"Training for Results: Methodological Inquiry"

by Lichia Yiu[1], Raymond Saner[2], and Joseph E. Champoux[3]

Background

A special panel was organized by the first author during the 13th Annual Conference of the National Institutes and Schools of Public Administration in the Central and Eastern Europe (NISPAcee) in Moscow. The panel consisted of members of the Management Education and Development Division of the US based Academy of Management. The aim of the panel was to address the methodological aspects of in-service training and competence development of civil servants. In particular, the panel members focused on innovative learning theory and learning methodologies and how they impact curriculum design, learning and development processes and the collective performance of the civil service.

A keynote speech was given by Dr. Carolyn Wiley, the Chair of the Management Education and Development (MED) Division who focused on global trends and innovations in management education and by the authors of this paper who gave individual presentations addressing different aspects of the stated themes. The exact titles of the presentations are presented in Annex 1.

This article hence summarises the three presentations by the authors and provides a conceptual framework to examine the issue of training outcome and the interactive effects between training outcome and training methodology. Lastly, the authors call for the use of an established quality assurance instrument, such as ISO 10015 to reduce the variation of training quality and to ensure higher return on investment defined as transfer of learning to the workplace in order to improve the of efficiency and effectiveness of the public service.

Introduction

The call for papers of the 13th NISPAcee Annual Conference was titled "Capacity Building of a Civil Servants Training System". The call for papers further stated that:

"Contemporary public administration is inherent in reforms, changes and increasing state structures' efficiency, stability of governance bodies and the professionalism and efficiency of civil servants' training system"[4].

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[4] The Call for Papers for the 13th NISPAcee Annual Conference on "Capacity Building of a Civil Servants Training System According to EU Requirements", 2005.

An in light of the continuous improvement process in the public sector, the Call for Papers further stated:

> "the development of civil servants' administration skills is one of the conditions for an increase in public service efficiency" and for country development".[5]

A similar point of view was made by the EU High Level Meeting on "The Capacity to Govern in CEE" which concluded that,

> "There is a common need in all participating countries to upgrade core governmental capacities and social requisites to strengthen strategic, long-term and holistic thinking in government for making critical future-shaping choices".[6]

Hence, the civil servants' training system in the CEE states are expected to continuously improve the day-to-day functioning of their civil servants (efficiency), but also to imbue this civil servants with strategic, long-term and holistic thinking which is needed to enable them to make critical choices in shaping the future (effectiveness) of their respective countries. However, the civil servant training system in many of the CEE countries tends to fall short of its given mission and often contributes in an insufficient manner to the general functioning of its public service and administration.

The civil servants' training systems in CEE countries have been confronted with many institutional and personnel related challenges making it difficult to effectively fulfill this dual vision. One of these challenges is related to the insufficient methodological competence of existing training institutions in CEE states and the lack of quality assurance mechanism and practices. The insufficiency has manifested itself in various forms such as: uncoordinated training strategies, variable quality of training systems, and training components that are unrelated to the real needs of the public service (UNDP, 2003). The later has caused sub-optimal utilization of valuable training resources and resulted in unaccountable outcome of training investment.

The challenge confronting the civil service training function in CEE countries is not only to improve training systems but also to improve training competence of its human resources. Under-qualified personnel sometimes occupy the key managerial positions within the national training institutions due to the political nature of appointments resulting in a lack of competence and skills of the directors (UNDP, 2003).[7] Similar problems were also reported in regard to the capacities of the trainers. Coupled with the problems of low standard of the training programmes and shortage of financial resources, the effectiveness of the training have been doubtful at the best, negligible at the worst.[8]

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[5] Ditto, footnote 4.
[6] Potůček, M (Ed.). 2004. The Capacity to Govern in Central and Eastern Europe: High Level Meeting. Vilnius, Lithuania: NISPAcee.
[7] UNDP. 2003. A Comparative Study of Selected Countries from Central and Eastern Europe, and the Former Soviet Union, (1989 to 2003).
[8] Maly, I. 2004. Experiences from an implementation of a new Civil Servants Training System in the Czech Republic – Country Study. Paper submitted to the 12th NISPAcee Annual Conference: "Central and Eastern European and Outside the European Union: Avoiding a New Divide". Vilnius, Lithuania. 13-15 May, 2004.

Although the situation described above is not representative of all CEE countries, few are the countries where training is effectively organised. Better performance results of the civil servant training do exist. "There is mixed evidence of service quality. In the more advanced *(CEE)* countries, such as Slovenia and Hungary, greater attention is now being paid to quality assurance, for example, in terms of both quality of training itself, and service delivery" (UNDP, 2003)[9] (Italic added).

Universal Nature of Training Quality Deficiency

In a comprehensive study conducted by Saner, Strehl and Yiu (1997), which compared the in-service training within the public administration in countries such as, Austria, Canada, France, Germany, Hong Kong (China), Italy, Lithuania, Quebec (Canada), Slovenia and Switzerland. The comparative analysis found that these in-service training of the public administrations were:

> "Well organised and need oriented training concepts play a major role for the development of an efficient and effective bureaucracy"

However, many of the practices identified through the comparative study presented a different picture consisting for instance of the following:

- Training is neither sufficiently *need* and *demand oriented* nor reflecting day-to-day best practice. None of the countries report systematic training need analysis;
- Systematic development of target group oriented training programmes is not undertaken in most of the countries studied;
- Traditional administrative culture and attitudes represent a hindrance to a modern utilisation of training. Training is often seen as remedial, sometimes even as punitive-corrective;
- Interrelationships between training and change or vice versa are not analysed to a sufficient degree in order to be a fruitful basis for a programme design;
- Transparency in regard to budget, policy making and implementation criteria in the field of central government training is absent in almost all countries or available only in statistics which are difficult to access and compute.[10]

The issue of disconnection between training service and its customers (i.e., public administration and individual trainees) and stakeholders (i.e., citizen groups, government) are causing a waste of resources and more importantly are causing delivery problems in terms of public service improvement.

