

A Review of Literature Examining the Application of Instructional Communication to the Training and Development Profession

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This paper is a review of human resource development, training, and instructional communication literature to determine any connections between trainers presentation and trainee motivation. The literature review explores constructs of instructional communication that impact motivation, and then connects motivation to trainees' transfer of learning. Furthermore, the literature review reveals a connection between trainer delivery, motivation and transfer of learning; thus, revealing additional variables to explore in the HRD discipline.

Keywords: Trainer Behaviors, Motivation, Transfer of Learning

"I loved my job...training is the best thing that ever happened for the worker aside from the union organizations...Training gives the worker the key to success. Knowledge and education is the key. I did, I really loved my job!"

- Cecil C. Cook, retired coordinator for The National Training Fund

An effective, exceptional training leader is enthusiastic, unambiguous, and knowledgeable when motivating trainees (Bell & Bell, 2003). A trainer has the power to create a motivating environment (Torrence, 1993). Torrence (1993) stressed the power of positive communication. He referred to effective communication as "warm fuzzies." This paper will support Torrence's (1993) and Bell and Bell's (2003) position that effective trainers can contribute significantly to the trainee's motivation with current empirical evidence by examining the concepts of motivation, learning, training delivery, and their impact on transfer of learning. In addition, this paper will connect research conducted in instructional communication, training, and human resource development in order to address how trainers can motivate trainees through delivery to increase the probability of leaning and transfer in training. Motivation and immediacy, a communication construct, has been shown to increase cognitive, affective, and behavior learning (Christophel, 1990) and transfer of learning (Holton, Bates, & Ruona, 2000). Motivation has been measured a number of ways. Richmond (1990) and Mottet and Richmond (1998) developed reliable and valid measures to explore motivation in delivery. A review of literature will provide an analysis of motivation from a HRD and communication point of view, instructional behaviors from an international training position, and transfer of learning as a result of motivation and instructional behavior. The purpose of this paper is to make clear the benefits of effective trainer delivery on the trainee's motivation and learning.

Problem Statement

Motivating trainees can be an extremely challenging task. Motivating workers or trainees is a universal concern and is not just a problem in the United States but in France as well (Guerrero & Sire, 2001). Many concepts have been related to motivation such as encouragement by superiors and peers, general attitudes, work and family relationships, personal rewards, personal choice and content relevance (Frymier & Houser, 2000). Though a trainer can not control various personal factors in a trainee's motivation, the trainer can build motivation and content relevance. A trainee's motivation also has been shown to influence learning outcomes (Christophel, 1990; Christensen & Menzel, 1998). Trainers often face the challenge of unmotivated trainees, and are unaware of how they can impact motivation.

Theoretical Framework

Expectancy theory (Vroom, 1964), explains why it is important to meet trainees' and trainers' expectations in order to increase their motivation. Trainees expect to gain important knowledge and skills to increase their productivity in their career. It is important that trainers communicate that the expectations are being met. It is important for a leader in training to meet various expectations.

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There are many variables that contribute to motivation. It is important to training and development to look at motivation closely. Richmond (1990) introduces us to the term state motivation. State motivation is similar to intrinsic motivation in that it is a type of motivation that can be altered by trainer, employer, or teacher behaviors (Richmond, 1990). It can be increased by enhancing the learning environment, building relevance to the content of the training, and the presentation style of the trainer, while trait motivation is inherent (Richmond, 1990). Trait motivation is the same concept as the personal characteristic, personality (Ford & Wessbein, 1997 cited in Holton, Bates, & Ruona, 2000). Trait motivation in students or trainees is defined as an innate characteristic (Richmond, 1990). This means the person is born with the motivation to excel or give 100%; however, state motivation can be altered by various strategies that teachers or trainers choose to implement into their classroom or training environment (Christensen & Menzel, 1998). It is important to note that a trainee or student can approach learning with high trait motivation and experience decreased state motivation that can have a negative impact upon their learning (Christensen & Menzel, 1998 and Richmond, 1990). This paper will look at how motivation and impacts trainees' experiences by showing trainers what they can do to enhance trainee motivation. This theoretical framework highlights key theories that explain why motivation and fulfilling expectations are important to the training and development discipline.

Method

This paper will review current literature to address the research questions. The review of literature consists of current human resource development, training, and instructional communication literature. Literature was gathered by collecting articles from graduate seminars, searching library databases, and looking through journals in the library stacks. Hopefully, this literature review will help to clarify important variables and constructs to increase effective training.

Research Questions

- Are motivation and learning connected?
- Are there trainer behaviors that can increase motivation?
- Does the literature reveal a connection between motivation and trainer behaviors thus illuminating a training method that could impact the transfer of learning?

