



IMPROVING ON-THE-JOB TRAINING

How to Establish and Operate a
Comprehensive OJT Program

SECOND EDITION

William J. Rothwell
H.C. Kazanas

About This Book

Why Is This Topic Important?

Training encompasses more than planned off-the-job learning experiences. Most training and workplace learning occurs *in real time* and *on the job*—not *off the job* or *away from work*. That is true whether the employer is a venerable and financially secure member of the elite Fortune 500 or is a recently founded, and perhaps even financially strapped, small business. On-the-job training (OJT) is perhaps most critical in small to medium-sized organizations lacking the staff, the internal expertise, or the other resources to conduct planned training or maintain a cadre of training professionals. Yet it is often ignored, since some employers have a bias toward glitzy, expensive, technologically driven solutions to training problems.

What Can You Achieve with This Book?

Simply stated, this book provides everything you need to think through how to install a low-cost, low-tech approach to improving real-time work performance by installing a planned on-the-job training program in an organization.

How Is This Book Organized?

A pretest opens the book. It should help employers assess the status of OJT in their organizations. It also serves as an advance organizer of the book's contents.

The book is organized into three parts. *Part One* consists of Chapters One through Four and is entitled "Foundations of OJT: Building an Effective Organizational Climate to Support OJT." *Part Two* consists of Chapters Five through Ten and is entitled "Preparing and Delivering OJT." *Part Three* consists of Chapter Eleven. It is entitled "Reflections on OJT."

Chapter One lays the book's foundation by explaining why OJT is important, briefly reviewing what has been written about it, listing major barriers to its effective use, and offering ideas for overcoming those barriers. Chapter Two offers guidance for establishing an OJT program. Chapter Three reviews key management issues that should be addressed during program start-up. Chapter Four describes methods of training the trainers and learners for their roles in OJT and on-the-job learning (OJL).

Chapters Five through Ten comprise the core of this book. They are based on DAPPER, a model for OJT and an acronym made up of the first letters of steps in the planned OJT process. Chapter Five is thus about discovering needs for planned OJT. Chapter Six is about analyzing work, worker, and workplace for OJT. Chapter Seven is about preparing planned OJT. Chapter Eight is about presenting planned OJT. Chapter Nine centers around evaluating the results of OJT, and Chapter Ten is about reviewing aids to planned OJT. Chapter Eleven emphasizes six key lessons about successful planned OJT programs.

The book concludes with a glossary that defines key terms used throughout the book and a list of resources for the reader's future use. Finally, the CD-ROM that accompanies this book provides all worksheets appearing in the book and also contains an entire train-the-trainer workshop on OJT, complete with reproducible slides, a participant workbook, and a leader's guide.

About Pfeiffer

Pfeiffer serves the professional development and hands-on resource needs of training and human resource practitioners and gives them products to do their jobs better. We deliver proven ideas and solutions from experts in HR development and HR management, and we offer effective and customizable tools to improve workplace performance. From novice to seasoned professional, Pfeiffer is the source you can trust to make yourself and your organization more successful.



Essential Knowledge Pfeiffer produces insightful, practical, and comprehensive materials on topics that matter the most to training and HR professionals. Our Essential Knowledge resources translate the expertise of seasoned professionals into practical, how-to guidance on critical workplace issues and problems. These resources are supported by case studies, worksheets, and job aids and are frequently supplemented with CD-ROMs, websites, and other means of making the content easier to read, understand, and use.



Essential Tools Pfeiffer's Essential Tools resources save time and expense by offering proven, ready-to-use materials—including exercises, activities, games, instruments, and assessments—for use during a training or team-learning event. These resources are frequently offered in looseleaf or CD-ROM format to facilitate copying and customization of the material.

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Praise for *Improving On-the-Job Training*

"An excellent contribution to the field, this book offers a realistic, practical focus on OJT, which is probably the most common form of training. It's too easy for people to think that OJT is simple, when in fact success with OJT is elusive. This book will show you how to do it. *Improving On-the-Job Training* will show practitioners how to establish and run an effective OJT program."

—Timothy W. Spannaus, research fellow,
Institute for Learning and Performance
Improvement, senior lecturer,
Instructional Technology,
Wayne State University

"As we expand our businesses, we will need workers to perform more complex tasks effectively. This book gives us an excellent model to implement OJT in real time and in real workplaces to create a high-performance workforce."

—William H. Lowthert,
leadership development manager,
PPL Susquehanna

"Rothwell, a world-renowned training expert, addresses one of the most critical areas of training used by all businesses and is also the most common form of training, on-the-job training. This book will provide an invaluable tool for any business to use to systematically develop successful OJT programs. The information in this book will assist companies in improving their performance and productivity through the proven methods recommended by William Rothwell."

—Patrick E. Gerity, executive director,
Office of Corporate Partnerships,
Slippery Rock University

"I was in the technical training business for over 30 years, 19 as the technical training manager for a Fortune 500 company before retiring. In all these years I've have seen many new approaches to training, but in reviewing all the new methods it still comes down to the most successful way of training especially hands-on and that is on-the-job training. This book provides a step-by-step practical methodology to improve performance. If companies would just follow the concepts in this book and adhere to them, training would be a normal part of an operation and the need for justification would no longer exist."