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[9] Ditto, Footnote 7.
[10] Saner, R., Strehl, F., & Yiu, L. 1997. *In-Service Training as An Instrument for Organisational Change in Public Administration,* Brussels: IIAS/IASIA.

Remedies need to be considered at both individual competence and management system levels. Both topics are broad. This paper will therefore concentrate solely on the training methodology and on the quality assurance (QA) for training. The following sections introduce cutting edge training methodologies and Quality Assurance system of training.

Training Methods

In order to understand modern management training methods, it is necessary to start with a few assumptions concerning adult learning. This is of particular importance when one addresses the training effectiveness of civil servants.

Knowles' Andragogical Theory of Learning[11]

The study of adult learning is also known as "andragogy" in contrast to "pedagogy". "Andragogy" derived from the Greek word *anere*, for adult, and *agogus*, for "the art and science of helping students learn".

Malcolm Knowles, one of the most influential theorists in the adult learning field, postulated the following assumptions about adults as learners:

a) *The need to know*. Adults learn best if they understand why they need to know or be able to do something with their learning (personal benefits). The more adults can directly experience or see the benefits of learning, in contrast to be told about them, the more strongly they will feel "the need to know".

b) *The need to be self-directing*. Adults have a deep psychological need to take responsibility for themselves and to be in charge of their lives (self-directing). However, they have also been conditioned into a "dependent" student role by the schooling that they received in early years. Therefore, even though adults tend to be more receptive in a self-directing learning environment, they need to be acclimatised so to speak. They need to be prepared for a first experience with self-directed learning through an orientation experience, before being plunged into it.

   Self-directed learning - in contrast to the current practice of computer-aided individual learning - does not mean learning in isolation or learning without help. Rather it emphasises a "learner-centred" learning strategy and skills to get support from the environment, peers, teachers, printed materials, audiovisual aids, internet etc. When learners take some responsibility in the learning process, they learn more, retain what they learn longer, and learn more efficiently.

c) *Greater volume and quality of experience*. Adults bring a rich reservoir of experiences and knowledge to the learning setting. It is therefore enriching for the learning process to tie into their experiences through more interactive and participatory methods. Adults also learn better if

[11] Knowles, M. 1984. Adult Learning: Theory and Practice. In Nadler, L. (Ed.), *The Handbook of Human Resource Development,* Chap. 6. New York: John Wiley and Sons.

the learning can be associated with their past experiences and existing knowledge and skills.

d) *Readiness to learn.* Adults become ready to learn when there arises a "need to know" situation that requires new knowledge and/skills. Adult learn bests when they choose voluntarily to add to their knowledge base. Exposure to superior performance through simulations, audiovisual presentations, linkage with role models, performance appraisal could all help to stimulate this readiness.

e) *Orientation to learning.* Adults are motivated to learn when they have a purpose. Adults see the purpose of learning as acquiring competencies that will help their career or life situations, or solve real problems.

These sets of assumptions have an impact on the selection of learners, instructional designs and selection of learning technologies. It also shifts the role of the trainer/teacher/instructor from being a transmitter of content, to being a facilitator, coach and change agent who supports the learner in acquiring content, e.g., new knowledge and behaviour patterns. In this context, andragogs (adult educators/trainers) see their role as 1) designers and managers of the learning processes for facilitating learning and as 2) content resource persons and educational brokers for instructional design and training delivery.

In line with the andragogical principles as outlined by Knowles, learning should be a two-way transaction. In other words, learning is a co-creating process where the learner actively participates in the learning process and contributes to its content. The training facilitator's role is primarily in designing the learning processes, sequencing the activities, facilitating the "right" learning climate, building (temporary) learning communities and supporting collaborative and self-directing learning, in addition to being a subject matter expert and resource person.

In this context, the appropriate learning technologies or methods should reflect such collaborative efforts both in learning teams and the large whole. In classifying different methodological options, the schema below (Figure 1) could be a useful guide in selecting the appropriate learning strategies congruent with the identified training needs and established training objectives

