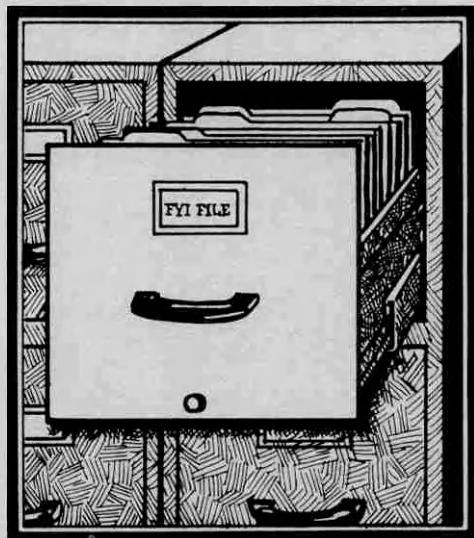


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Factors Affecting The Efficiency Of Training Guides

Training guides are specialized tools which provide a convenient, economical and effective way to train supervisors and managers.

Experience has shown that well-designed training guides can be extremely efficient and can perform important training/development functions with far less fuss and muss, and at far less cost, than other media. In some circumstances they can function better as a training medium than policy and procedure manuals, films, textbooks, discussion groups, employee magazines, and supervision/management bulletins. Further, the effectiveness of media such as films and discussion groups can be significantly enhanced, reinforced and extended when they are used jointly with appropriate training guides.

The purpose of this report is to outline and discuss briefly some of the key factors which we take into consideration when Creative Training Guides are designed — factors which contribute to their unique efficiency and overall effectiveness as training/development tools. The order in which these factors are presented in this report does not necessarily reflect their relative importance.

Factor 1: Optimum Learning Module — The physical character of Creative Training Guides reflects our findings that a "digest" size and length of no more than 14 pages of text represent the optimum learning module for printed material which can usefully and comfortably be assimilated at one reading by most adults.

We have found that 12 pages of easy-to-read text is better than 14. However, we have also found that it is often impossible to deal adequately with viable supervisory/managerial subject areas in 12 pages without resorting to serious omissions or counterproductive condensations. Therefore we opted for two more pages of material to ensure adequate subject coverage. The slightly greater length has little adverse effect on reading comfort or retention.

Factor 2: More Content in Less Space — We employ a precis mode of writing which results in maximizing the quantity of key ideas and substantive content that is presented in each guide.

The 14 pages of text contain quantities of substantive material usually presented in publications of many more pages and words. Yet, our guides are easy and pleasant to read because we pay close attention to the flow, clarity and understandability of our writing style as well as to its compactness and substantiality.

Our compactness of style makes Creative Training Guides even more economical than their low price indicates. You save additional money because less reading time is required for the same amount of learning. How much do you save because of this factor? As a rule of thumb, you can calculate a savings of one hour of salary per guide for each supervisor/manager. (Additionally, there are substantial savings in meeting and discussion time, as discussed in Factor 5.)

Factor 3: Effectiveness of Content — Effectiveness of content is the most important single factor in the efficiency of training guides. It is also the most subtle and difficult to achieve. A guide may be printed in an attractive and convenient format and even be pleasant to read, but unless its ideas and information are of high import and impact, it will not be effective.

The choice of content in a training guide reflects the judgment, expertise, experience, skill, attitude and know-how of its producer(s). To achieve effectiveness of content, we evaluate the material in Creative Training Guides according to criteria such as these:

1. Does it deal with key and relevant on-the-job matters?
2. Can the reader relate the content to the concrete circumstances and needs on the job?
3. Does it get to the heart of the matter?
4. Does it deal with the right aspect of the matter?
5. Does it provide practical answers to real problems?
6. Are the "why" and the "how" as well as the "what" covered?
7. Is it expressed as clearly and succinctly as possible?
8. Are all redundancies, irrelevancies and low practicality matters kept out?
9. Does it evoke, clarify and amplify knowledge the (adult) reader already has?
10. Does it re-awaken insight the reader once had but has forgotten, overlooked, or allowed to slip away?
11. Does it widen the reader's perspective?
12. Does it flex and stretch the reader's mind as well as

structure it?

