experiences

• to reach decisions by studying a situation or an incident

• to learn from past successes and failures

• to clarify perception of the problem and the solution or results

Case studies can be descriptions of events that really happened or are imaginary but based on reality. They can be presented orally, in written form or on film. They can depict cases or situations with no identified problems, one or more problems, or a problem with multiple or alternative solutions.

6. Question and answer

This technique is very effective for obtaining information about the experiences of the participants by asking them questions. There are different types of questions: • Predetermined questions: Questions are directed at a specific person determined in advance.

• Open questions: Questions are not aimed at any particular person; any- body can answer.

• Delayed directed questions: The first questions are kept open and then directed to a particular person. Questions can be:

• Closed: The questions have to be answered by Yes or No.

• Open-ended: The questions have to be answered with some detail or elaboration.

(5) Learning Assessment Technique

Assessment helps to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the training programme and ultimately to improve it. Before devising any assessment technique, facilitators should clearly identify what they want to assess. In the case of training programmes, the following are the most important things to be assessed:

• what trainees have learned

• how well the trainers have performed

• the overall process of training

• the feelings and confidence levels of the trainees in regard to training

When?

Assessment can be conducted at different stages of the training programme. It can occur at the beginning, the middle or the end.

Types of Assessment

Generally there are three categories of assessment that can be employed:

• Self-assessment or individual assessment

• Group or participatory assessment

• External assessment

1. Self-assessment or Individual Assessment

Through this technique each individual (including organizers, trainers and trainees) makes an assessment of his or her own performance and achievements. Self-assessment may take place both during and at the end of a training programme. The following tools may be used for self-assessment:

2. Group Assessment

a. Discussion

Using this method, the participants sit in groups of 8-10 members and assess the impact of the training programme with the help of a facilitator. The discussion should be centered on a set of questions or issues prepared in advance by the organizers or prepared by the participants themselves. Participants can use a whiteboard or chalkboard to list the main strengths and weaknesses of the training programme. The list may be prioritized as a summary of the final assessment of the group.

b. Interview

Group assessment may also be conducted through interviews. Two or three facilitators may be assigned with the task of interviewing the participants on the basis of a questionnaire prepared in advance. After interviewing the group members, the facilitators compile their views for final assessment. They can present their final assessment results to the group for their comments.

3. Confidence Mountain

A similar method can be engaged to assess the rise and fall in the confidence level of the participants at the end of each session or at the end of the program. Participants may be asked to express changes in their confidence levels using the figures of mountains. A big mountain represents a considerable rise in confidence and a small mountain will represent little improvement. Flat land means there has been no change at all. This chart can be maintained individually or by groups.

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