



Public Health
England

Protecting and Improving the nation's health

Teaching a Mixed Audience

The Pros and the Cons

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Training participants

One employer

Homogeneous

Different employers, one industry

Different employers, different industries

Heterogeneous



Participants work for the same employer

- Managers, supervisors, operators can learn together – develop team working
- Can develop specific skills in a realistic working environment
- Local policies may be taught, discussed or even developed

Internal trainer:

- Lower up-front cost
- Knows the workforce, culture, procedures

External trainer:

- Brings another perspective, 'neutrality' and perceived value

BUT:

Learning is limited by the experiences represented in the room

- audience will have the same / similar experiences
- internal trainer: experience stems from the same workplace
- the same practices are passed on - risk of no new ideas, new practices,
- no one to challenge poor practice : practices may develop in isolation from other industries
- perception that participants must all work the same way i.e. (just) follow procedure – may discourage independent thinking
- lower perceived value – ‘everyone has to do it’ → less engagement

Participants work for different employers in the same sector

- Training has a higher perceived value – encourages engagement
- Networking opportunities – learning from other participants
- Perspective and fresh ideas
- A heterogeneous audience, and an independent trainer are more likely to be in touch with developments, new instrumentation, new technologies, current or emerging best-practice etc.

Participants work for different employers in various sectors

As above and

- Further opportunities to learn from other participants
- Learning 'by analogy'
- Wider perspectives
- Encourages independent thinking

Participants will be more responsible for their own learning

Mixed training environments are especially suited to those appointed to a role:

- Radiation protection professionals
- Many workplace supervisors (RPS / RPO)

Selecting the training path

Goal:

- Competent and responsible workforce
- Strong radiation protection culture
- Principles of RP can be applied in atypical situations
- Skilled workforce: use of monitors, contamination control etc
- Incidents are minimised and/or dealt with effectively

Cost:

- Up front costs: course fee / participant's time / travel and associated costs
- Long term costs: regulator action, incidents, correcting mistakes etc

Examples

1 Nuclear Power Plant requires training for 15 new monitoring personnel

- Task orientated / procedure-driven
- Realistic practical work required
- Cost is a significant factor

Internal course, internal trainer

2 A large chemical plant requires refresher training for 5 previously trained RPOs

- Participants have significant experience to share
- Receptive and likely to engage
- Need to hear about new technologies / latest developments

External course, external trainer

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3 A regulator recruits three graduate trainee inspectors

- Must think independently
- Able to take responsibility for own learning
- See issues from perspective of others
- Be aware of all (including peripheral) issues

Heterogeneous learning environment

In summary

Learning in a mixed audience

Pros

- Access to expertise beyond own work environment
- Higher perceived value
- Encourages responsibility
- Deeper level of understanding
- Perspective
- Participant's experiences are a learning resource
- Away from the workplace – fewer distractions

Cons

- Participants learn in isolation from colleagues
- Practical work may not be specific
- Shy participants may not fully engage
- More expensive