—Joseph A. Benkowski, associate dean outreach,
University of Wisconsin-Stout

William J. Rothwell dedicates this book to his wife, Marcelina Rothwell.

H.C. Kazanas dedicates this book to his wife, Nuria Kazanas.



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Improving On-the-Job Training: A Fully Customizable Leader Guide for a Train-the-Trainer Program

Improving On-the-Job Training: A Fully Customizable Participant Guide for a Train-the-Trainer Program

Slides to Accompany *Improving On-the-Job Training*

INTRODUCTION

Getting the Most From This Resource

The word *training* continues to evoke a mental image of group-based rather than on-the-job learning or online learning experiences for most people. That is particularly true in major corporations in which training enjoys high visibility and has been effectively integrated with human resource planning, employee selection, job design, organization design, organization development, and compensation and benefits.

Of course, training encompasses more than planned off-the-job learning experiences. Most training and workplace learning occurs *in real time* and *on the job*—not *off the job* or *away from work*. That is true whether the employer is a venerable and financially secure member of the elite Fortune 500 or is a recently founded, and perhaps even financially strapped, small business. However, on-the-job training (OJT) is perhaps most critical in small to medium-sized organizations lacking the staff, the internal expertise, or the other resources to conduct planned training or maintain a cadre of training professionals. That is significant for at least one important reason: according to the Small Business Administration, organizations employing nineteen or fewer employees are the engines of job creation in the United States.

The stakes for improving on-the-job performance are increasingly high. Competitive conditions are global, and U.S. employers often find themselves outpriced by the lower labor and benefit costs in other nations. More effectively planned OJT is one way by which to individualize training, avoid one-size-fits-all

approaches that ignore the nuances of individual needs, and ensure that organizations provide appropriate experiences so that individuals can build their competencies.

Why Improve OJT?

There are several important reasons for organizations to improve OJT. Each reason relates directly to the need for this book.

First, when OJT has been carefully planned, organizations can effectively reduce the unproductive breaking-in period of newcomers. Time is now critical as a strategic resource. Customers and competition alike mandate it. Newcomers must become fully productive as soon as possible so that they can take their place as fully functioning team members and share the work burden with others who may be feeling stressed out—as is often the case in downsized firms in which individuals must produce more than what was once expected of them. OJT is thus a competitive weapon to make workers “performance-ready” faster so they can keep pace with dynamic changes in their jobs. The rapid deployment capability of OJT is all the more appealing so that workers’ skills are tapped “just-in-time” to meet organizational needs. That need is only intensified by the increasing use of short-term, contingent, flexitime, and flexiplace workers who must be made productive as quickly as possible if their temporary employers are to receive the greatest benefits from their efforts (Kenyon, 1999).

Second, planned OJT can relieve employee anxiety and reduce avoidable turnover. If left to learn jobs through “sink or swim” (unplanned) methods, employees may feel anxious about not knowing what they are expected to do, how they are expected to do it, or why they need to do it. If no organized effort is made to socialize them or introduce them to their job duties, they may become turnover statistics. Of course, most managers want to avoid turnover because it increases training costs and disrupts production. One classic, and often cited, research study suggested that training is a frequently overlooked—albeit important—factor in job satisfaction (Kovach & Cohen, 1992). Another classic, and often cited, research study revealed that women employees, at least, are more likely to remain with an employer that provides OJT than one providing off-the-job training (Lynch, 1991).

Third, planned OJT may provide early warning about employee basic skills problems. The United States continues to face a basic skills crisis that threatens the competitiveness of American industry in the global marketplace. While OJT is not the only way by which basic skills deficiencies can be surfaced or addressed, it may be integrated with basic skills training through the *functional job*

context approach to basic skills training, where the work functions themselves become the foundation for basic skills training. In such cases, the likelihood of success is magnified. Some employers have gone so far as to begin teaching basic skills in the workplace (Bolch, 2002).

Fourth, planned OJT may lead employers to find better ways to address individual learning disabilities. As a result of the Americans with Disabilities Act, civil rights protection was extended to the disabled in organizations employing more than twenty-five people. Employers are obliged to make *reasonable accommodation* for disabled individuals—including the estimated 3 to 16 percent of the workforce experiencing learning disabilities. To that end, employers must have some way to address such disabilities once identified and verified. OJT is a possible means to do that, though doing so may necessitate special training for on-the-job trainers.

Fifth, planned OJT may lead to high-quality customer service. Customers' perceptions often result from *moments of truth* in which they come in contact with an organization's employees (Albrecht & Zemke, 1985). Customers are more often served by workers on the firing line than by supervisors, managers, or executives. That means a well-trained, more than a merely courteous, workforce will be the best tool to ensure high-quality customer service. OJT is one means by which to achieve that end.

Sixth, planned OJT may be a means by which to continuously improve product or service quality. Total Quality guru W. Edwards Deming (1986) enshrined "instituting OJT" as one of his famous fourteen points for total quality, and training figures prominently in ISO Quality Standards (Eline, 1998; *ISO 9000*, 1992; Von Hoffman, 1998). OJT can lead to the continuous improvement of product or service quality, thereby contributing to the goals of a total quality initiative.

