TAKE TRAINING FOR CHRISTIAN WORK SERIOUSLY

Galen Currah writes, "These eight training management principles derive from both practice and Scripture. Implement them at your own risk, and blame me if you must."

1. Train those who need it, not only those whose turn it is to be trained.

In big programs, training can serve as a kind of short vacation, a reward for staying in one's job, or a periodic "refresher," everything except serious training to help workers achieve on a higher level. Training programmes should seek to help less-competent workers, who need more training, to get it. Reward competent workers in some other way, perhaps with vacations, cell phones, or a bit of public praise.

2. Train to fill learning gaps, not only to review all relevant ideas.

Not all trainees require the same lessons. Competent trainers first assess workers' current learning needs: What do these workers need to know (cognitive), to feel (affective), to value (discriminatory), and to do (behavioural)? Next, trainers can choose or design lessons, exercises, demonstrations, reading, lectures, mentoring and workshops, that provide learning experiences.

3. Train with new methods that meet needs, not only with traditional methods.

Trainers are not always the best practitioners. Training directors must discover the most productive programme workers, learn how those workers succeed, and incorporate their "best practices" into the next round of training. Discovery comes through evaluating field outcomes.

4. Train to make workers competent now, not only to educate for the future.

Evaluate training program at least every year or two. Evaluators must measure worker's performance and success in the field, not in order to humiliate the less competent but in order to improve the training methods, so that weak workers can improve. Marks received in classrooms seldom have any significant relation to church multiplication outcomes.

5. Train the obedient who show gifting, not only the willing.

God gives to churches apostles (extension workers), prophets (word workers), evangelists (expansion workers), shepherds (direction workers) and teachers (Word workers). He always does. These are the kinds of folks whom you find doing the work with or without training. Train them to increase their effectiveness.

6. Train the socially acceptable, not only those who are the most faithful.

Even though Timothy remained socially unacceptable (young, unmarried, ethnically mixed), Paul coached him to appoint only the socially acceptable into leadership positions (married, proven character, competent, respected). The work remains critically urgent; therefore the qualifications of trainees remain critical. Train mostly adult, married, self-supported men and women for church planting and leadership.

7. Train those whom you have empowered, not only those who can pay their fees.

Jesus called a small numbers of workers, appointed them, delegated his authority to them, instructed them in what to say and to do, sent them, and listened to them report back on what they had said and done. He neither asked for volunteers nor accepted those who proposed themselves. Prefer those who have proved able to follow instructions.

8. Vary teaching techniques, even with the same students, in the same teaching session.

Wherever one holds training events for big numbers of learners, one should use several techniques which include (a) short lectures (abstract learning), (b) group exercises (concrete learning), (c) hands on experience (active learning), (d) time to think about new ideas (reflective learning), and (e) specific plans (mentoring).

Avoid getting into a rut of linear thinking. Much of the world flops back and forth between linear logic and situational thinking. At a restaurant in the West, ask for a seat in a non-smoking section, and the waiter will put you in a reserved, protected section of the place. Do the same in the East, and the waiter will simply look round for a table with no smokers nearby. One response was linear, the other situational. Which? Intensive interaction between trainer and trainee helps to avoid such linear thinking, if the trainer sincerely aims to equip each trainee for the ministry that he or she is involved in.

There is hardly a messier occupation that that of church planters! They deal with sinners, enemies, demons, discomfort, and rejection besides their own ignorance, lethargy, self-doubt and financial collapse. For example, trainees in India come to a workshop led by an "expert" from the West who dispenses lectures, draws diagrams, distributes thick documents, and takes photographs with which to raise more money for himself. Ask: What can these church planters take back to the field that will enhance their faith, work, joy and effectiveness? Here lies a challenge!

Sample Articles on Adult Learning

http://www.joe.org/joe/2006december/tt5.shtml

http://tip.psychology.org/knowles.html

http://www4.ncsu.edu/unity/lockers/users/f/felder/public/ILSdir/styles.htm

Resources for Church Planting and Training Christian Leaders

Seeking to multiply churches? Read O'Connor, *Reproducible Pastoral Training* and Patterson and Scoggins, *Church Multiplication Guide, available* from a bookshop and via <http://www.WCLbooks.com>.

Mentoring tools and sites, visit <http://www.MentorAndMultiply.com>.

Train & Multiply®, Pastoral training materials for church planting. Visit <www.TrainAndMultiply.com> Questions about implementation? Write to GalenCurrah@TrainAndMultiply.com.

For free, reproducible training materials for new leaders & missionaries, visit <http://www.Paul-Timothy.net>.

Download *"Come, Let Us Disciple the Nations,"* church planter training software in the form of an interactive novel, from <http://www.Paul-Timothy.net/dn/>.

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