Motivation and Learning

The concepts of trait and state motivation are similar to the concepts of intrinsic and extrinsic rewards (Faction, Dobbins, Russell, Ladd, & Kudisch, 1995; Yamnill & McLean, 2001). The term intrinsic reward means that the trainee or student feels good and affective learning is increased (Faction, Dobbins, Russell, Ladd, & Kudisch, 1995; Yamnill & McLean, 2001). When trainees feel good about themselves they tend to feel appreciation for what they are learning and the person presenting the information. For example, an accomplished amateur golfer was feeling poorly about his ability. He felt that his golf skills had perhaps peaked in college; so, he decided to take a few lessons from a well-known instructor. His instructor reinforced his ability with praise with simple but effective statements like, even "Justin (making reference to Justin Leonard... a four time Southwest conference golf champion and winner of the British Open) can't hit it like that." Justin was also a student of this particular instructor. The golfer was motivated by the enthusiasm and praise from the favorable comparison to such a great player resulting in an enhancement of his golf game. Intrinsic rewards can be as simple as showing appreciation as the trainer for what the trainee contributes to the organization and society. Extrinsic rewards can either be a good report, a promotion, or a raise (Faction, Dobbins, Russell, Ladd, & Kudisch, 1995; Yamnill & McLean, 2001). Unfortunately, there are many variables that play into motivation that the trainer cannot control. However, trainers can influence state or intrinsic motivation resulting in more effective training.

Simple concepts such as empowering the trainee and the perceived relevance of the training content can dramatically increase motivation. Baldwin and Magiuka (1991) found that when trainees were given a choice in training they were more motivated. Cohen (1990) also supports that trainees are more motivated when they perceive training as being chosen by them and not forced upon them by others. Those employees that received their choice in training were more motivated to learn. Research in the traditional classroom showed that motivating students can aid in achieving a number of desired outcomes.

Research reveals various strategies that teachers can use to motivate their students. Like teachers, trainers are often faced with the challenge of motivating trainees that do not come to the training session motivated and excited

to learn. The lack of motivation can be attributed to a number of factors including but not limited to a poor work environment and lack of peer and supervisor support. A trainer cannot control these factors, but they can attempt to motivate their trainees. People might think presentational methods of motivation only apply to younger students; however, research reveals that college age students are easily motivated or de-motivated by their instructor (Christophel, 1990). This study raises the question if college professors and instructors can contribute to student motivation despite various other environmental influences; then, trainers can increase motivation too. Research thoroughly supports the importance of motivation in the classroom and in the training environment and learning outcomes.

Connections with Learning Outcomes

Motivation plays a huge role in students and trainee's learning. Learning outcomes are a crucial part of any training program. Many times the affective objectives or outcomes are underestimated (Christophel, 1990). However, trainers fail to realize that affective outcomes lead to cognitive and behavioral outcomes, or the trainer struggles with ways they can build affect for the content and skills that they train or teach. Research shows that when a trainee or student appreciates and values the material, they are more motivated to learn. As a result, the trainee or student will cognitively take in the desired content (Christophel, 1990; Christensen & Menzel, 1998).

Baldwin and Magiuka (1991) found that not only did motivation increase when trainees were offered training choices, but their learning also increased. Baldwin and Magiuka (1991) measured learning with two measurements. One measurement asked the participant open-ended questions. The participant was asked to explain twelve learning moments. The second measurement asked shorter questions such as, "explain the importance of asking for employee input on past performances and their future goals?" The data was analyzed using a MANOVA and a significant difference in motivation and learning was found. Learning increased as motivation increased. As motivation decreased so did the trainee's perceived learning.

Furthermore, Christensen and Menzel (1998) explored a linear relationship between learning, and motivation. Christensen and Menzel (1998) predicted that there will be a positive linear relationship between motivation and learning. They also explored the relationship between learning and state motivation. The analysis showed a significant positive relationship between perceived learning and state motivation. In other words, when a person's state motivation is increased intrinsically, they acknowledged an increase in learning.

Guerrero and Sire (2001) also found that motivation measured by self-efficacy and instrumentality had a positive influence on the learning of French workers in a training program. When a trainee feels that their training meets their needs they were motivated and learned more information and vital skills. For example, if employees are having difficulty with managing upset customers and that difficulty is impacting their job satisfaction, they will be motivated during training to listen, learn, and transfer their training into their jobs. However, many times training is implemented without addressing the needs of the employees resulting in much less effective training for the employee. Motivation and learning are connected and should not be ignored (Guerrero & Sire, 2001). As a result, trainers should construct their delivery to encourage and motivate trainees.