Employees have a vested interest in their own on-the-job learning (OJL) as much as employers should have a vested interest in OJT. To remain employed at a time when dramatic economic restructuring is tearing at the fabric of life in the United States—and, indeed, in all nations—individuals have a stake in seeing that they receive the best training possible. More than one authority has commented on the growing importance of keeping employee skills current in a period of turbulent change. Workers must upgrade their knowledge and skills consistently to remain marketable. And OJT can be a good investment at a time when organizations are cutting back traditional training (Gale, 2001).

Since 90 percent or more of an individual's learning occurs on the job (Watson, 1979), OJL has long been an important part of an individual's continued marketability. When firms did not "downsize" and individuals did not "jump ship" as often as in recent years, that continued marketability may have been less

important than it is now. But in the current economic climate, OJL is a powerful tool to help individuals find jobs, keep jobs, advance to other jobs, and move advantageously from one organization to others. Learning how to learn—an essential component of OJL—is a powerful hedge against skill obsolescence and prolonged unemployment, provided that what individuals learn can be transferred across organizations (Rothwell, 2002).

Purpose

This book is written for trainers, although many others—including supervisors, operating managers, and experienced employees—may benefit from it. A departure from other treatments of OJT that focus attention on one-on-one training methods only, this book is an action guide that describes how to establish and operate a comprehensive OJT program geared to all job categories in *one* organizational culture. Such a program, we believe, will improve employee performance and increase organizational profitability. This book can also be used to improve one-on-one OJT conducted by supervisors or co-workers and can thus serve as a reference guide for developing train-the-trainer experiences.

Overview of the Contents

A pretest opens the book. It should help employers assess the status of OJT in their organizations. It also serves as an advance organizer of the book's contents.

The book is organized into three parts and eleven chapters.

Part One consists of Chapters One through Four. It lays the foundations for the book by showing what is needed to build an effective organizational climate to support OJT.

Chapter One lays the book's foundation by explaining why OJT is important, briefly reviewing what has been written about it, listing major barriers to its effective use, and offering ideas for overcoming those barriers. Chapter Two offers guidance for establishing an OJT program; Chapter Three reviews key management issues that should be addressed during program start-up; and Chapter Four describes methods of training the trainers and learners for their roles in OJT and OJL.

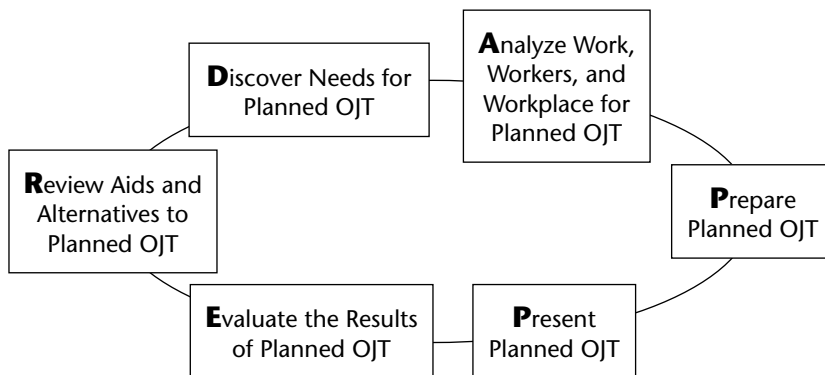
Part Two consists of Chapters Five through Ten. It is based on DAPPER, a model for OJT and an acronym made up of the first letters of steps in the planned OJT process (See Figure I.1):

- *Discovering* needs for planned OJT
- *Analyzing* work, worker, and workplace for OJT
- *Preparing* planned OJT
- *Presenting* planned OJT
- *Evaluating* the results of OJT
- *Reviewing* aids to planned OJT

Part Three consists of Chapter Eleven only. This part, and this final chapter, emphasizes six key lessons about successful planned OJT programs.

The book concludes with a glossary that defines key terms used throughout the book and a list of resources. Finally, a CD-ROM accompanies the book. It provides all worksheets appearing in the book and contains an entire train-the-trainer workshop on OJT, complete with reproducible slides, a participant workbook, and a leader's guide.

FIGURE I.1. THE DAPPER MODEL.



PRETEST

How to Assess Post-Training Job Performance

Complete the following pretest before you read this book. Use it as a diagnostic tool to help you assess the need for a planned OJT program in your organization. You may also use it as an advance organizer to refer you directly to topics in the book that are of special importance to you now.

The Pretest

Directions: Read each item in the pretest on the next page. Circle T (true), N/A (not applicable), or F (false) in the left column next to each item. Spend about 10 minutes on the pretest. Be honest! Think of OJT in your organization as you believe the learners see it—not necessarily as you think it is, as you hope it is, as you believe it will eventually become, or as you think that managers think it should be. When you finish, score and interpret the results using the instructions appearing at the end of the pretest. Then be prepared to share your responses with others in your organization as a starting point for improving OJT. If you would like to learn more about one item below, refer to the number in the right column to find the chapter in this book in which the subject is discussed.