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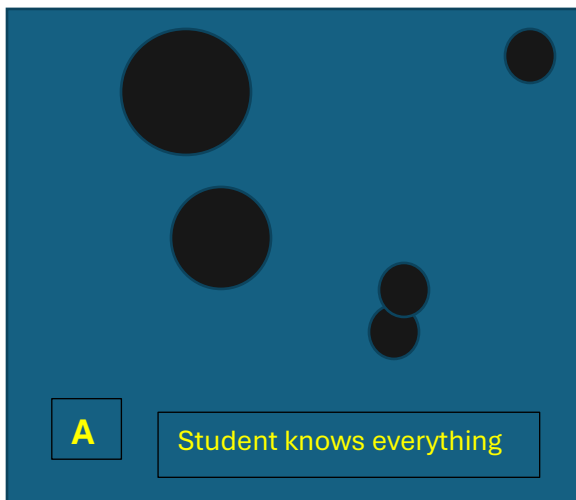
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Training that hits the target

How do you design training that fills a gap in someone's competency?

How do you conduct training that is not boring?

How do you ensure that the training isn't disregarded?



White areas are the skills and knowledge covered in the course.

The Black areas are the skills and knowledge the student comes in the door with.

This is an essential set of questions. I want to present a model for competence in any knowledge or skill area.

The square represents the field of all the knowledge or skills needed to do the job (whether it is a welding or a reliability engineering position).

The white circles are holes in the person's competency. We would find many holes if we started with a young person just out of college or trade school. If we revisit

the same person 5 years later, many holes have been filled with experience, ongoing schooling, and iOJT (Intentional On the Job Training).

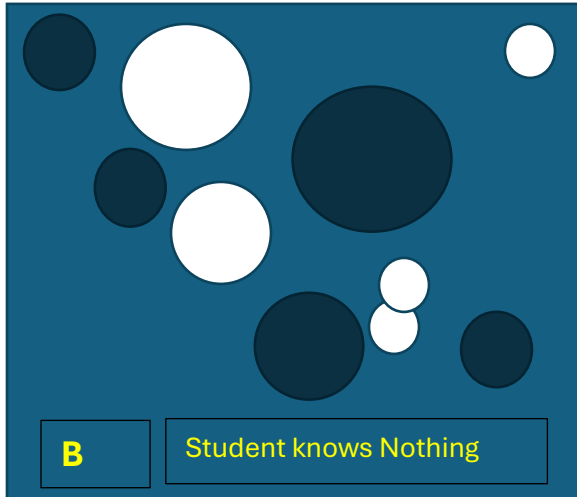
If the environment is rich, where the new employee can get a wide range of experience, they will have more holes filled in by experience. Conversely, few holes will be filled if the environment is not rich. That is the reason that apprenticeships are essential. They ensure the person is in an intentionally rich environment for the first few years with alternating working and classroom assignments.

An old timer will have most circles filled for their environment as long as that environment stays stable. Once the environment is in flux, the old-timers' knowledge and competence base gradually becomes less aligned with the field of competency needed for the job. Their competence (which was so personally hard and time-consuming to obtain) becomes obsolete.

The other interesting thing is people who have worked in the same facility for their career have their competence field filled in for that facility. The competence issue only presents itself when they change jobs. They might be entirely competent with the equipment, tools, and processes of their

old job but might (will) have holes when presented with a new situation. Some of these holes can be dangerous because they are usually a surprise to the person themselves. Since the person was competent in their old position, they developed a habitual way of thinking about themselves as competent and didn't question it.