Motivation and Delivery

Though it is clear in research that motivation can be attributed to many factors, delivery of the training and the design of the training play a key role in motivation. This section of the paper will provide the knowledge and skills to help trainers motivate trainees. Trainers have more control over the delivery and design of the training than they do over other environment issues (Ford & Wessbein, 1997). This section will show how trainers can communicate motivation, influence their trainees, and build content relevance. The review of instructional communication literature will explain why appropriate instructional behaviors (Burba, Petrosko, & Boyle, 2001) are effective. When a trainer delivers and designs training programs that utilize effective communication, the trainer builds trainee motivation. Finally, this section of the paper will reveal how training delivery will also impact learning outcomes.

Gorham and Millette (1997) found that teachers are more likely to attribute high motivation to something he/she said or did in class. Trainers often take the same approach as teachers when analyzing highly motivated trainees. However, trainers will usually attribute de-motivation to laziness on the trainee's part and not a result of a poor training session. College aged students consider the instructor or professor to contribute to both motivation and de-motivation. Similar conclusions are drawn in training because the "students" are also adult learners, and these studies illustrate how motivation plays a key role in adult learning also. Trainers often undervalue the power of their presentation and platform skills. It is true that many factors contribute to trainee motivation; however, motivating communication is a powerful tool for trainers to utilize in training sessions.

Communication Skills and Immediacy

Burleson and Samter (1990) identified key communication skills in the classroom, and Burba et. al. (2001) identifies appropriate instructional behaviors in international training. Relevant skills for trainers would be referential skills that include the ability to deliver information clearly. Ego supportive skills are the ability to make

people feel good about themselves and are a vital tool to trainers. Persuasion skills and narrative skills are also important tools for teachers and trainers (Burlison & Samter, 1990). In addition to effective communication skills, Burba et. al. (2001) identified four areas of appropriate instructional behaviors: clarity; enthusiasm; interaction; and spatial-behavior communication. For the purpose of this paper the first three will be explored.

Clarity behaviors included using clear examples, using multiple examples, repeating important information, application of content, expressing interests in students' progress or development, and using visual aids (Burba et. al., 2001). Clarity behaviors help cognitive learning (Frymier & Shulman, 1995). These types of behaviors also aid in reducing the trainee's anxiety. Using clear examples and applying the examples to the trainee's jobs helps establish motivation.

The category of enthusiasm consists of using tools such as humor, dramatic speaking styles, facial expressions, moving and interacting with the trainees, expressing energy, smiling, eye contact, and gesturing (Burba et. al., 2001). These behaviors spark trainee's interests. They make the process entertaining. Furthermore, these behaviors are the specific behaviors that create immediacy and establish positive working relationships.

Finally, the category of interaction with the trainee included calling students or trainees by their name, listening to students' experiences and allowing them to participate in the training, and encouraging questions and praising trainees. Interaction behaviors give trainees ownership in their training experience. Students respond in school when the curriculum is adapted to their needs and experiences. Likewise, trainees will respond positively when they are allowed to take an active role in their training that will hopefully positively impact their job and career.

Clarity, enthusiasm, and interaction were found incredibly significant ($p < .0005$) for trainees in the United States, other western cultures, and eastern cultures as well (Burba et. al., 2001). This finding is important to trainers because it reveals that effective instructional behaviors are tools that trainers can utilize safely with a variety of audiences and cultures. All of these skills are important when building relevance, increasing motivation and creating immediacy.

Immediacy is a communication concept that explains how certain verbal and nonverbal communication behaviors reduce tension and psychology distance (Mehrabian, 1971). All of these skills are concepts important to building relationships. Frymier and Houser (2000) found that communication skills and appropriate instructional behaviors (Burba et. al., 2001) are a significant forecaster of learning and motivation. Referential skills and ego support were also the most significant (Frymier & Houser, 2000). Referential skills and immediacy were significant in learning (Frymier & Houser, 2000). Immediacy, ego support, and referential skills were also significant in increasing state motivation. Frymier and Houser (2000) determined that these results show it is important to see how communication skills impact the manager-employee relationship. It is just as crucial in the trainer-trainee relationship. Trainers can benefit from exploring effective communication skills and instructional behaviors to see how immediacy is created to build motivation and learning.

Christensen and Menzel (1998) studied how teachers' verbal immediacy impacted students' state motivation. They wanted to know the nature of the relationship between teacher verbal immediacy and state motivation. Results indicated that as verbal immediacy increased, so did students' state motivation. Their study revealed that verbal immediacy was correlated more strongly ($r = .47$) than nonverbal immediacy ($r = .34$) in increasing motivation (Christophel, 1990; Christensen & Menzel, 1998). In addition, Christophel (1990) showed that there is a positive correlation between both teacher verbal and nonverbal immediacy and increasing student motivation.