13. Does it motivate and inspire as well as inform?
14. Does it prompt the reader to sense the connotations of the words as well as their denotations?
15. Does it relate to and integrate with other ideas in the guide?
16. Does it reflect a better way of life on the job?
17. Will it hold up one, five, or 10 years from today?

Factor 4: Focused for Line Supervisors and Managers

— One of the most common mistakes made in the preparation of training materials is that they are written to cover a subject "academically" instead of being focused in the perspective of operating supervisors and managers. Much training material is written with a "staff" mentality or orientation which turns off line personnel.

Creative Training Guides are written by experienced trainers who convert the "subject information" (such as psychology, employee relations, AA/EEO laws and regulations) into "operating" or practical "what, why and how to do it" information which line supervisors and managers can comprehend without need to convert academically, staff-oriented subjects into an operating frame of reference.

Factor 5: Compatibility with Organizational Policies, Procedures and Circumstances

— Another common mistake made is that training materials are prepared with a mixed assortment of policies, procedures, problems and concrete circumstances together with supervisory/management principles and fundamentals. Besides encumbering the training medium with materials obtainable elsewhere in the organization, such mixing rigidifies the content and makes quick obsolescence inevitable because today's particular combination of policies, procedures, problems and circumstances will no doubt not be the same as tomorrow's. Very often, different departments within the same organization will find such training material inappropriate or at least partly irrelevant to them so that, even from the start, the material has low acceptance.

It takes considerable expertise and sophistication to design guides that avoid obsolescence and are compatible with the policies, procedures, problems and circumstances of many different kinds of organizations. The fact that our guides continue to be used by organizations of widely different character, from both the private and public sector, confirms that we have significantly resolved this difficult problem to their satisfaction. We attribute this know-how to the many years of experience and consultation our staff associates have had with a wide variety of organizations.

Factor 6: Reliability/Validity of Content — As ethical publishers, we strive to present only sound material. We avoid fads and narrow or specialized points of view. We are cognizant that administrators place their trust in us when they introduce our guides into their organizations.

We try not to be swayed too quickly by "latest" findings and "new" schools of thought which appear with such frequency these days, and which often seem quite convincing at first blush. Looking back over the past 10 or 15 years, we now see that most of them promised too much. We do try to use what usefulness still remains of them after a testing out and shaking down period.

However, conservatism is not really our bag. Our guides contain much innovative material in addition to the tried and true. As publishers, we find that we can't be all things to all persons and that we would leave the reader hanging if we assumed a noncommittal "neutrality." We therefore do not hesitate to incorporate our

considered opinions and evaluations whenever necessary. The expression "if you don't stand for anything you will fall for anything" is appropriate for mention here. In designing our guides we include "something old, something new, something borrowed, something true," as necessary to get the job done right.

Factor 7: Usefulness for Meetings — Creative Training Guides are widely used in seminars, in-house training sessions and in university, junior college and technical school classes as well.

Our guides are designed to be used both as a training session outline for the trainer and as a text for the participants. If you examine them you will note that the paragraph headings serve a double purpose. One purpose is to introduce the content of the paragraph to the reader in dramatic form.

The second purpose of the headings is to provide an outline for a training session. Even inexperienced trainers have found that they can conduct professional quality training sessions using Creative Training Guides as their main resource and outline, supplemented as appropriate with other information, materials and resource people.

Meeting time can be significantly reduced if training guides are distributed before a meeting. Since the average reading time for a Creative Training Guide is about 23 minutes, supervisors and managers are not overly burdened with pre-meeting preparation. Experience has shown that when participants study pre-meeting materials the discussions are much more productive and on target.