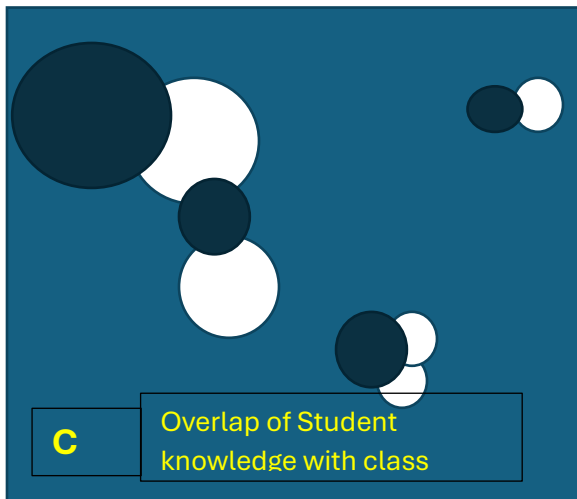
Where and how the training is positioned in the field is essential.



In the simplified diagrams we can see three different trainings. It is essential to realize that this discussion is independent of the trainer's quality or the training materials, the modality, and even the willingness to learn (they can significantly help mitigate this problem but don't change it).

Training A is a review of knowledge and skills that the candidate already knows. There is a high probability of boredom since it cuts no new ground. Of course, an excellent instructor and engaging materials will help, but there is a tendency toward boredom.

Training B is material that is not connected to anything the candidate already knows. It is too advanced for this candidate without some preparatory work. Someone in this position is bored, frustrated, or maybe annoyed (even at themselves for not knowing it or at the trainer, materials, or company for not being clear). You will get little out of the experience, like walking into an advanced class, as before, a gifted instructor might have been able to backfill enough material so the main topics made sense.



Training C is ideal. Some material is known to the candidate, and all new material is linked to the candidate's competence areas. In their wisdom, elementary school teachers repeat known materials as they transition into new topics. New topics are always tied to known topics, and where the material is entirely new, the teacher proceeds slowly and repeats it often. Of course, with a large classroom, there will be boredom since some students will "get it" the first time, and frustration will arise because some students won't even "get it" the 10th time.

Where does this leave us?

In the maintenance world, we must overcome our fear and dislike of testing. Testing is vital to show the field of competency. Training becomes a hit-or-miss proposition without knowing what the candidate is competent in.

Firms usually train everyone in some course they think is essential. This strategy is like throwing mud at a wall and seeing what sticks. It does have the advantage of appearing "fair" and not needing much forethought. One advantage of experienced trainers is that they are used to this and can somewhat mitigate the problem.

We must know what competencies are missing if we have scarce training dollars and aggressively go after them. Training this way is not easy and requires more effort from the staff for testing, training design, and thinking. It also will not be fair since the goal is a whole field of competence for a job, process, or area that depends on where one has started. In this model, not everyone needs the same training, so not everyone gets the same training.

The unanswered question is: what competencies are needed for a particular situation? That could be another whole discussion.

Any travel has a starting point (competencies needed for the job or area and the missing competencies of the candidate), a journey (the classes, OJT, readings, CBT, etc.), and an endpoint (ready to rock in the new role).

I invite your comments to illuminate this topic further. Thanks, Joel JDL@Maintrainer.com
www.MaintenanceTraining.com for information on Maintenance Management training in the US and worldwide



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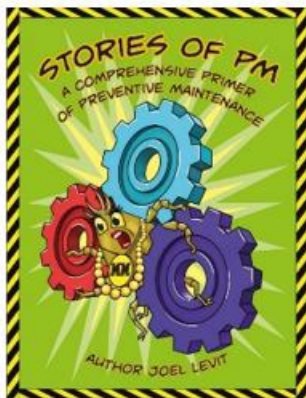


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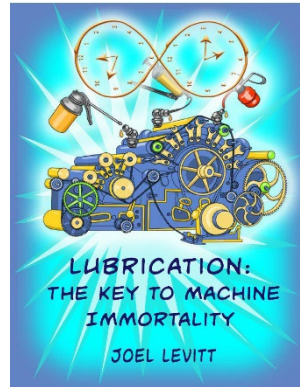
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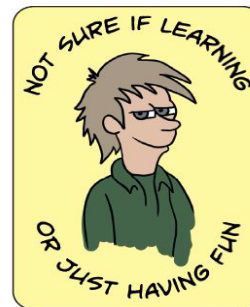
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