

ILPO55 Training Method

(ILPO55: Output 6, Activity 1 06-A1- Develop Methods and Tools for
Competence Evaluation)



Table of Contents

1. Introduction 3

2. Defining Training 3

3. Training-Setting the Scene 3

4. ILPO55 & Training 4

 4.1 The Adult Trainer Programme..... 5

 4.2 The Social responsibility facilitator Programme 5

5. Blended Learning 6

 5.1 Introductory concepts 6

 5.2 Activities- The Flipped Classroom 6

6. Concluding Remarks 7

References 8

1. Introduction

Training is one of the methods highlighted by the Project Consortium within the ILPO55 employability portfolio. Hence this document aims to bring together some key points and crystallise notions related to training and the link with the project objectives and outputs. Focus will be put on a holistic perspective about the benefits of training and how it can form part of the package that an over 55 or financial services institutions can use to address employability and knowledge sharing.

2. Defining Training

Before proceeding further, it is important that we understand the meaning of training. Pepper (1984,p11) defines training as ‘ that organised process concerned with the acquisition of capability, or maintenance of capability’. A similar but clearer perspective is also considered by Sahu (2005, p7) who states that that training as ‘a planned experience which through the process of learning with the help of some facilitators brings about a development of knowledge, upgradation of skills or turning of attitudes leading to a change in observable behaviour’.

3. Training-Setting the Scene

Training can be considered as an important element within the structure of any organisation. The Human Resource Development function is constantly on the watch for training and development needs and opportunities (Wiltsher 2005:432). Reference can be made to Laird et al. (2003:13) who explain that people are an important ingredient within an organisation, since they are the reason behind outputs being produced to a desired standard. This is an important aspect of the new sustainable HR paradigm whereby staff is seen as a key resource (Baum 1995:13). However, in order for people to perform such tasks, they are required to obtain the knowledge and skills required for that organisation. Similarly, Sommerville (2007:208) states that “training is the process that provides employees with knowledge and skills required to operate within the systems and standards set by management.” Unfortunately, some organisations (including those from the financial services sector) often see training as an extra added cost for the organisation. This is a closed short-term view of training, which does not recognise the potential of this method. Hence, we need to go beyond the issue of cost.

“HR should realize that training is not an unnecessary expenditure which can be discarded; instead they should understand that if the employees are properly trained and developed, it can prove to be the best investment made by the company which will definitely furnish quality returns in future.” (Pande 2011)

Training can either be used as a remedial approach in order to address an immediate need or problem within an organisation. Moreover, training can also be implemented as a means for further development or to anticipate future driving forces. The latter is particularly important, so that the over 55 employee remains relevant to the organisation and the industry and that skills gaps are limited.

4. ILPO55 & Training

Neaegel & Walker (2006) identify eight dimensions related to age management. One of which being, learning, training and lifelong learning.

Good practice in this field means ensuring that older workers are not neglected in training and career development, that opportunities for learning are offered throughout working life, that training methods are appropriate to older workers, and that positive action is taken where necessary to compensate for discrimination in the past (Walker 1997, p4.)

In line with the principles being put forward by the ILPO55 project, they also mention that on the job training that integrates older employees within an organisation, should be a priority task. Neagle & Walker (2006) also mention a number of good practices in this area, some of which include:

- the absence of age limits in determining in house learning and training opportunities;
- special efforts to motivate learners, establish methodologies and support;
- specific provisions in leave provision;
- analysing the skills needs of the organisation, matching these with the available skills and individual educational status of older employees and utilising them in the methodology and contents of training;
- organising work so that it is conducive to learning and development, for instance within the framework of mixed-age teams and groups;
- using older employees and their particular qualifications both as facilitators of further education for older and younger employees, and as an organisational 'knowledge pool'.

Considering the context and the practices mentioned above the ILPO55 project is proposing training as an integral method of the Employability Portfolio, consisting of training methods and instruments to facilitate both the employability of older workers and the

conceptualisation of an intergenerational learning partnership involving younger workers. The ILPO55 project in fact proposed two concrete short programmes in order to target these aspects.

1. The Adult Trainer Programme
2. The Social Responsibility Facilitator Programme.

4.1 The Adult Trainer Programme

The over 55 employee has years of experience and extensive knowledge that can be shared with the younger generation as part of the intergenerational learning partnership proposed by the project. In order for this to be effective, training that looks at the principles of training design, delivery and development focused on effective adult education aspects, is required.

Hence the adult trainer programme was developed in order to provide skills for the over 55 employees to further contribute to training and share knowledge using effective delivery methods. In fact this programme looks at effective design, delivery and assessment of training, Technology enhanced learning and mentoring. At the end, this does not mean that the over 55 both as an adult educator and as an adult learner should stop further professional development. This is part of a continuous cycle of learning and development.

