

beyond... the mbh newsletter

Sep 2003

Editorial

In celebration of **mbh training** becoming a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) and Registered Education Provider with the Project Management Institute (so rack up your PDPs folks!) this month's newsletter is devoted to that most undervalued and under-utilised line on the P&L.

At **mbh training** we are passionate about providing the best training available. We avoid the typical scenario where training and human resource development is conducted as an isolated or functional program, and deliver training as a fully integrated component of our overall Managing by Project business management philosophy. Also, many RTOs modularise their training courses, making them too theoretical with no real examples or applications that allow the learner to pragmatically apply the learning during the course. As one of the newest vocational training organisations, we focus on experiential learning and wherever appropriate, computer based training. Our objective is that over 80% of training can be immediately applied by the learner -as compared to the usual amount of just 7%. We believe we can achieve this objective through focusing on the practical application of our courses and by ensuring our assessment tasks are carried out in the workplace.

At **mbh training**, we have a strong understanding of the issues faced by adults returning to education. This provides our trainers with a greater capacity to deal with the unique learning styles and barriers to learning faced by these students. To find out more about this, read this month's main article "Adults and the return to education".

Finally, to align the website to our new brand, we have re-launched it. Please feedback your comments and ideas, so that we can continue to provide the better information for our [clients](#) and the community in general.

Feature Article: Adults and the return to education

It has become increasingly obvious that adults are surging back to education. Whether in Universities, TAFE, private enterprises or in house work places the trend is up. It seems the thirst for knowledge has grabbed the population around the world. In Australia alone the number of adults in education full or part time has increased by 183,515 from 1996 to 2001. (Source: <http://www.abs.gov.au>)

Is it that adult education has become more accessible to us, or that companies are encouraging personal development from their staff, or competition for work has many adults realising they need to have the piece of paper with the qualifications to become competitive in the market place?

When you speak to your friends, colleagues and neighbours you will find someone you know has also taken the title of 'student' amongst the others they already have and are juggling their work, home, study and family commitments to become further educated.

Some things we do know about adult learning

There are many scenarios we can let run chaotically through our minds on why adults have returned to education but there are some things that we do know about adult learning;

- Some adults seek out learning to cope with life change events, such as a new job, marriage break ups, promotion, firing or moving to new cities.
- It seems the more life changing events an adult goes through the more likely they will seek out new learning experiences.
- Maintaining ones self esteem and pleasure are strong motivators to undertake the learning journey
- Most adults that undertake learning do so 80 -90% of the time because they have a use for the knowledge or skill they are looking for.
- Courses need to be designed to accept viewpoints from people in different life stages with different value sets.
- Adults tend to take errors personally and this in turn leads to it affecting self- esteem.

Source: 30 things we know for sure about adult learning by Ron and Susan Zemke

What Adult Educators need to remember

An adult educator needs to be mindful of the variety of situations that can come up when dealing with adults in the training environment as well as the psychological perspectives that can occur. There are many external and internal factors that influence and impact adults as they go through their daily lives. There are obstacles such as past learning experiences, work related conflict, changing life events and poorly ran training courses from school days or private enterprise to name a few. It is a huge achievement for any adult and takes great courage to step through the doors on to further education whatever the reason.

Educators need to understand where the student is coming from and ideally be empathetic to the needs of their students. The way in which adults learn has become of great importance through out the training industry, should we lecture to our students, is demonstration and practice applicable, via multi layered learning, or experiential learning to name a few.

All these are effective ways of training but consideration must be taken into account on the type of course we are running, it is not very effective just lecturing to a group of carpenters on how to make a table, they need to actually build it themselves with a degree of theory thrown in at the correct place to embed the learning.

Cultural Issues and experiences

In our multi culture society we need to take into account the backgrounds, culture and experiences of our students, there are such a myriad of questions we need to ask ourselves before we even step into the training environment.

Some of the questions we might ask ourselves are:

- How big is the group of students?
- What is the cultural mix of the students and are there any special requirements I will need if I training one type of cultural group from another;
- What is the age group as this can affect the ability for students to retain information
- Do we have activities to really get the group engaged?
- Have we catered for the different types of learning styles, pragmatist, activist, reflector and theorist (which have been designed by Honey and Mumford. UK);
- Are there any special needs required and how might I deal with this e.g. dyslexia, deafness;
- How should we set up the training environment?

However, we should try and remember that in a classroom of 20 students it is difficult to fill the needs of all, but as trainers we should endeavour to do so.

To successfully transfer knowledge takes a mixture of education, life experiences and the well being of our bodies. These all contribute to how adults learn and how much we can take at certain stages of our life. As educators when we are delivering our programs we should think about age group and other circumstances, such as cultural background and gender to ensure we select activities to cater for these groups, this will help enhance the learning.

Our students have a great wealth of experience that should be encouraged to be shared as this will draw out a vast amount of knowledge for the group to digest and sharing this will encourage the students to participate. As students we can also realise our limitations and what can affect us as we grow older, we can then adjust our processes to help us embed the learning.

TIP for trainers:

Before you start your training course set up a safe environment with your students, get them to brainstorm some rules for the session and write them on a flip chart for all to see. You could even get someone to police them and change the person every couple of hours to involve everyone.

Useful resources for adult education:

Knowles, M. Holton, E and Swanson R.A. (1998) *The Adult Learner The definitive Classic In Adult Education and Human Resource Development.* USA: Butterworth Heinmann

Lefrancois, G.R (2000) *Psychology for Teaching.* (10th edn)
Belmont, C A :Wadsworth Publishing

Sofo, F (1999) *Human Resource Development. Perspectives, Roles and Practice Choices,* Sydney: Business and Professional Publishing.

Next training issue:

- More on learning styles
- Dealing with difficult attendees

New Website Launched

The mbh website has been redesigned and launched as of September 3. There are many new features that have been incorporated into the site, including:

- A clean and clear new look, incorporating the three elements of mbh's core business, [mbh training](#), [mbh consulting](#) and [mbh methodology](#)
- More detailed information and intuitive navigation in our [mbh training](#) section
- Case studies outlining the benefits mbh have delivered to our [clients](#)
- Information on Managing by Project and version 4.1 of our free online demonstration of the [mbh methodology](#)

We welcome your feedback on the new site design, so feel free to emailus@mbh.com.au

Unsubscribe

To unsubscribe from the mbh mailing list, please email mbh@mbh.com.au with the subject line "unsubscribe".