Teaching a Mixed Audience

The Pros and the Cons

E L Grindrod
Public Health England
1 June 2017
Training participants

One employer

Different employers, one industry

Different employers, different industries

Homogeneous

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*
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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pros</th>
<th>Cons</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Access to expertise beyond own work environment</td>
<td>• Participants learn in isolation from colleagues</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Higher perceived value</td>
<td>• Practical work may not be specific</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Encourages responsibility</td>
<td>• Shy participants may not fully engage</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Deeper level of understanding</td>
<td>• More expensive</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Perspective</td>
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<td>• Participant’s experiences are a learning resource</td>
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<td>• Away from the workplace – fewer distractions</td>
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