

Published by
The American Society for Training and Development
1640 King Street, Box 1443, Alexandria, VA 22313-2043

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Printed in the United States of America

Training & Development, vol. 47, no. 6
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Voice Mail

You-Know-What Versus You-Know-What

I'm replying to the letter in "Voice Mail" (January 1993) under the headline, "Is It Really Training?" in which the author says that much business training is really education.

In his letter, James Georges asks, "Can we survive 45 more years of the kind of education-called-training that helped put U.S. companies in their present noncompetitive mess? I doubt it."

I agree. But I see the problem from a different angle. I believe that much of what education does is train rather than educate. We look for students to give back facts and figures. When they encounter roadblocks or detours, they freeze. They say, "I wasn't taught to handle that situation," or "We didn't cover that." They only know the facts; they don't truly understand them. Consequently, they cannot extrapolate information from one situation to another.

As an adjunct professor of education and sociology, my main objective isn't to impart knowledge to my students. Sound strange? Let me explain. I can show someone how to do something, but unless a student understands why it works, his or her knowledge is brittle. It's far more difficult to bring about someone's understanding than it is to bring about their knowledge. As for training, there are some instances in which we might not require or wish trainees to understand. To simply "know" how, when, and where might be desirable, preferable, or even necessary.

As an educator, I require students to know certain information. Once they have the facts in mind, my job is to help them understand what the information means.

If you understand what I've said, then I've done my job and not just completed my task.

— **Bernbard A. Arnesen III**
Arnesen Visual
Gletzville, New York

At Last, a Mediator

STD is a vital part of training and educating the workforce. I value my membership, and I look forward each month to the valuable information *Training & Development* publishes.

But every time I read one of those "training versus education" opinion letters *T&D* publishes, I get angry and sad. I get angry that people put so much time and energy into trying to defend their sides of a totally unnecessary and unproductive argument. And I get sad that people are too narrow-minded to understand, or even recognize, the bigger picture: The purpose of training and education is to facilitate learning.

I'd like to make a plea for all professional trainers and educators to develop an attitude for the greater value of training combined with education. Through many years of experience in both, I've found that the two are inseparable in the "learning process"—a term with less adversarial connotations than "training" and "education" have acquired, apparently.

J.R. Kidd, a twentieth-century "learning facilitator," stated the entire case when he wrote, "Theory without practice is empty, and practice without theory is blind." Kidd's profound observation makes arguing about training versus education in learning seem like arguing about sun versus rain in agriculture. The better the balance of each element, the better the results.

TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

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Voice Mail

Let's say that training is to accomplish skill, and that education is to accomplish knowledge. If one concedes that education addresses theory and that training addresses practice, then neither training nor education can be complete without the other. To paraphrase Kidd's words, "Education without training is empty; training without education is blind."

Contrary to many of the definitions I've read published in *T&D's* "Voice Mail" column, training is not all about coaching tasks or skills, and education is not all about mental awareness of some subject. There must be elements of both coaching and awareness in every learning situation.

Training and education are two aspects of the learning process, in which knowledge and skill (theory and practice) are imparted in whatever proportions of training and education best facilitate transfer to learners. The factors that dictate the appropriate mix of knowledge and skill include the resources that are available; the knowledge and skill levels of the intended audience; the theoretical, functional, or mechanical nature of a subject; and so forth.

Who are the best learning facilitators? They are people who have a great amount of knowledge and skill in facilitating the learning process.

Everyone in the profession of learning facilitation should strive to learn more about it through education and practical experience. Practitioners should learn more about the theories behind what they practice. Theoreticians should get out into the real world to experience the constraints practitioners have to overcome in order to achieve learning objectives.

It's neither productive nor constructive for learning facilitators to jealously guard labels such as "training" and "education." Instead, I would like to read about trainers and educators developing and applying training and education together in ways that benefit learners.

Please quit wasting time, energy, and ability on a useless debate.

— **Stephen A. Matthews**
Management Training Consultants
Hutchinson, Kansas

A Kiss Is Not Still a Kiss

As a trainer in sexual-harassment issues, I was shocked by your recent item on the "pecking order for kissing in the workplace" ("Working Life," December 1992). The piece quoted a book that advises letting a superior be the one to initiate a kiss. Guess what, folks? Any superior who initiates a kiss is ripe for a sexual-harassment case.

Recently, the CEO of a major corporation was sued by five women for sexual harassment, in part because he repeatedly pestered them for kisses. He justified his actions by saying, "I didn't pin them down." Too bad he didn't read the book mentioned in the WL item. Then he would have had another excuse.

In your position of educating the educators, you should be criticizing anachronisms, not lauding them.

— **Rita Risser**
Rita Risser, J.D.
Santa Cruz, California

Editor's note: Risser makes a good point. Still, one aspect of sexual harassment is defining intent. Surely there is a difference between "pestering for kisses" and giving someone a greeting peck, which is the kind of kissing the WL item refers to. And there's a difference between a peck and a pattern of behavior.

Sexual harassment doesn't belong in the workplace or anyplace. But it is a complex issue. The inevitable social interaction at work is sometimes ambiguous. People tend to interpret different behavior differently. And interpretation of human behavior often depends on the context in which it occurs. In the current climate, it's probably more responsible to forgo kissing of any kind at work.

See "New Training Tools" (May 1993) for products and services that aim to prevent sexual harassment.

"Voice Mail" is compiled and edited by **Haidee Allerton**. "Voice Mail" welcomes your views. Send your letters and comments to "Voice Mail," Training & Development, 1640 King Street, Box 1443, Alexandria, VA 22313-2043; fax them to Allerton at 703/683-9203; or call them in on the "Voice Mail" line, 703/683-9590.