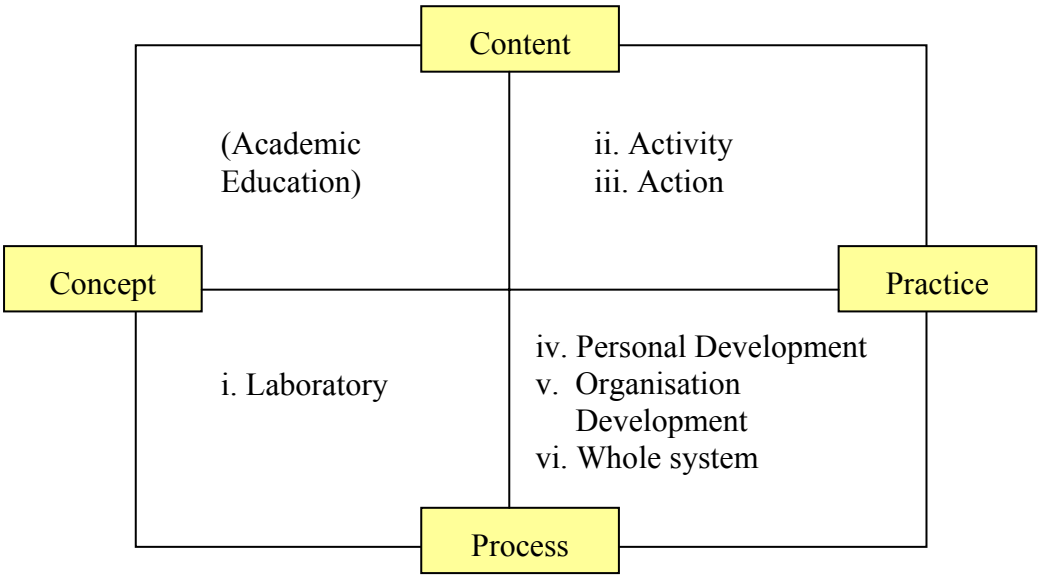


Figure 1: Six Training Objectives and corresponding learning strategies
(source: Lynton & Pareek, 2000, p. 71)

Once a learning strategy has been selected, the appropriate learning methods need to be selected as well. Learning methods which are not congruent with the respective learning strategy often render a learning strategy dysfunctional. Table 1 below proposes a system of correspondence between learning strategy and appropriate learning methods.

Table 1: Six types of to the six types of learning strategies.
(Adopted from Lynton & Pareek, 2000. p.83.)

Learning Strategy	Emphasis	Samples of Methods
(Academic Education for comparison only)	Transmitting content and increasing conceptual understanding	• Lecture • Seminar • Individual reading
Laboratory	Process of function and change Process of learning	• Sensitivity training • Experiential learning • Free exploration and discussion • Experimentation
Activity	Practice of specific skills	• On-the-job learning under coaching and supervision • Job rotation and job aids • Role rehearsal
Action	Sufficient skills to ensure organisational action	• Field work, setting and achieving targets • Action Learning • Project based learning •
Personal Development	Improved individual competence in a wide variety of tasks and situations	• Field training • Simulation methods • Appreciative inquiry • Syndicated discussions • Learning journaling and reflection • Personal counselling and coaching
Organisation Development	Organisational improvement and transformation	• Action Research, studying of organisational needs • Acting as internal consultant across the organisation • Large group process
Whole System Development	System Improvement	• Identifying stakeholders' common ground • Large group programmes

This paper will focus on the use of action learning, action research and multimedia for the learning process. While the use of multimedia, especially the film clips, will be more of the classroom application; the use of action learning and action research extend the learning from the classroom to the workplace. All three approaches nevertheless shift the role of the teacher/trainer from knowledge transmitter to that of a learning facilitator and resource expert.

1. Action Learning (AL)

Action learning is a concept that was developed by Rag Ravens in the 1930s [12]. As the title indicates, action learning is about *learning through action*. It is formally defined as a tool, a process and/or a program for solving organizational challenges and developing individual skill sets simultaneously, i.e., learning and action inextricably interwoven. Although not a tool that is commonly seen in the typical organization, it is used internationally in a variety of organizations for developing solutions for volatile, ambiguous and complex problems.

As a learning process, AL consists of 4 steps (see Figure 2). The strength of this approach lies in its power of fostering forward thinking and problem solving capabilities in the learner.

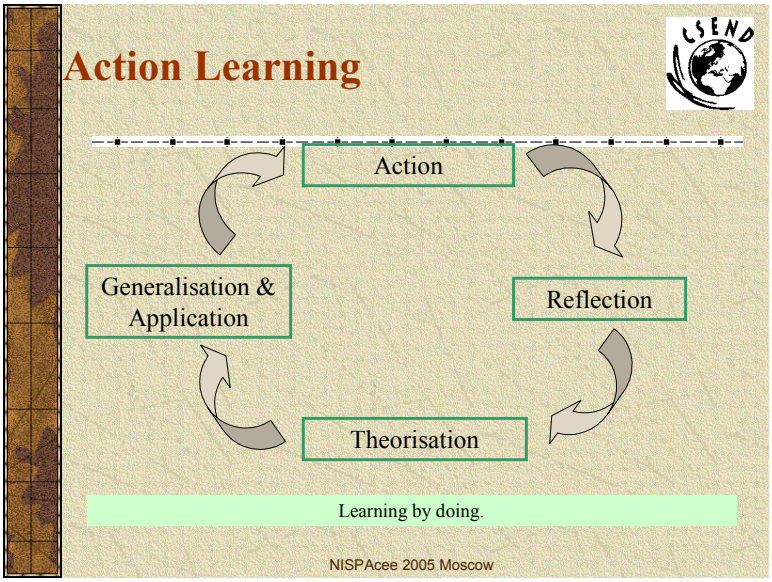


Figure 2: Process of Action Learning

Ravens believed that managerial learning is a social exchange, and that taking action is fundamental to any learning. This later point is of particular salience to the civil servants in CEE countries who are confronted with complex system change and its ensuing uncertainty and need to develop new mindset and competencies to deal with these complexities. As Ravens said in his book *The ABC of Action Learning* (1983):

> "In any epoch of rapid change those organisations unable to adapt are soon in trouble, and adaptation is achieved only by learning, namely by being able to do tomorrow that which might have been unnecessary today, or to be able to do today what was unnecessary last week…..training systems intended to development our young may do little more than to make them proficient in yesterday's techniques. Thus learning cannot be solely the acquisition of new *programme knowledge*…. So it is that the subjective aspects of searching the unfamiliar, or of

[12] Raves, R.W. 1998. *The ABC of Action Learning.* London: Lemos & Crane.

