

THE IMPACT OF TRAINING IN HOSPITALS TODAY

*the supervisor as
a teaching person
for in-service training*

Today, staff education is a very important part of in-service training in hospitals. It has always been a necessary part of training in industry but with the entry of government into hospitals through various funding agencies and mechanisms, hospitals have become engaged in training to as great a degree or perhaps more so than industry, even at its height in the 1920's and early 1940's after both World Wars.

Upgrading and helping the underprivileged enter the hospital field has occupied all levels of supervision not only in overall program management but also in direct supervision of workers entering and moving up career ladder programs.

Through anti-poverty programs and the interest which hospitals have had in the last few years in training the underprivileged, ladders of progression have enabled the worker to gain skills and through demonstrated use of these skills, move up the rungs of the job ladder. This progression frees the entry level positions to the unskilled.

In-service education or training is "big business" in hospitals today because of the need to not only help the unskilled develop skills but to help the skilled increase their capabilities. Rapid expansion of hospital facilities has produced a severe shortage of capable workers in all job fields.

HOSPITAL TRAINING BACKGROUND

At the turn of the century and during the 1930's, any kind of training was considered wasteful and time-consuming. This was in distinct contrast to the periods after both world wars and the impetus since World War II which has continued and has further accelerated. In the 1930's, training was something which pampered employees, and those businessmen who entered it were considered to be coddling employees.

In the 30's, the most productive worker, the one who acquired his own skills and was "self-made," was the one management hired and retained. The slower, incompetent worker was fired. Reasons

for *why* he was wasteful or *what* could be done to improve his attitude or skills through training were frowned on by management.

The Wagner Act of 1935 did much to change this as it gave workers for the first time a chance to organize and protect their rights of employment and retention on the job. Subsequent labor relations acts with further protection of workers' rights have enabled management and unions to give standard benefits as we know them today: vacations, sick pay, holidays, seniority and so forth. Once the standard benefits were covered and expanded within all industries, including the hospital industry, attention since the 1950's has been more and more to the education of workers. Today, in hospitals it is not unusual to find educational funding clauses in union contracts or to find that management has instituted liberal tuition refund programs.

FACTORS TODAY

There is impetus, then, today, behind in-service training in hospitals. The impetus comes from state and federal government, from the desire of the worker himself to be trained and get ahead, from the economy which through lack of sufficient manpower applies pressure to train workers from within, from unions which have added education to their long list of benefits, and from hospital management itself which has a sincere interest in the goals of the worker and desires to see him progress. Hospital management also has recognized that a vast untapped source of manpower exists *within* institutions — waiting for the opportunity to learn skills and move up the career ladder to fill jobs for which there is short supply from without the hospital. Training programs and tuition refund programs financed by federal, state and hospital funds are commonplace in hospitals today.

In the 1930's, the supervisor was a "straw boss" but today he must know how to train. In the 1930's, the super-

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visor set the production pace and kept the workers in line. Today the supervisor has to understand his workers, their problems and needs and must coordinate these needs with the goals of the institution. Late in the 1950's, the "straw boss" of the 30's was already becoming as extinct in hospitals as he had become long since in industry.

As hospitals grew, there was a great need for supervisors who could train and educate and for managers who could lead and develop others. Trial and error learning was becoming as obsolete as yesterday's horse and carriage.

Some of the more progressive hospitals began in the 1950's to foresee the need to expand the personnel program to take in the vast area of training. In 1957, St. Vincent's undertook an expansive and expensive program, financed in large part by the U.S. Public Health Service, to discover the best ways to improve worker efficiency. At its close in 1960 all phases of the study were implemented into a highly successful program. In studying turnover costs, absenteeism cost and savings from improved wage and salary administration, one area most affected during the study, and to this day, was supervisory training. It was found in the late 50's and holds as true today, that certain goals must be prevalent in an institution if training programs are to succeed and workers are to progress up the job ladder.

ORGANIZATION GOALS

Some of these goals are:

1. To develop supervisors who can effectively motivate and train others.
2. To prepare non-supervisory personnel to function as efficiently as possible.
3. To establish promotion-from-within policies and train people to fill these jobs.
4. To improve communications on all levels, and
5. To encourage self-development through study.

