



STRUCTURED, IN-HOUSE MAINFRAME TRAINING PROGRAMS

components and best practice

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“There is no saturation point in education.”

– IBM Founder Thomas J. Watson, Sr.



Key to Success: executive commitment

Without executive mandate, in-house training programs often fail and always fall short of their true potential.

A key to ensuring the success of any skills development program is at the least a management announced expectation of training, and at the most effective, incorporating training as an employee requirement.



Key to Success: perspective

There are few things that offer mainframe management a better ROI opportunity than training, yet this is often the most neglected.

A skilled, cross-trained mainframe workforce offers productivity gains, reduced system usage, reduced system failure, improved customer service, compliance, increased employee retention, revenue gains and much, much more – every single day!

Given advances in training technology and the current availability of experienced mainframe personnel, an in-hc mainframe training program is simple to implement, will budget, and will reap rewards across your organization fo



“If you think education is expensive, try ignorance.”


— President of Harvard University, Derek Bok



Mainframe Training Components

Your in-house mainframe training program can contain any or all of these components

All are simple to add to your mix, many are free or low cost, all pay off with significant, long-term



Components: Structure

Structure can be as simple as a Learning Plan or as complex as a Job Competency Framework. Structure provides an ongoing map with direction and reference points that ensure training goals are attained.

- Ensures personnel maximize their available training time with job role focused training
- Ensures personnel perform to standards/levels required by the organization
- Provides a road map or pathway for personnel to follow, giving direction and increasing the amount of training completed
- Identifies skill and competency gaps more efficiently
- Simplifies succession planning
- Minimizes management effort throughout the year!

TIPS

Team your HR Department with your Senior Mainframers

Get a head start with Mainframe Job Role based learning plans from vendors



Components: eLearning

eLearning should provide the bulk of the training content in your in-house mainframe training program.

- Low cost
- Instantly deliverable to your global or nationwide workforce
- Versatile: each course can be used across multiple competencies
- Versatile: can be used as a component of other training
- Sets skill and knowledge standards across the organization
- Provides superior, objective data on workforce skill levels, skill gaps and training habits
- More training completed annually



Components: eLearning

From Vendors look for:

- Broad spectrum e-Learning curriculum
- Up-to-date content is vital!
- Topics across multiple vendors and mainframe related systems
- Interactive, engaging courseware
- AICC and/or SCORM compliance

Or develop your own:

- Can be as simple as recorded PowerPoint slides and voiceover
- Wide range of e-learning development tools available

TIPS

Find an eLearning Vendor with experience setting up in-house mainframe training programs for clients, and have them help you set up yours!



Components: In-House Classes

In-House classes and webinars provide highly interactive training with a live instructor but at minimal cost. Utilize as much of this training content in your in-house mainframe training program as possible.

- Effectively zero cost
- Contains “your system” specific content available nowhere else!
- Knowledge transfer of decades of skill and experience from your senior mainframe personnel
- Deliverable to your global or nationwide workforce
- Ties in with Mentoring Program
- No travel required



Components: In-House Classes

In-House classes and webinars offer the knowledge transfer of decades of skill and experience from your senior mainframe personnel to your zNextGeneration mainframe workforce.

Challenge your key, senior mainframers to:

- Develop quality, “your system” specific, training content
- Develop smarter: use available tools to simplify and expedite the course development process
- Incorporate projects and exercises in a mainframe ‘sandbox’

TIPS

Vendor tools are available to dramatically simplify and shorten the time and effort needed to develop in-house classes and webinars.



Side Note: Archiving

SIDE NOTE:

A significant concern for any mainframe computing organization is the “brain drain” or knowledge and experience lost to the organization as senior mainframers retire.

The in-house classes and webinars developed by your senior mainframers become an archive of decades of knowledge and experience, preserved in a ready to use training format.



Components: Mentoring

Mentoring is a highly effective and typically underutilized mainframe training component. It offers the knowledge transfer of decades of skill and experience from your senior mainframe personnel to your zNextGeneration mainframe workforce.

Mentoring models:

- One-on-one mentoring: one senior mentor to one junior mentee
- Multiple mentors : multiple senior mentors to one junior mentee
- GROW model: Goal – current Reality – Options – Will

TIPS

Team your HR Department with your Senior Mainframers

Keep it simple to begin, then expand to different models if needed.



Components: Resource Materials

Resource materials, both internal and external, should be made readily available to all mainframe personnel.

Internal:

- Manuals, process and procedure, standards, compliance
- Wiki

External:

- IBM.com
- IBM RedBooks
- Vendor Helpdesks

TIPS

Develop an easily accessed resource of all internal information and make sure everyone knows its location.



Components: Hands-On

Mainframe Sandbox

The hands-on experience gained from working “live” in a mainframe sandbox offers invaluable training for all levels of mainframe computing personnel.

Have your senior mainframe personnel set up projects and exercises and tie them to in-house classes and/or your mentoring program.



Components: Skills Assessment

Objective assessment of your mainframe computing workforce offers Mainframe Management clear, objective data displaying overall skill levels and identifying any skill gaps.

- Identify skill gaps and focus training on those areas
- Identify most qualified personnel for new jobs or projects
- Identify success of your in-house training program

Some Available Methods:

- Vendor supplied e-learning assessment banks
- External certification
- Performance evaluation meetings with managers
- In-house developed testing banks



Components: External Classes

Conferences and external classes offer some of the highest quality, most technically advanced mainframe training but are the most expensive.

Use this training component depending on your available budget and/or your lack of an in-house subject matter expert or other resource on a topic.