> learning to pose useful and discriminating questions in conditions of ignorance, risks and confusion, must become as well understood, and as effectively employed, by managers as are all the syllabuses of programmed instruction…." (p.11).

This does not mean that Ravens or the AL methodology rejects all formal instruction (in Ravens term, "***P***"); but it does mean recognition of the limits of such instruction, aiming at imparting what is normally known to others. Traditional instruction cannot by itself stimulate the posing of insightful questions ("***Q***"). ***P*** may be necessary in learning about managing the public service and public administration in a democratic market economy but without insightful questioning by students, such learning will not be sufficient to steer the process of reform.

For Ravens, fundamental to action learning - and to an action learning programme – is that "each participant attacks a real-life task for which no course of treatment has yet been suggested." The learner is there to observe himself in managerial action.

Therefore, an action learning based programme will consists of four essential elements: Learner, learning set, set adviser/facilitator and a real life project. However, to have a learning project attached to a programme does not qualify such programme as action learning based. Instead, the learning process has to allocate time for reflection (step 2) in learning sets and to be facilitated by a set advisor. The task of the learning set focuses on both the problem solving (task) and members' interactions (team dynamics).

Quiet often, a confusion exists between *active learning* and Action Learning (AL). Active learning describes a learning approach whereby participants of the training programme or learning process are actually active and participate instead of being passive note takers and on-lookers. Active learning is confined in the classroom setting, while Action Learning (AL) extends into the work place.

Conclusion: Action Learning has been used successfully in industries and in public administration with sound results and can offer significant improvement as to transfer of learned knowledge and skills to actual work place environments.[13]

2. Action Research (AR)

Action research is the foundation of most organisation development (OD) work. It is both a model and a process. As a model, AR can be seen as a simplified representation of the complex activities that occur in a change effort. This model could serve as a road map to individuals facilitating change.

AR is also a process (see Figure 3). It is "the process of systematically collecting research data about an ongoing system relative to some objective, goal, or need of that system; feeding these data back into the system; taking actions by altering selected variables within the system based both on the data and on

[13] Practical example can be found by the work of Saner, R. & Yiu, L. 2002. Building Internal Capacities for Change in China: Action Learning in the Public and Private Sectors. In Boshyk, Y. (Ed.), *Action Learning: Worldwide*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan.

hypotheses; and evaluating the results of actions by collecting more data" (French and Bell, 1990, p. 99)[14].

In the context of learning, AR could be used in combination with AL while the learner-trainees are engaged in AL projects. By combining these two action based methodologies, the learning design of in-service training programme takes on an additional value. Such a programme provides valuable learning opportunities for the learners to explore a living system through their AL project and grow from such experience. It also provides insightful inputs for solving existing performance issues by collecting relevant data and by offering well founded diagnosises and solutions.

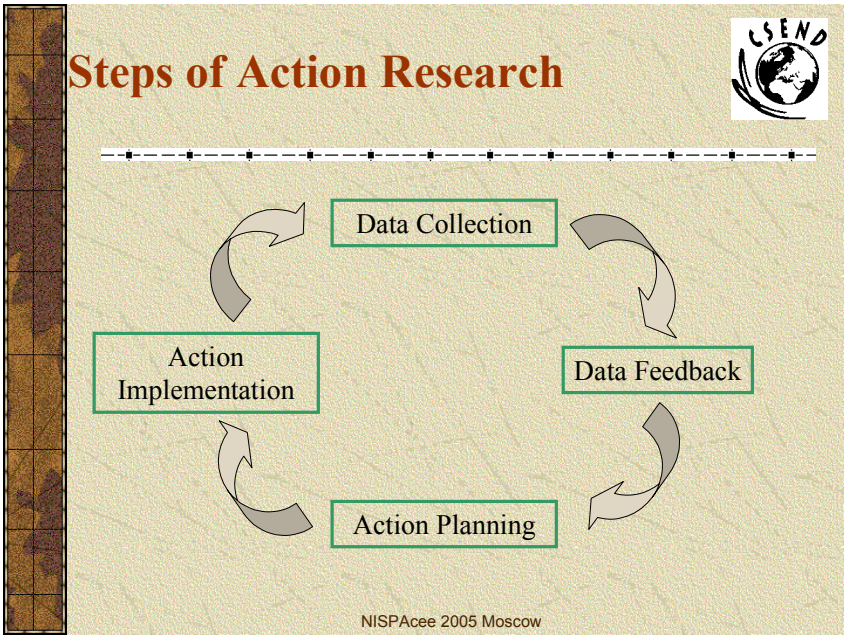


Figure 3: Essential Elements of Action Research

Conclusion

AL and AR could be combined in order to achieve system level learning and development. They can act as twin engine for a change process where capacity building and training is an integral part of the programme. Such a complementary design has achieved substantive gains in facilitating the transformation process in Slovenia.[15]

[14] French, W. & Bell, C. Jr. 1990. *Organisation Development: Behavioural Science Interventions for Organisational Improvement*. 4th edition. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.
[15] Saner, R. & Yiu, L. (Eds.). 1997. *Pilot Projects for Improving Working Procedures in Slovene Public Administration and Training Modules*. Ljublijana: Institute of Public Administration and Geneva: Centre for Socio Eco-Nomic Development.

3. Film as a Teaching Resource[16]

Videotaped films are now widely available for inexpensive rental or purchase, making them an accessible teaching resource. Films now available from a video store include contemporary films, classical films, foreign films, documentaries, and some television series. About 24,000 such films are available on videotape, laserdisc, and DVD (Craddock 2001; Maltin 2002; Martin and Porter 2002).