Supervisory training programs usually include sessions on human relations skills and communications. At St. Vincent's our programs have included these topics for the past 12 years. This is to emphasize to supervisors the need to be people-oriented as well as work-oriented. Hospitals by their very nature are people-oriented because they are patient-oriented. Therefore it is not difficult to apply principles of positive human relations to their personnel programs.

NECESSARY CLIMATE FOR TRAINING

The hospital's overall attitude toward training is important. Does management see itself responsible for planning, organizing, implementing and evaluating a training program? Is training seen as a cooperative activity? Do staff people in the personnel department see themselves as advisory to supervisors and department heads who function in line positions, in carrying out training programs? Does the line supervisor apply the training principles to his work situation?

If the above questions cannot be answered affirmatively and if training stops with the line supervisor and is not applied to lower echelons, training can only be a limited or nonexistent experience in hospitals.

Supervisors are responsible for dealing with people. They have to be aware of all types of behavior — individual as well as group. A knowledge or understanding of human behavior is a prerequisite to teaching people.

The supervisor as a teaching person should have a "general background of the knowledge, skills and attitudes required by top management to deal with the human equation in training . . . to apply them in a more specific manner because the personality of the top-management leader can effect the success or failure of a training program."¹

Training invites changes in human behavior. Training has to be a cooperative activity — staff with line. Training needs

a receptive climate for practice. Training teaches attitudes as well as skills.

Supervisors as teaching people can inspire a cooperative attitude among their workers when they understand the nature of their own behavior, the behavior of others, management's attitude and management's goals. When training proceeds in this climate, the hospital will be as one body working towards one end.

The supervisor is the one responsible for training his workers. In addition to accomplishing the work of his unit or department, he is the leader of his group. He is the one from whom authority springs. He assigns work. He delegates authority. "He must continually shape the behavior of his subordinates to create a situation in which they can help him to get the job done. He must create the conditions under which workers can achieve a stable organization of their environment on the job which will lead them to produce the kind of behavior that is directed toward the aims of their group and the larger organization of which it is a part. All these things combine to thrust the training role on the line supervisor, and there is little he can do to avoid it."²

For example, suppose a group of sessions on communications are run by the training coordinator. At St. Vincent's he is a staff person in the personnel department at the level of assistant director of personnel. Sessions on this subject have been run for various department supervisors because it is much-needed. Principles may be outlined, key ideas printed and distributed, case studies and examples of mis-communication discussed. Much enthusiasm is sparked among the participants. But the training coordinator has only accomplished his task when the learner has practiced what he has learned. The supervisor must supervise and to do so he must teach.

PRINCIPLES OF LEARNING

To apply what he has learned, the supervisor might do well to follow some general principles of learning. In his book

on *Supervising People* George D. Halsey has summarized these into 15 practical suggestions:³

1. Know the subject yourself
2. Try to have undivided attention
3. Make the learner want to know
4. Start with the known; lead into the unknown
5. Teach the simple first, and lead up to the complicated
6. Keep your explanation to the point
7. Give a reason for each step
8. Demonstrate by doing (or having done) correctly and exactly what the learner will later be asked to do
9. Encourage discussion, especially questions
10. Promptly after each operation has been explained and demonstrated to the learner, give him an opportunity to demonstrate the operation as if he were teaching you — making sure that he understands and explains to you the reasons for each step.
11. Never forget that the emotions play an important part
12. Check from time to time to see how well the information is retained and used
13. Remember the importance of example as a teaching force
14. Plan your teaching in advance
15. Use the same care, the same teaching technique, in giving instructions to an individual."

TRAINING SUPERVISORS TO TEACH

Supervisors need to learn and then implement the principles of learning so well summarized by Mr. Halsey. Training is wasted unless line supervisors know how to teach skills in a way that workers not only learn the skills but are able to apply them. In addition, the line supervisor must know how to follow up so that what has been learned is reinforced.

Learning can be best accomplished in small groups. This theory, and those

that follow, may be applied to any learning situation for any level of worker and for any subject matter. It has been successfully employed at St. Vincent's in both staff and line training for the past decade.

Training sessions should last no longer than an hour. Beyond this attention is lost, restlessness occurs, interest wanes and subject matter is not retained.