Guides distributed during or after meetings also make it possible to economize on meeting time because they serve as summaries and handy reference/reminder sources of what was discussed in the meeting. When participants know they will have a guide after the meeting, they will consume less time in note taking and in asking some unnecessary questions.

Factor 8: Permanence and Continuity — Lack of permanence and continuity is a serious problem. It is costly to reissue new materials when old materials become obsolete, and when new personnel need to be trained. (Supervisors and managers can learn individually between training sessions with our self-administered guides.)

Users of Creative Training Guides are always assured of being able to obtain a supply of non-obsolete guides. Our guides are virtually free of obsolescence because of their unique design and choice of content. We publish our guides in relatively moderate, yet cost-effective, quantities. Any changes necessary to update them are incorporated in later printings. For example, "The Supervisor's Role in AA/EEO" has had five printings. Three of the printings incorporated slight changes to reflect changes in law and conditions.

Factor 9: Advantages of Reading Materials — There is much talk these days about the assumed superiority of other media as compared to reading materials. Yet, no medium, regardless of its particular strengths, can replace written materials.

One key fact ought to be kept in mind: Reading still carries the heavy freight in training/development. Supervisors and managers obtain at least 95-99 percent of all their information from written materials. Much of what is communicated to them via other media is reinforced with written material — attesting to the ephemeral and dependent nature of the other media.

We don't intend to be negative about other media. Far from it; L.J. Gordon Associates conduct seminars and

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design materials in other media for clients. We do, however, want to give due credit to the true importance and indispensability of written media.

Reading materials have some key advantages which most other media do not have, such as:

- Learning is paced at learner's absorption rate;
- Retention is superior;
- Learner can easily refer back to previously read materials;
- Materials can be carried to any location;
- Learner can schedule the most convenient and suitable time to study.

Most supervisors and managers have reading abilities considerably above the average population. Experience has amply shown that they will respond favorably to and benefit from properly prepared written materials. However, because they are busy, they will not read bulky texts. They will not bother with materials which have not been designed with their convenience — and learning state — in mind.

Factor 10: Integration/Coordination of Ideas — Creative Training Guides supplement one another. This is one of the advantages of an integrated series. One set of materials does not clash and conflict with another. Repetition is also eliminated. Vital concepts are coordinated and related to give the supervisors/managers a more whole and harmonious total learning experience. Undesirable fragmentation and compartmentalization of learning are thus avoided.

Factor 11: "State of the Art" — The current "state of the art" is incorporated in every Creative Training Guide. Yet, we avoid specious technical vocabularies and specialized conceptual frames of reference.

We recognize that while new knowledge displaces some previous knowledge, the ratio is only about one to 10,000, i.e., .9999 percent of "old" knowledge still remains valid. Therefore, we hold that our everyday language and common sense perspective, which incorporates .9999 percent of established knowledge, should not be abandoned in favor of the latest "in" vocabulary or specialized perspective.

Knowledgeable training/development professionals know that the proliferation of technical terms and specialized conceptual frames of reference is leading to linguistic and conceptual confusion. Specialized vocabularies may be useful in communication with a specialized group. But they have little utility when used outside the group and are largely counterproductive when used with lay people such as supervisors and managers. Their effects on the overall "ecology" of language and thought structure/utility should be considered.

The problem of over-use of specialized language is so severe that universities are urging their faculties to develop a general curriculum and a common language/conceptual base to alleviate the difficulties into which overspecialization, with its gobbledygook, has led us.

When some trainers don't see their favorite terminology and conceptualizations in our guides and see only everyday language and a common sense perspective, they jump to the conclusion that our guides are "simple" content-wise because the language lacks the usual trappings of "learnedness." We hope that, by explaining our position in regard to avoiding professionalistic gobbledygook, our attempts to present in-depth, state of the art materials expressed in simple and practical language for the benefit of practicing supervisors and managers will be better understood.