Moreover, there was a positive correlation between both teacher verbal and nonverbal immediacy and motivation and learning (Christophel, 1990; Christensen & Menzel, 1998). Though nonverbal immediacy might be perceived as having a higher impact on student learning, the collinear measure reinforces that the two (verbal and nonverbal immediacy) work together. Teaching and training is both relational and content driven. Research supports that effective teaching is building personal communication as well as content expertise. Effective presentation skills will cross apply to training as well. When communication becomes interpersonal between two people then trust and respect increases. As a result, the trainer will establish higher motivation resulting in increased learning by the trainee. Furthermore, it is clear that there are other factors that influence motivation. Delivery research indicates that sex and ethnicity have been found to be factors in motivation (Menzel & Carrell, 1999). Nevertheless, immediacy was found to be a stronger factor than demographics; thus reinforcing the power of establishing immediacy in training. There is not much a trainer can do about a trainee's demographics or a trainee's work environment, but they can work on effective instructional behaviors to build immediacy.

Relevance

Trainees expect for training to be relevant to their needs and their jobs (Yamhill & McLean, 2001). It is frustrating for trainees to be pulled away from a pile of work that is never ending to experience training that does not meet their goals and expectations. Trainees and students are less likely to listen and retain information if the training content is not relevant to their development in their job, career, or their personal goals (Yamhill & McLean, 2001).

Students who perceived their teachers as making the course content relevant were more motivated to study. “A positive, moderate sized correlation (.46) between state motivation and teacher relevance was found (Frymier & Shulman, 1995). Although the present study used a cross-sectional design where causal relationships are difficult to isolate, we do have reason to believe that the teachers’ efforts at making content relevant probably led to the increase in motivation.” Clarity, redundancy, and humor previously mentioned as appropriate instructional behaviors have been found to build relevance in the minds of students (Frymier & Shulman, 1995). Trainees are able to organize the information in relation to their job and their needs. Clarity, defining objectives, providing clear examples, and repeating important information in an entertaining manner keeps the trainee’s attention. As a result, the trainee can make connections clearly, they are more willing to listen to the trainer, and the trainee will have a greater likelihood of retaining the information (Frymier & Shulman, 1995). Myers and Knox (2001) found that there is a positive relationship between verbal immediacy and students information-seeking strategies. One reason for this finding could possibly be the comfort level between the instructor and students. Burba et al. (2001) illustrated the importance of clarity behaviors in international training. Instructor self-disclosure can be used to clarify course content by providing examples and encouraging discussion that will build relevance and increase learning (Witt & Wheelless, 2001).

Learning Outcomes

A one-way ANOVA revealed a significant positive difference in the perceived cognitive learning and state motivation across levels of instructor verbal immediacy (Christensen and Menzel (1998). Christophel (1990) also found a significant and positive relationship between motivation and affective learning. Therefore, an instructor’s verbal immediacy impacts student motivation, which impacts perceived students’ cognitive and affective learning. The instructor’s use of humor, praise of students’ work, engaging students in conversation and encouraging their point of views, asking for feedback, self-disclosing, and addressing the class as “we” had a strong impact on student’s affective learning by reducing psychological distance. There is a definite link between student motivation and affective learning with the teachers’ use of verbal immediacy (Christensen & Menzel, 1998; Witt & Wheelless, 2001). Instructors need to understand that relating to trainees and students does impact motivation and affects the outcome of the training or teaching (Witt & Wheelless, 2001). Though there is a connection with verbal immediacy and students’ affective and cognitive learning, most of these studies were conducted with college age students. In the desire to better educate instructors to increase student performance; all levels of education must be examined.

Sanders and Wiseman (1990) found, like Burba et. al. (2001) that regardless of ethnicity or nationality, immediacy will increase learning outcomes. Perceived cognitive learning was significantly related to five verbal behaviors. The behaviors were: 1. encouraged students to talk; 2. use of humor; 3. talked with students outside of class; 4. solicits other’s point of views; and 5. praise students. Perceived affective learning was influenced by the following: 1. instructor’s use of humor; 2. asking students about their assignments; 3. asking for feedback from students; and 4. praising the student. Johnson and Miller (2002) also found that verbal immediacy had an impact on both students from the United States and Kenya. Both studies show along with Burba et. al. (2001) that all trainees and students respond to effective instructional behavior and immediacy.

