



Blend Your Training Until the Lumps Come Out

I've been in training longer than current training media...even video tape! I'm beginning to see a problem resurface that I thought was resolved long ago.

In the old days, we had self-study workbooks, some of which were well-crafted training programs. The problem was that they were not administered properly or reinforced for greater understanding and performance. It was just too easy to distribute the workbooks and eliminate that expensive class. Well, if you read the training history books, you'll see that the approach failed. More and more self-study workbooks were replaced by live classes, and the cost of training soared.

Fast forward to today, and all of a sudden, the self-study workbook shows itself as online learning. It has a slick new look and a convenient delivery system, and well...here we go again! This time let's learn from our mistakes. The online technology offers training opportunities barely dreamed of a decade ago. Here's how to keep history from repeating itself:

- Recognize the differences and strengths as well as the weaknesses of the technology-based instruction, such as online learning, multimedia training, and others. They provide great potential for learning when they are properly designed. The key is that they must be captivating.
- Animation, full motion video, and engaging interactivity all "captivate" the learner, and improve retention by accommodating different learning styles.
- Where possible, blend facilitator-led training with online learning but do it right! Use both methods' strengths.



- Self-paced learning helps acquire and assess knowledge and certain skills.
- Facilitator-led programs can reinforce and enable learners to apply their new knowledge and skills to work situations. Blended properly, the resulting program is smooth, but use one or the other improperly, and it's lumpy!
- Finally, administer both phases of the training, and make your learner understand the value of each. Online learning is not something for learners to rush just before coming to class, and the class is not the right forum to repeat all the information for those who didn't complete the online learning beforehand.

Now, more than ever, we have the ability to create a learning environment superior to any other time. Let's not make the mistakes of the past. Make your facilitation-led training experiential, and your online instruction captivating.

Blend the two smoothly...and take out the lumps!

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