Factor 12: Overall Productivity — The overall produc-

tivity of training guides is dependent on the sum of the efficiencies of the various factors incorporated into their design.

Some factors contribute to economy, some to effectiveness. But true economy and effectiveness can be obtained only when the specialized efficiencies of the various factors are utilized in proper balance to achieve the overall result(s) desired as closely as possible.

CONCLUSION

By issuing this report, we hope to convey to our clients our efforts to make Creative Training Guides as productive as possible for them.

Training guides provide a practical solution to the increasing costs and complexities of training. They save staff time. They provide a flexibility and convenience unmatched by other media. They offer some teaching advantages not provided by some more expensive and complicated training devices.

The full potential available from training guides as a genre is built into Creative Training Guides. While their surface appearance is modest, there is much more to our guides than meets the untutored eye. Creative Training Guides incorporate a sophisticated training/development technology which enables them to deliver, at the bottom line, more bang for your training/development dollar. — *L.J. Gordon Associates Creative Training Guides, Inc., Urbana, IL.*

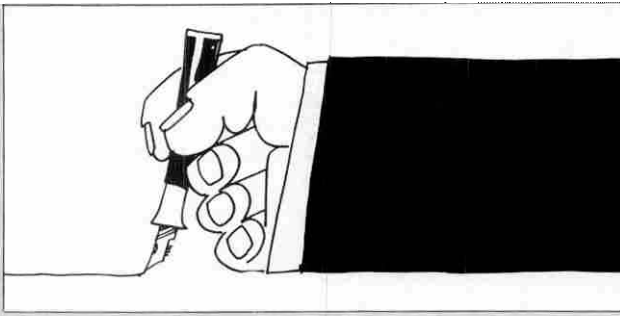
"Producing Slide and Tape Presentations"

To many readers, educational technology today is nearly synonymous with what has been labeled as "high technology" — satellite broadcasting, television by cable and broadcast, microcomputers, and direct instructional applications of automated data bases. The organizing of information into purposive messages, however, is at the heart of the development of a technology of instruction, and a general educational technology. The vast array of communications tools at our disposal to accomplish this job always impresses.

This latest in the series of books of readings from *Audiovisual Instruction* magazine has to do with what many of us in this professional field have come to regard as basic or conventional communications media-slide tape presentations. The growth of photography as a general activity among the citizens of this country has been phenomenal. Nearly every elementary child has been exposed to the 35mm slide. It is probably one of the most easily used, technically and operationally, media that we have in our inventory.

This book of readings is dedicated to serving as a reference and book of ideas on the use of slides in combination with audiocassettes for presentation design. Included here are some basic tips on putting together a presentation, techniques for improving the visual images, how to make title slides, a section on equipment, and examples of use in operational situations. The book of readings concludes with some notions that are labeled as innovative ideas, but there are ideas throughout the articles in the book which should interest the reader.

For additional information contact Publications Department, A.E.C.T., 1126 16th St. N.W., Washington, DC 20036.



Education Fails to Teach Writing, and the World of Work Pays the Price

It's no secret that Dick and Jane can't write very well when they leave our schools, or even our colleges. As a result, virtually every large company conducts in-house training programs to teach its executives how to write letters and reports properly. Consultants are teaching English composition because our education system has failed to do so. The training is expensive, and employers resent that they must do it, but they must.

One of the best known of the writing consultants is Albert Joseph, President of International Writing Institute, Cleveland, OH. His audiovisual program, "Put It in Writing," is the most widely used writing course in the English-speaking world.

"The nationwide decline in writing skills is especially amazing," Joseph points out, "when you consider that every student in the U.S. spends more time studying English than any other subject. That's true regardless how much education he or she received, or in what field. It is also true that the English department is the largest department in most schools and colleges."

Joseph believes most English teachers don't want to teach composition. They are literature specialists; the courses they must take to become English teachers almost guarantee it.