Film scenes offer a visual portrayal of abstract theories and concepts discussed in typical organizational behavior books and taught in related courses. Showing concepts through different film scenes also shows the application of these concepts in different situations.

Film Theory

A review of the film theory and the film studies literature suggested some unique features of film that make it an uncommonly powerful teaching tool. An early film theorist, Siegfried Kracauer, captured this view of film when he said: "[A unique property of film is its ability to] make one see and grasp things which only the cinema is privileged to communicate" (Kracauer 1973, x).

Film Characteristics

Film records physical reality but sees it differently from ordinary human experiences (Andrew, 1984; Arnheim 1957). Film is unequaled in its ability to hold and direct the attention of the viewer. Lens techniques, focusing techniques, camera movements, camera angles, framing of shots, and film editing can create gripping views not found in reality (Carroll 1985). The following summarizes these major film characteristics.

- *Close-up shot*: Lets a director show a viewer something that might go unnoticed with ordinary vision. Example: *12 Angry Men*
- *Long shot:* Shows the viewer more than what ordinary vision shows. Example: *Broadcast News*
- *Deep focus:* All parts of a scene are in focus from the nearest object to the farthest. Example: *The Hudsucker Proxy*
- *Soft focus*: Keeps objects nearest the viewer in focus; puts objects farther away out of focus. Example: *Top Gun*
- *Film editing:* Puts a series of images together in a unique sequence intended to have specific effects on the viewer. Example: *The Godfather*
- *Shot/reverse-shot:* Shows social interaction between two or more parties. Scene switches from a view of one party to a view of the other party in the conversation. Example: *Broadcast News*
- *Sound, dialogue:* Delivery of dialogue by the actor or actress adds to the drama, humor, or satire of a scene. Example: *Head Office*

[16] *Source:* Adapted from Joseph E. Champoux, Film as a Teaching Resource, *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 8(2) (June 1999): 206–217. Sage Publications, Inc. Reprinted by permission of Sage Publications, Inc. See this article for a more detailed description and full citations for this summary on teaching with film.

- *Sound, composed music:* Deliberately controlled in tempo, loudness, and color to give desired effects to the cinematic experience. Example: *Top Gun*
- *Sound, music taken from other sources:* Often has meaning for viewers from earlier exposure to the music; lets a director use borrowed music as a satirical device or emphasize meaning to certain film themes. Example: *2001: A Space Odyssey*
- *Special effects:* Enhancements that come from many sources; computer effects are increasingly common in modern films. Example: *Metropolis*

Viewer Responses

Viewers are not passive observers of images on a screen. They can have many different responses, some of which come from film's unique features (Allbritton and Gerrig 1991; Gerrig and Prentice 1996). Viewer responses often become an essential part of the film experience.

The shot/reverse-shot editing technique described earlier creates a viewing experience that does not happen in the real world. A viewer can see all aspects of the conversation the director considers important to the film's story.

Nonverbal cues from eye movement, facial expression, and body movement can load images with information a viewer interprets. Directors can embed these scenes with high emotional, satirical, or comical content that a viewer can only experience with the film medium.

Media, Cognition, and Learning

Traditional teaching media include lecture/discussion and printed media such as book materials or projected text. Visual forms include overhead projection of drawings, slide projection of images, or computer projection of slides. I recommend adding film and film scenes to existing instructional media. Several lines of research suggest different learning effects of different media forms. The conclusion from both brain and media and cognition research points compellingly to using multi-media for learning.

Teaching Functions of Film

Films can serve many functions in one's teaching program. The functions that will work for you depend on your teaching style, teaching goals, and course content. The following is an overview of ways of using film as case, experiential exercise, metaphor, satire, symbolism, meaning, experience, and time.

- *Film as Case:* Case analysis is an obvious use of film and perhaps the first that one thinks of when considering film for teaching. Scenes from a well-acted and well-directed film present material more dramatically and engagingly than a print case. Example: *The Coca-Cola Kid*
- *Film as Experiential Exercise:* Some films lend themselves to inclusion in experiential exercises. Using films instead of print

materials adds the advantages and unique qualities of film to the exercise. Example: *Apollo 13*

- *Film as Metaphor:* Metaphors serve many functions in prose and poetry and can serve similar functions when using film as a teaching resource (Cooper 1986; Hawkes 1972; Mooij 1976). Metaphors often leave lasting impressions that a person easily recalls. Example: *Scent of a Woman*
- *Film as Satire:* Satire is an effective art form for burning concepts into a person's mind (Feinberg 1967; Griffin 1994, 1; Test 1991). It uses humor and ridicule to contrast pretense and reality. Well-done satire can leave an unforgettable image of concepts you are trying to emphasize. Example: *Modern Times*
- *Film as Symbolism:* Some scenes from films can offer a symbolic way of communicating theories and concepts. Unusual shots, sequencing, lighting, and the use of black and white film often convey symbolism. Example: *Ikiru* (*to Live*)
- *Film as Meaning:* Film is an excellent medium for giving meaning to theories and concepts. The visual and auditory effects of great films can convey a message better than printed or spoken words. Example: *12 Angry Men*
- *Film as Experience:* The unique qualities of film described earlier can create strong experiences for viewers (Stadler 1990). You can use this feature of film to introduce students to other countries' cultures. Example: *Ciao, Professore!*
- *Film as Time:* Films portraying earlier periods can help show aspects of behavior during an earlier time. Example: *Tucker: The Man and His Dream*

Ways of Using Film for Teaching

There are several ways of using film for teaching organizational behavior principles, theories, and concepts (Proctor and Adler 1991; Zorn 1991). Experimenting with each method will show you which ones are most effective for your teaching style and course content.

