

Facilitate

Dominate

***Driving Results By Teaching  
Learners How To Learn***



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Many learning and development organizations take the build-it-and-they-will-come approach to education offerings, providing vast catalogs of courses, but never really knowing whether or not the learners are getting it. In order to demonstrate that your learning initiatives are delivering bottom-line results and are connected with corporate strategy, you must be able to show results. Providing learners with catalogs of content isn't going to do the trick. Giving learners the tools they need to learn, and letting them know how that learning fits into the organizational context, can help ensure the success of your learning initiatives.

That success really begins with understanding what is meant by proficiency. Ingrid Gudenas, CEO of Effective Training Solutions Inc., started researching proficiency in the late 1980s, asking hundreds of managers, senior-level executives and trainers what level of proficiency they were seeing in their learners after the training was completed. "What was interesting was that we didn't get any answers back—what we got was questions," she said. "That means people don't know how to answer.

They would say, 'What do you mean by proficiency?' 'What do you mean by level of proficiency?' 'Do you mean proficiency at the end of training or proficiency on the job?' Nobody ever said, 'We're seeing 100 percent proficiency,' or 'We're seeing medium levels.' They actually couldn't even answer the question."

This led Gudenas and her team to seek a proper definition for proficiency for training. "Training is supposed to produce proficiency, but it wasn't really defined," she said. "So we came up with a definition of 100 percent proficiency. Regardless of the content, it would mean that the employee had all of the knowledge that they needed. In other words, they can remember everything that was covered—that would be 100 percent recall of the material. They were fast. They were error-free. They were able to use good judgment. They could think. They could make good decisions. They could operate with minimal supervision."

Using this new definition, Gudenas and her team put out their question once again to hundreds of organizations, asking first if they agreed with the definition and second what level of proficiency they were seeing. "Basically what they said was, first of all, 'We're not measuring. We don't know really. We're just going to give you a guess or a ballpark or a guesstimate,'" Gudenas explained. "So we said, 'OK, given that you're not really measuring the level of proficiency, what guesstimate would you give it?'" The organizations generally responded with estimates between 40 percent and 60 percent.



To help organizations drive 100 percent proficiency, Gudenas and her team turned their research efforts to uncover how people were learning. “We found out that people were learning basically a couple of different ways,” she said. “One was classroom; another was on the job; and there was online learning going on at the same time.” The instructional methods that were being used, though, dated from the 1940s, Gudenas said. “You could spiff it up and make it look good, but basically, the methodologies are from the 1940s,” she said. “It’s like spiffing up a 1940s vehicle that even maximally spiffed up is not going to go more than 35 miles an hour. We called that 1T technology.” 1T technology is one person training another person, whether it’s in a classroom, on the job or in a mentoring situation.

Moving forward in their research, Gudenas and her team found that in the ’70s and ’80s, organizations were making an effort to improve 1T technology by using train-the-trainer programs. “We called that 2T technology,” Gudenas said. “But typically after trainers are trained or instructional designers are trained, they go back and use 1T technology, which is training a person. And what we looked at was could 1T or 2T come up with 100 percent proficiency? And there was really no instance where it did.”

Going even further in their research, Gudenas said the team uncovered research conducted by L. Ron Hubbard in the subject of training and learning in the 1960s. “His basic premise was that training should result in 100 percent proficiency,” she said. “An analogy would be if an engineer builds a bridge you expect it to stand 100 percent of the time. So why would you set a lower standard for education? If you were going to educate somebody, why would you not educate them to a level of 100 percent? He was one of the first to discover that verbal instruction results in very low retention, which I think has been substantiated in the field.”

Taking this research, Gudenas began working with companies to try out various approaches in a business setting. “We started to partner with different organizations,” she said. “We basically said, look we have this system, we know it’s going to achieve 100 percent. We’re not sure how to implement it in business, but work with us and let’s work out the process and the system.”



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Working with a number of clients over the past 20 years, Effective Training Solutions built 3T technology. “Instead of a person training a person or training a trainer, it became training the trainees to train themselves,” Gudenas said. “A very important component of that, the reason people aren’t able to do it, is because they don’t have the learning skills to do it. So a key component of 3T technology is providing trainees with the learning skills, and once they have the learning skills, you can then say we’re going to shift the accountability for learning up to a standard of 100 percent.”

Effective Training Solutions measures its clients learning initiatives on six levels. Level 0 includes a root cause analysis. “We look at the business metrics, and we identify which business metrics could be improved,” Gudenas said. “Then we target what that improvement is going to be, and from that we target what the financial return is going to be.” Ultimately, the training company measures the ROI on each business metric.