Skills obtained through this training programme will enable Over 55 employees to contribute actively to the organisation's training plans, thus making them a valuable asset to the continuous improvement of the organisation. Retaining older employees, who would have gathered a lot of experience throughout their years of employment, and who would have the organisation's ethos and policies ingrained in them, is vital. Instead of losing such knowledge and skill, which would most likely go to the competition, the organisation should seek to utilise it to train its newer employees and foster in them its main principles. The Adult Trainer programme enables the organisation to develop its own trainers and thus be more in control of the training being imparted to its employees.

4.2 The Social responsibility facilitator Programme

Training within the context of the ILPO55 project, also focuses on other knowledge, skills and competences that are important for the financial services sector. Hence this enables the over 55 to contribute whilst also remaining employable. The social responsibility facilitator programme introduces the over 55 employee to the principles of corporate social responsibility, whilst also providing necessary professional knowledge, skills and competences required to fulfil such a role. The later includes elements such as critical and creative thinking, communication skills, and other key soft skills.

The involvement of Organisations in Corporate Social Responsibility activities is an ever-growing trend amongst Banking and Financial Services Organisations. Whilst some organisations have had such measures in place for a number of years, in today's society the involvement of organisations in CSR activities is becoming a must/need rather than a voluntary exercise. This creates the need for Social Responsibility Facilitators who can assist in the designing and running and run such activities/campaigns. The Social Responsibility Facilitator Programme deals exactly with this. It aims at preparing employees to join the CSR departments with active knowledge on the principles of Corporate Social Responsibility. Project activities have identified the involvement in CSR as an ideal career progression path for over 55 employees. Current CSR activities have been accused of losing their intrinsic value (of doing something for the community) in favour of marketing strategies for the organisation who offers them. Once again the experience gained throughout years of employment will present itself as an asset. The involvement of older employees in CSR will bring a balance of older and younger generations thus complementing contemporary views and ideas with past values.

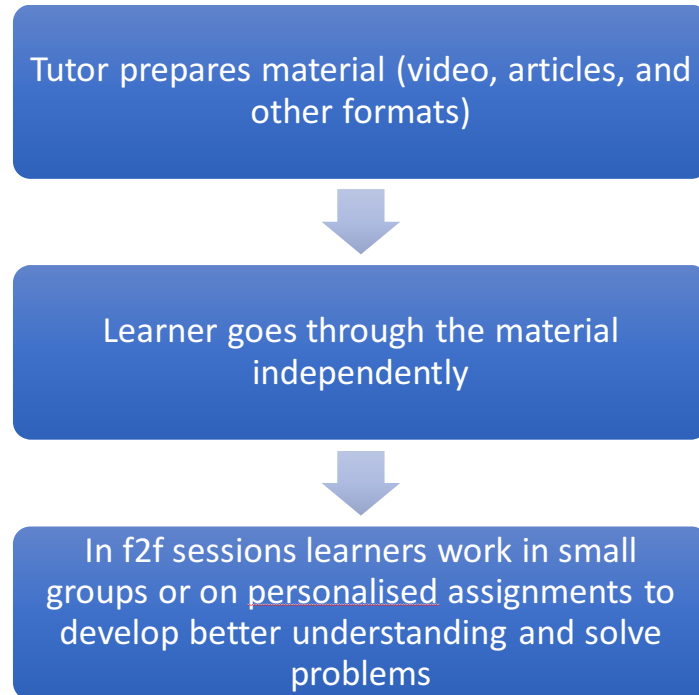
5. Blended Learning

5.1 Introductory concepts

Training is a vast area and different people can learn in different ways. A common approach being implemented by many organisations is referred to as 'Blended Learning'. In simple terms this approach combines the traditional face to face approach with an online component, in which students can, in part, control the time, pace, and place of their learning. This approach is in fact ideal for the context highlighted by various financial services institutions as it provides greater flexibility and congruence with the operations of the organisation. The blended learning approach is in fact being recommended by the ILPO55 project.

5.2 Activities- The Flipped Classroom

Online activities can take different formats. This can range from a simple 'repository' of material which is then viewed and reflected upon at one's own time and pace to fully fledged discussions, interactive videos and activities. The flipped classroom approach can be a successful method within the context of blended learning. That which is traditionally done in class is now done at home, and that which is traditionally done as homework is now completed in class. A simple process can be considered as follows.



6. Concluding Remarks

The aim of this document was not to provide a comprehensive training manual, but rather to contextualise the views of the ILPO55 Consortium on the training method within the parameters of the ILPO55 project and the ILPO55 reference framework. The training method was identified as one of the key methods to achieve project objectives, and also as a key method for the over 55 to undertake as one of the components of the employability portfolio. The important point to remember is that training is dynamic and continuous and therefore this should not be a one-time event both for the individual and also for the organisation.

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