Item: "English composition is not our job. The worthwhile goal here is to expose young people to the richness of life through an awareness of literature, from Beowulf to Vonnegut. I'm a literature specialist. Teaching people how to write is, after all, vocational education" — A suburban high school English teacher at a Career Development conference.

Item: "I'm not sure kids can be taught basic language skills at the secondary level. That may be a job for the colleges and universities." — An inner-city high school English teacher in a newspaper interview.

Thus it seems educators more and more are turning their backs on one of the most basic skills: how to communicate, especially in writing. "To be sure," says Joseph, "some schools are — and have been — doing an excellent job. As our society has grown dissatisfied, organizations like the National Council for Teachers of English are trying to re-educate the educators."

However, composition is considered the lowest job in most English departments. In universities, it is often taught by graduate students.

"But it's unfair to blame just the English teachers," Joseph emphasizes. "Educators in all subjects are notorious for over-complicated language. Throughout academia the writing sets a bad example for students. For example, a Massachusetts Ph.D. — in a report on teaching writing, mind you — wrote about declining

writing skills: 'The results have catalyzed a societal dynamic which stimulated many school systems to adopt Back to Basics or Competency Based educational schemes.'

"I would feel much more confident if he had said: Society has demanded our schools go back to basics, and that they make sure students learn them."

In defense of educators, Joseph points out that their writing is usually no better or worse than business or government writing. The trouble is, of course, it should be much, much better if they are to teach others.

Who will lead the way to improved teaching of writing? Probably the world of work, in Joseph's opinion. As more and more companies complain, and as they prove that writing *can* be taught easily and effectively, the educators must listen. Then the change will come, he predicts.

"Civilizations advance as their communications skills improve, and they decline as those skills decline. One cannot imagine our society tolerating this threat much longer," Joseph concludes.

Male Managers — Clones?

Are men more aggressive and sophisticated than women? Most men believe they are and therefore color their perceptions about women as managers.

According to a survey conducted by Dr. Alma Baron — a survey of 8,000 men holding middle and high-level management positions — men believe people still are reluctant to work for women. Men also believe women are not as career-oriented as men and that men cannot relate to women executives in social situations. Baron's findings are highlighted in her article, "Do managers clone themselves?", which appears in the March issue of *Personnel Administrator*.

What do these findings mean for women trying to enter management? That the same old stereotypes about women still abound, Baron says. Even after 10 years of the women's movement and after women have proven their capability in all phases of the workforce, old attitudes still exert a massive hold upon people's perceptions.

Women have not been career-pathed nor promoted as often as men, Baron continues, because high-level male managers have not seen their female counterparts and therefore assume women still are working for pin money. And within an organization, if by chance a woman does make it to the management ranks, socially she does not receive the same treatment as a man. And sadly, many men do not realize they are treating women differently from men, Baron says.

All this leads to women reaching a professional plateau and the only apparent way to get around this dead-end is to leave the organization, find another job and hope for the best.

But change is inevitable, Baron says, and stereotypes have to be broken. Yes, managers do clone themselves by hiring persons (usually male) who are like themselves. But stereotypes *are* falling and change is compelling, Baron says. More organizations are realizing that to solve the many new problems which face them, they need to hire and train new types of managers — and this will mean increasing numbers of women. If managers continue to clone themselves, Baron concludes, they run the danger of homogeneity which is good for milk, but bad for business.

Multi-Location Training Topic at TIME Event

Coordinating a multi-location training program was the topic at the February TIME (Training Involving Multimedia Education) association meeting held in New York City Feb. 18. Mary Ann Maniace, training administrator for the International Paper Co., discussed framework development, site coordination, control factors, advantages/difficulties, and the problems associated with a national multi-location training program.

Maniace's presentation was based on her successful efforts in developing and maintaining a multi-location training program for International Paper Co. International has 500 data processing personnel and 100 support people at 11 locations in the U.S. and Canada. Three of these are major computer sites.