TIPS

Use Training Credits from your ELA to pay for training classes with mainframe vendors



Components: Delivery Methods

For optimum effectiveness, your training should be delivered in a variety of ways. This example in-house mainframe training program uses multiple delivery methods:

- Classroom and conference
- Mentoring
- Webinar
- Self paced e-Learning
- Projects and Exercises
- Documentation

Multimodal Learning:

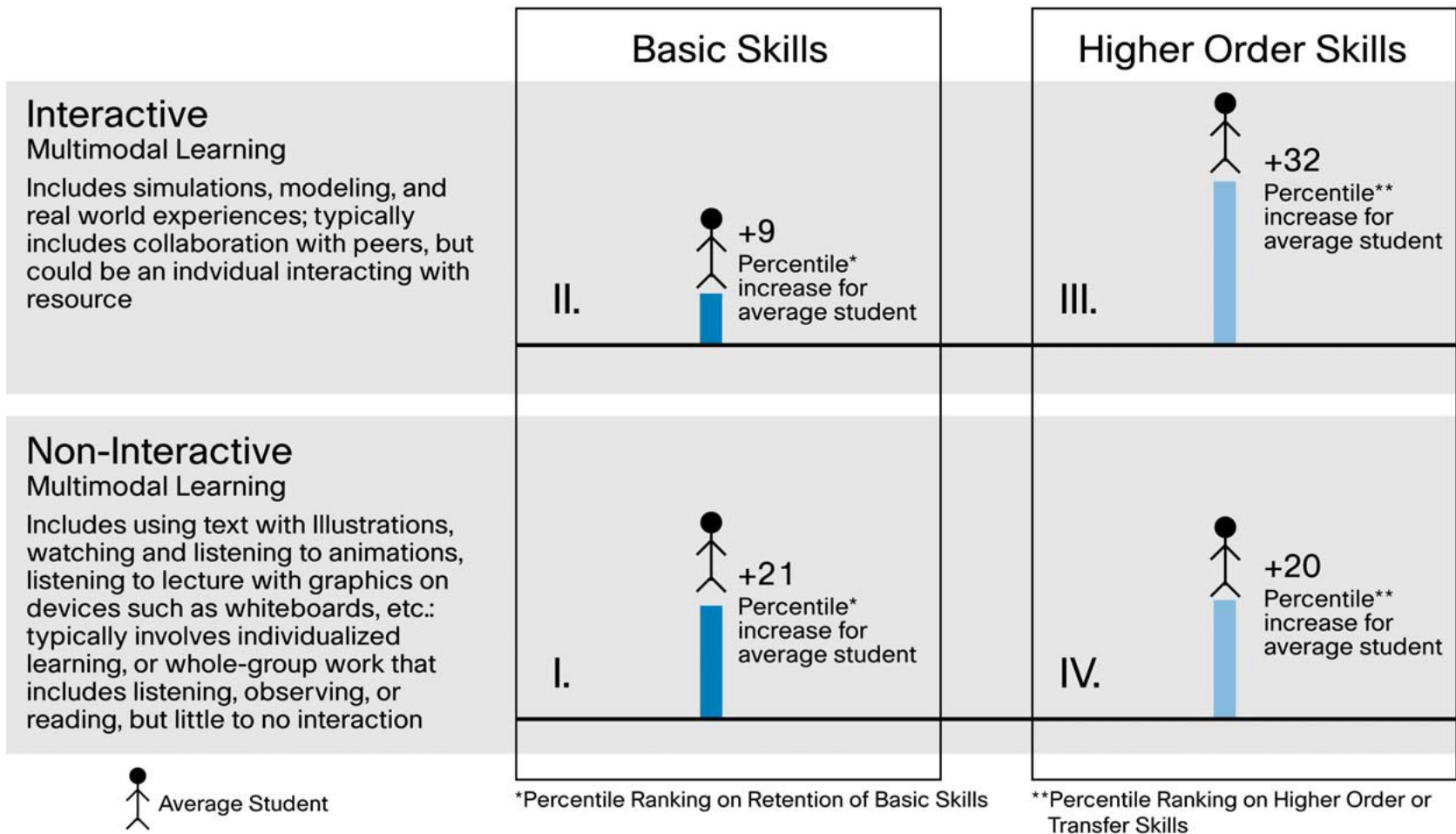
- Personnel have different preferred learning styles
- Personnel have superior retention and understanding when using



Components: Delivery Methods

The Impact of Multimodal Learning in Comparison to Traditional, Unimodal Learning

Findings Reported Separately for Basic Skills and Higher Order Skills, and by the Inclusion or Absence of Interactivity



Components: Metrics

Having your workforce complete training is only part of the process. Monitoring the progress and analyzing the results is invaluable!

Learning Management Systems offer an unparalleled ability to gather data on every aspect of your mainframe personnel's training, from scores and completions right down to time spent and pinpointing areas of difficulty.

Analyze the data to:

- Focus training resources where they are needed most
- Identify individuals or teams best suited to projects or roles
- Determine the ongoing success of your training program

TIPS

Utilize your corporate Learning Management System (LMS)

Develop procedures for instructors/mentors to document results/opinions



Internal Marketing

The mainframe computing workforce must be aware of your in-house mainframe training program for it to be a success.

Management should communicate with the workforce regularly about:

- Management's expectation of their training
- Available courses
- Available delivery methods
- Learning paths for their job role
- Competitions, awards, achievements

TIPS

Use your Learning Management System

Email a monthly or quarterly training newsletter to all mainframe employees



Cost

Your in-house mainframe training program can cost as much or as little as you need, **without sacrificing any of the training!** Just “dial” up the right mix and your workforce can have all the training it requires:

Your Mix of Training:
blended to suit your budget
and training needs

Most
Expensive:
higher % of
external
classroom
and
conferences.
Least
Expensive:



Discussion