- *Before:* Showing film scenes before discussion gives students a recallable visual image to which they can compare the topics under discussion. This approach allows quick reference to easily recallable examples shown in the film. Example: *Top Gun*.
- *After***:** Showing scenes after describing or discussing theories and concepts lets you use the scenes as a video case. This approach helps students develop their analytical skills in applying what they are learning. Example: *Top Gun*.
- *Repeat***:** Repeating scenes is especially helpful when trying to develop student understanding of complex topics (Wolensky 1982). Run the scenes before discussion to give students a visual anchor. Rerun the scenes as a video case and ask students to analyze what they see with the theories and concepts discussed. Example: *The Firm*.
- *Comparison***:** Films offer rich opportunities for comparisons in several ways. Remakes of the same film can offer a chance to see the same culture at different times. Example: *Sabrina* (1954) : *Sabrina* (1995).

Conclusion

Film and film scenes are a widely available, easily accessed, teaching resource. Film's many unique characteristics as a communication medium let it have especially positive effects on one's teaching program. Films serve many functions in teaching. You can use them as cases, as a source of information for experiential exercises, or present unusual experiences to students. There are several ways of using films and different ways of placing them within a course.

Quality Assurance

Training as an instrument for change and improvement often does not provide expected results as pointed out in previous section of this article (Saner, Strehl, Yiu, 1997). Many times, investments in training are not successful and intended objectives through training are not met leading to disappointments and unhelpful attributions of blame.

What matters are the results or outputs (skills acquisition, know-how acquisition and increased behavioural competencies of trainees), and not on input figures (number of trainer, number of training programmes or number of training Centres etc.). At the final end it is the outcome measures, which determine whether or not a given training system is effective or ineffective.

Training as an investment versus training as expenditure.

While it might be relatively easy to have CEE governments agree on the need for training, it is less easy to know how to assess the return on investment of agreed training programmes. How can for instance governments know whether the money spent for training will return in form of more efficient and effective performance of local, regional and central authorities? How can one measure the benefits of the intended training? How can the local and regional authorities be sure that newly trained staff does not simply walk off and take with them the newly acquired knowledge and skills?

What about quality of training investment?

What quality system could best support a local, regional or central government agency in a CEE country in improving the efficiency and effectiveness of its training? Different quality standards and instruments are available to measure quality of training, such as ISO 9000, the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM), or some form of Total Quality Management systems.

Several European governments have used either of the three quality instruments mentioned above with mixed results. Some felt these standards were sufficient, others considered the three instruments as being too bureaucratic, too industry oriented and not sufficiently adjusted to the peculiarities of the training process.

A survey of seven countries indicated a trend away from the three traditional quality instruments.[17]

None of the quality instruments mentioned, however, address the actual pedagogical process itself and the interaction between organisational performance objectives and the training intervention within companies or public organisations.

ISO 10015: the new solution to the quality question

Realising the need for more sector specific guidance of quality assurance of training, a working group was created within ISO to draft a guideline standard for training. Twenty-two country representatives developed the draft text over several years culminating in the publication of a final official standard ISO 10015 issued by the ISO secretariat in December 1999. The new ISO standard offers two main advantages namely:

a) being based on the process oriented concepts of the new 9000:2000 ISO family of standards and being easily understandable for administrations used to ISO related Quality instruments; and
b) being a sector specific, that is pedagogical oriented, standard offering public administrations specific guidance in the field of training technology and organisational learning.

What follows is the description of two key features of the new ISO 10015 standard.

a. Linking training investment with improved administrative performance

While it can be useful to test the professional competence of trainers or certify the pedagogical concept of training programmes, the key to assessing return on investment of training is its link to administrative performance. When asked the question why do you pay for training, an administration should be able to link its decision to organise training with concrete performance needs of the administration. In other words, the key client is the administration, not only the civil servants being trained.

