

Book Review: Training for Development

–Shailey Singh*

Authors: Rolf P. Lynton & Udai Pareek

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The world of training has undergone a phenomenal expansion in the past decade and this can be attributed to factors like technology, mobility, rapidly escalating global markets and diversity. More and more people are working from home, work is spread across the map spanning across different time zones and not just simple business process outsourcing but also complex strategic negotiations and implementations. This book has focused the change in training scenarios from the classic approaches to more strategic concerns and decisions taken not just in boardrooms but across the organization. The book though published in September 2011, definitely has a futuristic approach because all its nuances are highly applicable today five years down the line in the modern millennial era. While there are many others who have tried to touch upon this topic much after this book, including *Fien et. al.* in their popular authorship *Work, Learning and Sustainable Development: Opportunities and Challenges* but they restrict their approach to the first two factors - technology and mobility while only making passing mentions of culture, diversity and policy.

The author highlights the urgent and massive importance of training in the ambit of wider diversity to qualify the employees for bigger game-changing roles. The book is well organized and this reflects in the table of contents itself. It is broadly divided into four parts and seventeen chapters. It starts with the assumptions for prevailing and alternative concepts of training in the modern era. The book presents four very fresh scenarios out of a show whose enactors are participants/learners, trainers and the

* Assistant Professor at Apeejay Institute of Management Technical Campus, Jalandhar, Punjab, India. Email: shaileysingh56@gmail.com

training systems. The effect of culture, self-instruction, and hierarchical order of training is emphasized. Each chapter in the book starts with beautiful quotes by famous people from Ruskin to Erik Erikson to Diana Cooper and many motivating proverbs and excerpts from literature. These are beautifully put across in italicized letters at the beginning of each chapter to give a positive and meaningful start to the reader.

Goals are an integral part of any training module anywhere in the world and the author has done justice by dedicating substantial content to explain goals, the role of policymakers in identifying goals correctly in the first part of the book. The book portrays how potential disasters can occur when training goals fall short of the full definition of purpose. While the portrayal is definitely catching, but what stands amiss is a practical situational case study approach to exemplifying how goals have fallen short in recent times. Those of us in corporates and academics well understand the importance of situational analysis in management genre. Change management has been given its due space in the chapter and is a beneficial read for managers intending to bring about a change in their current organization's overall training. Of value here is the author's crisp diagrammatic explanation of training goals of six different kinds clustered in three quadrants of a two-dimensional paradigm. Various examples from training in different industries from teachers, nursing and of course corporate processes have been included.

After introducing the steps in training, the next part of the book deals with "Training in Process" and of course significant coverage space has rightly been dedicated to this. After fine-tuning the objectives and preparing the partners for the task ahead, it becomes imperative that focus should shift to methods, techniques, and aids and most importantly experience. Designing the program is quintessential to the success of any training process but the emphasis on social process and training climate have been beautifully integrated in the text and this is something that most other training authorships tend to miss out. All trainers need to take note that their participants coalesce into an effective group and build realistic relations not just with each other but also with the world that they are expected to work in. Culture, language, ambience, tone - all shape the feeling that underlie the behaviour of both participants and the trainer. Public Administration has an excellent book by *Wart et al* titled *Leadership and Culture: Comparative Models of Top Civil Servant Training* which covers culture beautifully but the only drawback is that it restricts the reader to Governance and Public Management domain only while the book in hand has a much broader industry coverage.

Beautiful diagrammatic representations of training climate, its roots and effects have been developed by the author and they provide good inputs for any organization looking to start its new training module.

The next part of the book deals with the trainer and his training styles. Power and influence have been discussed but the most interesting insights are on how the trainer's behaviour renders the task as clear and attractive or unclear and ineffective to the participants. Industries and managers globally are facing a challenge today – how to train the free-spirited millennial generation? This is the hottest topic of debate across all Management forums. The book gives some unique, appropriate and flexible training styles which coupled with innovative tools by managers could help combat this challenge. Case discussions and interactive exercises in this particular portion add to the rich content of the book. Illustrations are extremely helpful though would have made a better impact in colour print. After program implementation and evaluation methodologies have been included. Here common imbalances in training programs have been highlighted and two of these which caught my eye and deserve a detailed read were Linkage failure and Input overload. A little more research on this topic is recommended and hence a good read for researchers to start with and further develop the idea.

The fourth and final concluding portion of the book is technical in nature and dedicated to Training Systems. Global sustenance of training system has been debated and discussed. The highlighting aspect of this part of the book is the training system developed by the author and beautifully depicted diagrammatically showing normative, collegial, diffused, enabling and functional linkages. Institutions/organizations have a defining role to play in training for development and growth and the book touches this issue deeply in the concluding portions. Resistance to change at top level sanctioned by hierarchical tradition and the functional role that a dynamic training program can play to counter this has merited attention in the diagnosis of issues.

The biggest strength of the book is its relevance in today's demanding times - it focuses on the latest developments; collaboration of different styles, advanced concepts and techniques in training. Crisp diagrammatic depictions help in better understanding. The writing style is appealing and the content is rich. The author has touched many different industry verticals and this is especially relevant for students who are willing to read and broaden their horizon with knowledge about different sectors.

Subsequent editions need to improvise on shortcomings of the book

by including a more dynamic situational approach spread across all the chapters of the book. Case exercises have been restricted to select topics only. Colour illustrations would appeal better. What is amiss in the content of the book is the effect that automation has on training and the innovations that self-driven robotics will have not just on training modalities but also on development of participants and all shareholders in the training climate. Another area which has been denied its due importance is the dynamics of training and training systems in the present entrepreneurial ecosystem where start-ups are mushrooming by the day.

Author has provided an insight to various concepts which form a part of present day “Training for Development” – where training is strongly embedded in a well- defined and planned institutional strategy. Apart from minor limitations related to entrepreneurial institutions and automation, this book is by far one of the most comprehensive and well-articulated book on Training and would strongly recommend it for trainers, academicians, students and researchers.