Developing the framework for a national training program involved analysis, investigation, installation, and implementation. Interview and survey techniques in the analysis state were used to conduct a needs analysis; "need-to-knows" were separated from "nice-to-knows." Also, the training administration identified subjects easily satisfied by multi-media training packages. Finally, the analysis was completed with projecting the number of course months necessary.

In the investigation stage, recommendations using company standards (which outline package and vendor selection) were presented to management for approval and the legal department was consulted for making final negotiations and processing contracts.

Installation involved defining the responsibilities of management, employees, a central site coordinator, and outlying site coordinators. Site coordinators must be capable, cooperative and conscientious; these qualities are important because many coordinators will perform these duties in addition to their regular responsibilities. Initial procedures, monitored for potential refinement and update, were established. During implementation, Maniace recommended visiting each site to give that personal touch. Walk-throughs with coordinators, orientation sessions with participants, and reviewing responsibilities round out the implementation phase.

With multi-site training, coordination and control is essential. To minimize confusion, all inquiries should be channeled to the central site. The central site should call vendors, and the vendors should call the individual sites. A short, simple report including requests for new orders/courses to be retained, new inquiries, and evaluation should be prepared by each site coordinator. Also, the central site coordinator needs to follow up the sites for a few months to resolve questions and problems, track adherence to procedures, and determine necessary modifications.

Maniace concluded by pointing out the many advantages and few difficulties of multi-location training. This kind of training is timely, student-paced, modularized, tailored, and cost-effective. In addition, travel budgets are reduced, impact on project productivity is minimal, and additional uses for the training equipment can be found.

A few difficulties do exist, however. If the program is not followed carefully, coordination problems may develop. Also, students are denied the human contact that comes with an instructor. Different management operation techniques (and cultural differences, since International has locations around the U.S. and in Canada)

at the various sites may present some problems. Three other problems also exist, but these — billing, reporting to management, and evaluation — are problems with any training program.

Reprinted from *EDP Training News*, March 1981. Carnegie Press, Inc., Carnegie Bldg., 100 Kings Road, Madison, NJ 07940.

Library of A/V Training Programs Ready for Rental

For a number of years, AV professionals have been able to purchase slide and motion picture programs from Kodak's library of audiovisual teaching aids. Many of these programs have been developed for use in the company's own marketing education courses. All have been specifically designed to help teach communicators how to prepare and present messages effectively and efficiently.

The library, consisting of 15 slide/tape programs and motion pictures, is now available for rental. An "option to buy" feature has also been incorporated. If, after renting a program, you should decide to purchase it, return the rental program to Kodak and you



will be sent a new copy of your chosen program, along with a refund of your rental charges. Kodak does not have a no-charge preview policy.

Some of the subjects available are: "Effective Visual Presentations," an 18-minute program that includes slides, 16mm sound/color film, cassette tape and script, on how to plan and produce good AV programs; "Basic Art Techniques for Slide Production," on how to create professional-looking artwork for slides even if you are not artistically talented; and "Basic Copying," a step-by-step guide for producing slides from artwork.

Two new programs of special interest to anyone who wants to know more about multi-image presentations have just been added to the list. "Images, Images, Images: A Program About Multi-Image Production" is a 16-minute, nine-projector show using state-of-the-art techniques including animation and seamless masks to illustrate the planning, producing, programming and presentation of a multi-image program. "Images: An Overview of Multi-Image Production" is a dramatic seven-minute presentation using three projectors and a single screen to describe the basics of the multi-image program. Also due to be released in May is another new slide program, "Principles of Effective Projection." All programs come with a script and synchronized audiotape which carries both narration and slide-changing pulses.

A complete listing, including rental or purchase prices, of all available motion picture and audiovisual programs can be found in Eastman Kodak Company's new "The Communicator's Catalog from Kodak," Kodak publication No. S-4, or it can be obtained by writing to Eastman Kodak Company, Dept. 641, 343 State St., Rochester, NY 14650 for a Visual Communications Programs order form.