Another area of interest to explore to better understand training and motivation would be the effects of immediacy and effective instructional behaviors in a mediated course (Witt & Wheelless, 2001). Freitas, Myers, and Avtgis (1998) found that the perception of an instructor’s verbal immediacy in the conventional classroom was not different from the student in the mediated course. The authors suggest adding student learning to the study of mediated courses and immediacy because mediated courses are a growing trend in education and training and should not be ignored.

Motivation and Learning Transfer

A trainer would be hard pressed to find a trainee who set through a day’s training feeling de-motivated and perceiving minimum cognitive or affective learning; yet, they went back to their workplace and actually applied and used what had been presented that day in training. Ford and Weissbein (1997) and Baldwin and Ford (1998) define transfer of learning as a process that, “involves the application, generalizability, and maintenance of new knowledge, and skills.” (cited in Holton, Bates & Ruona, 2000). This concept is supported by Vroom’s (1964) expectancy theory (cited in Holton et. al., 2000). The theory explains that trainee’s motivation will increase if they believe that training will make their job easier or improve job performance (cited in Yamill and Mclean, 2001). Kelman (1961) conceptualized three levels of influence. People will comply with training and certain job requirements, but compliance does not have a lasting effect on the student or trainee. Transfer of learning is more likely when the trainee develops beyond compliance to identification and internalization. Identification is when a trainee can see the good or benefit to what they are learning, and internalization is when the trainee performs the task or integrates what

they have learned without even thinking about the task or knowledge (Kelman, 1961). As trainers, it is important to deliver the content in a way that the trainee feels increased motivation and affect for the content. In addition, goal-setting theory plays a significant role in a trainee's attitude and learning outcomes (Yamill and McLean, 2001). Tannenbaum, Mathieu, Salas, and Cannon-Bowers (1991) found that a positive attitude increases motivation and an increase in motivation increases a trainee's transfer of learning. This finding crystallizes the desired connections between motivation, delivery, relevance, learning, and transferring the learning into the workplace.

Many factors influence transfer of learning. Training transfer must be measured in order to report back to managers that the training is working (Garavaglia, 1993). By measuring training to show whether or not there is a transfer of skill and knowledge on the job, we ensure that money and efforts will continue to be put into training programs. Training transfer can be measured qualitatively by questionnaires and reports or quantitatively by surveys. Instructional designers can improve training transfer by utilizing certain methods and skills in their design or delivery. Holton et. al (2000) sought to create a transfer of learning measurement or inventor. Looking at the inventory (Learning Transfer Systems Inventory [LTSI]), motivation is a factor that is measured, and it is a factor that the trainer can control. Sometimes, a trainer may design the modules they present then their influence has the potential to be even more powerful; because training modules are rarely designed for learning transfer (Yamill & McLean, 2001). The important thing to remember is that you have to give the employee long enough to apply what they learned when applicable, but if it is too long many training professionals fear that the learning will be lost. Those that are key stakeholders should have a part in measuring training transfer for obvious reasons such as cost and contributions to the organization. Trainers must do their part to ensure that the trainee is motivated and learned the desired objectives in order to transfer the learning so that the organizations and employees can grow (Yamill & McLean, 2001).

Conclusion

When training is effective it can be, "the best thing that ever happened for the worker aside from the union organizations...Training gives the worker the key to success" according to Cecil C. Cook a retired coordinator for the *International Training Institute*. However when the training is ineffective, everyone's time is wasted. This paper was designed to enhance the effect of training by examining the concepts of motivation, learning, training delivery, and their impact on the transfer of learning. In addition, this paper connected research conducted in instructional communication, training, and human resource development to address how trainers can better motivate trainees through delivery; thus, increasing the probability of leaning and learning transfer in training. Furthermore, this paper illustrated how motivation and immediacy, and effective instructional behaviors have been shown to increase cognitive, affective, and behavior learning (Christophel, 1990) and transfer of learning (Holton, Bates, and Ruona, 2000). Many times trainers experience frustration due to various factors that impact trainee motivation that the trainer cannot control. However by focusing on improving areas of training as referenced in the paper that can be controlled and improved, the training experience and the results of the training will be greatly enhanced for everyone.

Contributions to HRD

The studies on motivation, instructional behaviors, immediacy and learning provided the following suggestions for future research:

1. *What is the role of trainer delivery on motivation and learning?* It is important to explore motivation, delivery and learning outcomes in mediated courses (Freitas, Myers, & Artigis, 1998).
2. *How does state motivation and intrinsic rewards influence motivation and learning?* Researchers need more studies looking at state and intrinsic motivation. (Facteau et. al., 1995; Richmond, 1990).
3. Exploration of various factors such as motivation in trainee's transfer of learning (Holton et. al., 2000).

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