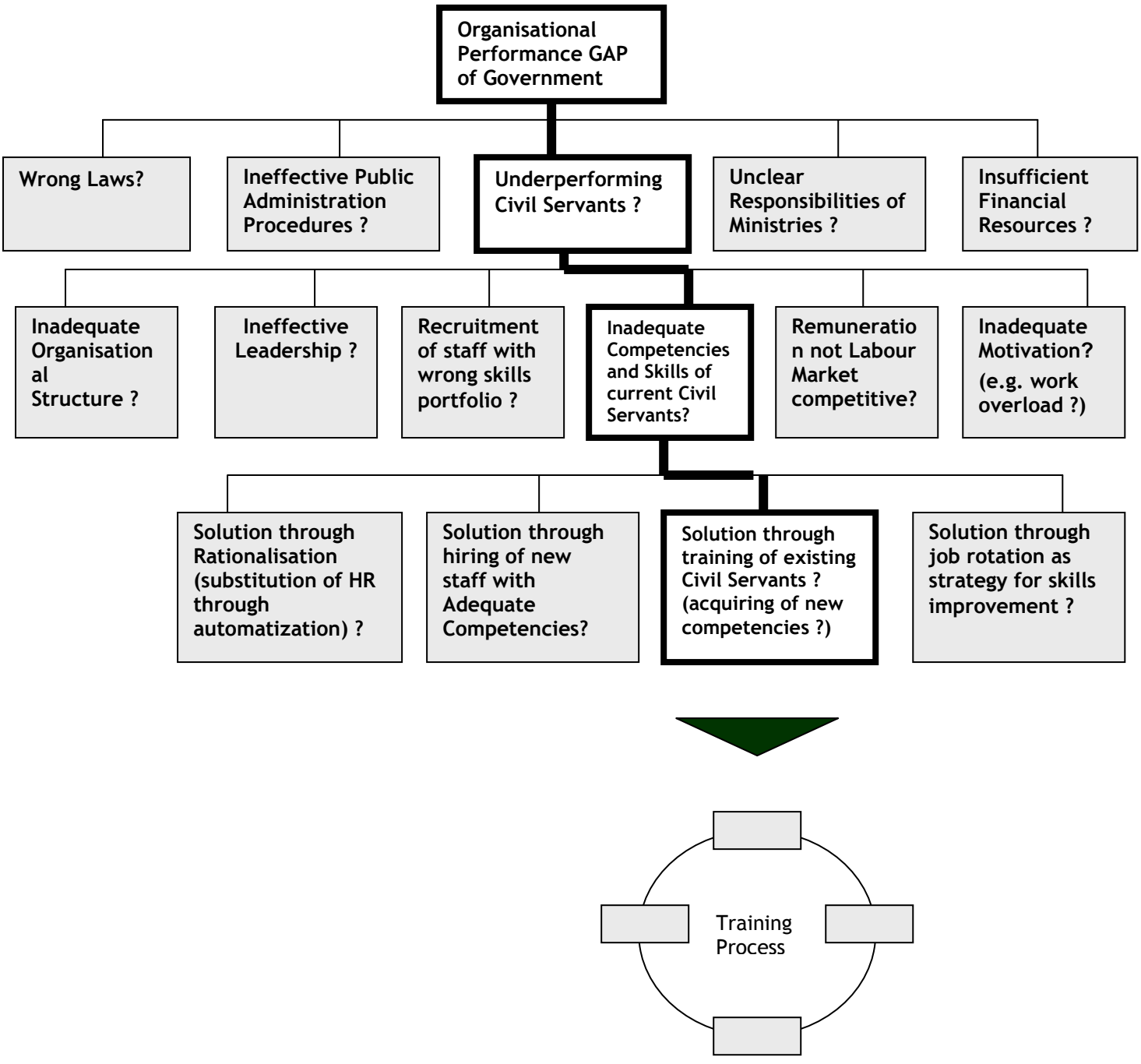
Looking at the diagnostic tree below (Figure 4), an administration has to recognise first what is the performance challenge it faces and what are the causes of this challenge.

To take a fictious example, an administration might have tried to implement a new law but failed. The question it should ask is why is it not able to apply the new law? Is it because it has other laws which contradict the new law? Or it might be that the new laws are in place but the procedures to apply them are missing? Is the quality of its administrative services poor because the staff is not equipped to deal with the new approach and does not know how to apply it?

[17] Saner, R. 2002. Quality Management in training: generic or sector-specific? *ISO Management Systems*, July-August 2002: 53-62. Geneva: ISO.

If the performance gap is linked to under-performing human resources, then the administration should ask itself, why do our people under-perform -- Is it because their competencies do not fit the job requirements? Are they remunerated below labour market rates and hence are de-motivated or ready to switch jobs? Is the current administrative leadership deficient and staffs are simply de-motivated? If none of the above factors are applicable, it might be that their under-performance is due to a deficient skills set of the current staff. If so, then training would be the right solution.

Figure 4: Why Training?
(Adapted from ISO 10015 Training, 1999, Figure 1, p.V)



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ISO 10015 in this regard offers a clear road map in guiding an administration in making sound training investment decisions by asking the top civil servants to connect training to performance goals and use it as a strategic vehicle for individual and collective performance improvement. As a result, the success of training is not only measured by whether individuals have improved their professional competence, but also whether individuals have positively contributed to the administration's performance because they benefited from effective in-service training.

