Running Head: VALUE-ADDED TRAINING

Ensuring Training is Value-Added

Prepared for

EDUC 510

Tusculum College MA018

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Ensuring Training Is Value-Added

"Value-added (adj.): being or pertaining to something added to a product to increase its value or price" (WordNet, 2003).

In today's society, "value-added" is generally associated with merchantable goods – or, possibly, services – offered by organizations to their customers. Associating "value-added" with education and training is typically only done by professional educators and curriculum developers.

However, the past several years have seen significant interest in value-added education, especially at pre-school, elementary, and secondary levels. The initiatives launched by Tennessee and Pennsylvania, for instance, have received tremendous recognition by education-oriented journals and industry-watchers.[1]

The concept of value-added education at the post-secondary level has been primarily a topic of interest in schools of business and college/university academic business administration departments.[2] Some research during the past several years, however, has identified the benefits of "value-added" education in all post-secondary academic disciplines.[3]

Training is different from education in that its focus is predominantly directed toward adults, vocationally oriented, and usually time-sensitive. To a trainee, any training activity must have measurable value – intrinsic or extrinsic – based on a number of factors. Alvic (2005) maintains that trainees or their organizations (departments, corporate entities, etc.), must address

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[1]See, *e.g.*, a discussion of Tennessee's Value-Added Assessment System on the Education Policy Studies Laboratory Web site at www.asu.edu/educ/epsl/EPRU/epru_Research_Writing.htm and Pennsylvania's Value-Added Assessment System on the PA Department of Education's Web site linked at www.pde.state.pa.us/a_and_t/

[2]A Web search performed at Google.com on June 4, 2005, on the phrases *"value-added education"* (quotes included) and *value-added education* (no quotes) resulted in 891 and 3,580,000 results, respectively. A substantial segment of the results were linked to business education sites.

[3]See, *e.g.*, a typical instance from the College of Engineering on Penn State University's Web site at www.engr.psu.edu/NewsEvents/EPS/v15n1_1998fall/value.htm

four very specific elements that directly relate to their anticipated Return on Investment (ROI) in a training activity:

- Cost of the course – to individual adult learners (those who seek training through their own initiatives), the cost is direct; to organizational trainees, the cost is borne by their departments.
- Time to complete course – to all adult trainees, participation in training activities requires a significant time investment that must be rationalized.
- Capacity for success – to all adult trainees, a training activity will have no value (and, consequently, the trainee will not be totally involved) if the trainee does not anticipate success both in the training activity and its subsequent application.
- Expectation of respect – all adult trainees require respect as a prerequisite to their investment in a training activity.

Trainers and curriculum developers can enhance training experiences for adults by adding value to training activities, either through sharing experiences or engaging trainees in practical applications in the controlled environment of a classroom setting. Both of these methods are commonly used by subject-matter experts (SME's) who are recruited to train adults in vocational or quasi-academic courses.

Through its classroom participation and outside research during the Education 510 course in Tusculum College's MA018 track, the "Good to Great" Team has identified the following items that will ensure training activities have added value:

1. Apply the methodologies of Instructional System Design (ISD) or another generally accepted model to curriculum development.
2. Evaluate the trainer, trainees, and training activities at every possible opportunity in the instructional process and modify as required.
3. Carefully determine the type and scope of training that is required through extensive Needs Assessments: organizational, job/task (knowledge/skills/abilities required),

and personal (deficiencies in required knowledge/skills/abilities to complete job/task).

4. Determine whether the training is proactive or reactive, and develop the curriculum accordingly.
5. Stress the importance of understanding adult learning concepts to instructors, especially those with no adult education experience.
6. Include subject-matter experts (SME's) in the curriculum development process, either individually or through focus groups, to ensure training bridges the gap identified by the needs assessments identified in Item 3, above.
7. Group trainees so that each training activity can be maximized; *e.g.*, put experienced machine operators together with inexperienced workers, or else populate the class with learners who are on the same knowledge and experience levels to facilitate efficiency and effectiveness of the trainer and the training activity.

Even though his statement relates to elementary and secondary education, William Sanders' (1999) remarks concerning the results observed from development of the Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System can be applied equally to adult training environments: "The most controversial part of our work has been this finding: the overwhelming importance of the classroom teacher in determining academic growth." The "Good to Great" Team concurs and believes that, through close attention to the seven items outlined above, adult training will have added value in any setting.

References

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The following articles were not cited in this paper, but they provided excellent treatments of Value-Added Assessment in higher education and were used for background:

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Schneider, C. G. (2002). "Can Value Added Assessment raise the level of student accomplishment? *PeerReview* (Winter/Spring 2002). Accessed June 4, 2005. Available on-line: www.aacu-edu.org/peerreview/pr-sp02/pr-sp02feature1.cfm