As near as possible, participants in learning groups should have homogeneous backgrounds. Age and number of years' experience may vary but level of job and education should remain similar. Work experience may vary depending upon the course being conducted and how much interplay is sought between participants. For example, it can be both stimulating and more educational to mix people from different job areas. Also a mixture of different personalities will be both interesting and stimulating. For example, whereas discussion may be limited among a group of shy, timid persons, it will be outgoing and stimulated if more aggressive and outgoing personalities are added to the group.

ON-THE-JOB TRAINING

"Learning by doing is the most widely-used method of acquiring operating skill and necessary related knowledge immediately useful on the job."⁴

Training can take place and most often does right in the work area.

On-the-job training uses the general principles of learning mentioned above which are based on the theory that observing is not enough but that one learns by doing. Sophocles said this in 445 B.C. and it is as true today.

JIT is a four step method for training the worker. It first prepares the worker for his job, presents the job to be done, allows the worker the opportunity to try it himself and ends with frequent follow up by the supervisor.

DEFINITIONS

We have examined training in a fair amount of detail. Some definitions of

training may serve to summarize our statements.

Training is "the function of helping others to acquire and apply knowledge, skills, abilities and attitudes needed by the organization of which they are a part."⁵

Also, "training is a means by which a superior (supervisor) can induce a subordinate to do a better job without having to supervise him in detail."⁶

"Training is a systematic, organized, and planned procedure directed to changing the behavior of people in some desired manner."⁷

Training is accomplished when we satisfy individual needs, attain the goals of the organization and when behavior that we want repeated is encouraged while behavior that we do not want repeated is discouraged.

SIGNS FOR THE SUPERVISOR

If a training program is built upon the sound principles described so far, the following will be apparent:

1. development is individual, personal and unique
2. to learn, a person must experience an unfulfilled need
3. all training produces self-development
4. for development to take place, the learner "must perceive some goal or reward related to the satisfaction of his need and worth the effort involved in attaining it."⁸
5. development is work-centered and not based on stereotyped personality traits
6. training is best accomplished when there is sufficient motivation to inspire the learner to want to solve problems
7. learning is dependent upon the day-to-day work situation
8. development is accelerated when the supervisor's leadership and attitude are encouraging, positive, stimulating and creative

9. learning is taking place on all levels
10. learning is free from any force with simply the "degree of maturation and psychological readiness to learn present."⁹
11. the learner is experiencing some success as he progresses in his learning.

USING HUMAN RESOURCES

To implement the training so needed in hospitals and to help the individual develop and progress up the job ladder, in-service programs, on-the-job programs, promotion-from-within programs are needed. Conversely, employees

should also have the right, free from jeopardy, to reject opportunities of advancement.

Education, development and training leads to the profitable use of a person's resources through which there is fulfillment of individual as well as organizational needs.

"Happy the man who finds wisdom, the man who gains understanding! For her profit is better than profit in silver, and better than gold is her revenue; she is more precious than corals . . ." (*Proverbs 3, 13-15*).

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VALSPAR FIRST TO SIGN JOBS '70 ENTRY AND UPGRADING

The Valspar Corp., Rockford, Ill., was the first employer to sign both entry-level and upgrading training contracts under provisions of the JOBS '70 program, the U.S. Department of Labor announced.

JOBS '70 is a stepped-up version of the Job Opportunities in the Business Sector (JOBS) program, a joint effort of the Labor Department and the National Alliance of Businessmen (NAB) to hire and train disadvantaged jobless persons. It features an entry-level and a skill-upgrading contract option.

Under its entry-level contract, Valspar, a manufacturer of paints and varnishes, will hire and train 37 disadvantaged unemployed persons as material handlers, mixers, varnish makers, tinters, machine packagers, and stores laborers. They will

be trained for 16 to 39 weeks and upon completion of training will have permanent full-time jobs and earn from \$2.61 to \$3.13 an hour.

Under its upgrading contract, the company will upgrade the skills of 11 present employees: 4 from materials handler to mixer, 2 from mixer to tinter, 2 from general laborer to varnish maker, and 3 from general laborer to tiner. They will be trained for 17 to 25 weeks; after training they will have upgraded skills and increased earnings averaging \$15 a week.

The Labor Department has invested \$90,824 in Federal funds in the two 18-month contracts: entry level, \$79,905, at an average cost per trainee of \$2,154; and upgrading, \$11,119, at an average cost per trainee of \$1,011.