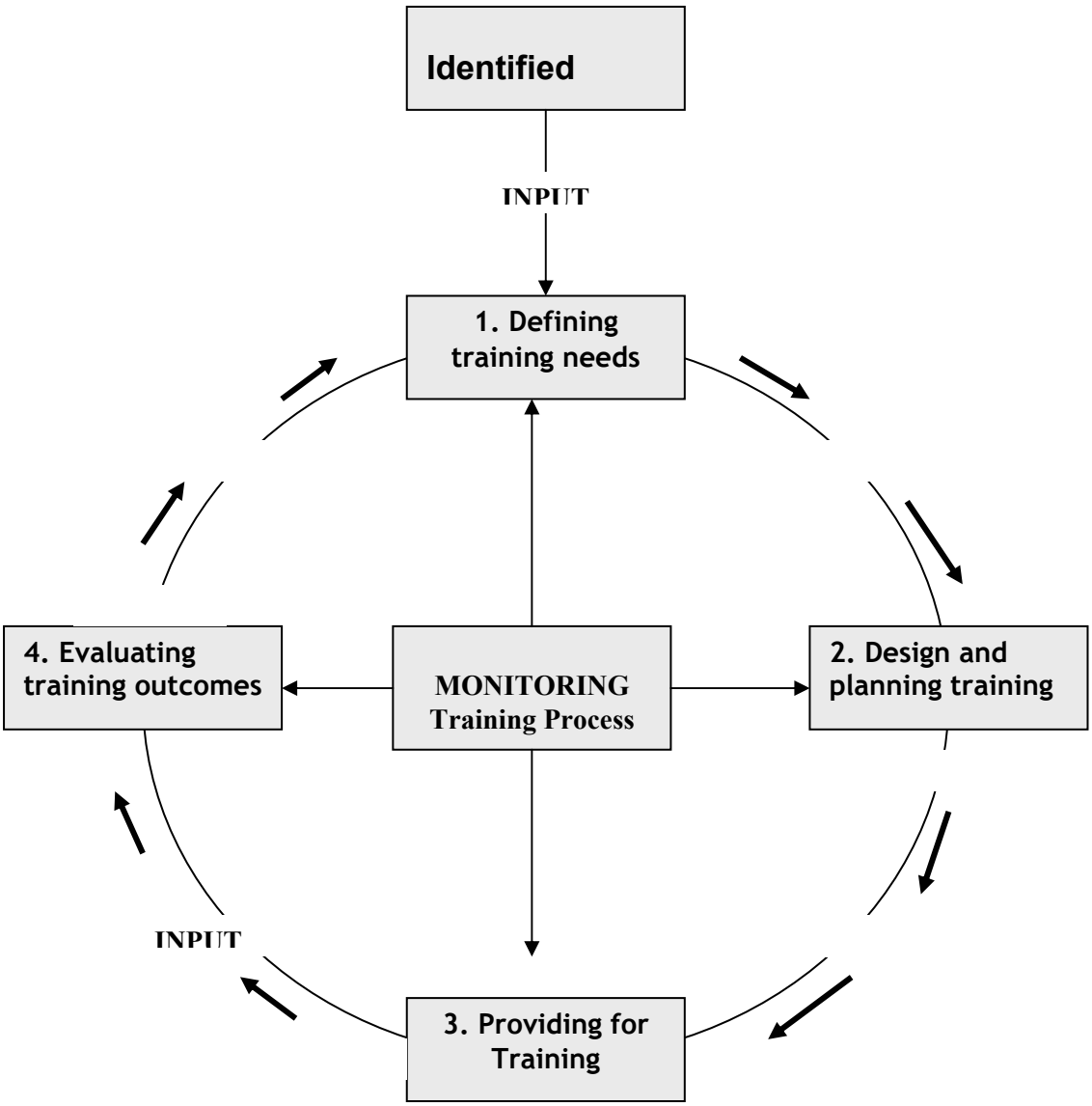
b. Organising training on the basis of pedagogical principles and processes

Training as an intervention strategy is called into place once an administration has determined that training of the current staff is the optimal approach to close the performance gap. Consequently, the next critical phase of investing in staff is that of establishing an appropriate training design and effective learning processes. In this regard, ISO 10015 serves as the management tool to ensure that training is organised efficiently in regard to the use of resources (finances, time and energy) and effectively in regard to closing the performance gap.

Following the well-known Deming Cycle, ISO 10015 defines training in a four-step process, namely, Analyse-Plan-Do-Evaluate. Each step is connected to the next in an input and output relationship (see Figure 5). As a quality management tool, ISO 10015 helps to specify the operational requirements for each step and establishes procedures to monitor the process. Such a transparent approach enables training management to focus more on the substantive matter of each training investment rather than merely on controlling of expenditure.

Unlike other quality management systems, ISO 10015 helps an administration link training pedagogy to performance objectives and link evaluation with the latter as well. Such a training approach provides administrations with constant feedback regarding its investment in human competencies. Similarly, at a higher aggregate level, ISO 10015 offers administrations the opportunity to examine their training models and to validate their training approaches and operating premises by the use of comprehensive data.

Figure 5: Input-Output Process of Training
(Elaboration of ISO 10015 Training, Figure 2, p, 2)



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Conclusion

In order to ensure success of training investments, governments need to consider how ensure effectiveness and efficiency of training investments. Only the quality of an administrations' human capital can ensure long-term success of transition.

Training is "mission critical" and should not be considered as an activity "nice to have" instead training needs to be managed carefully like any other major investment. ISO 10015 is recommended as the state of the art instrument in quality assurance for

training. Coupled with the use of modern training methodologies, some were discussed in details here, could ensure greater effectiveness of training in the public sector and reduce the waste of training resources.

Annex 1: Titles of Individual Presentations (by alphabetic order)

"Innovative Approaches to Management Teaching and Learning: Using Cinema to Teach Management and Leadership"

Prof. Dr. Joseph E. Champoux, The Robert O. Anderson Schools of Management, University of New Mexico, USA and Visiting Professor at Management Schools in Caen, France and Graz, Austria.

"Innovative Approaches to Management Teaching and Learning: Action Learning as a Vehicle for Management Development and Organisational Learning in the Public Sector"

Prof. Dr. Raymond Saner, Director, Centre for Socio-Economic Development; Senior Lecturer at Institute of Business Economics and Management, Basle University, Switzerland; and past Board Member of the ODC Division, AoM (2001-2004).

Keynote Address: "Trends and Innovations in Management Education and Development: Implications for CEE Transformation".

Prof. Dr. Carolyn Wiley, Chair, Management Education and Development (MED) Division, Academy of Management, USA; Former Vice President, Mercer Human Resource Consulting , Ireland.

"Innovative Approaches to Management Teaching and Learning: Training Strategy and Learning System Design"

Prof. Dr. Lichia Yiu, Co-founder and president, Centre for Socio-Eco-Nomic Development, Geneva; Representative to Switzerland, MED/Academy of Management, USA; Member of IASIA/IIAS, Brussels; and Expert of OECD task force on Analysis of China's Higher Education (2002-present).

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