THE EFFICACY OF ROLE PLAYING IN TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT: Role playing and training are important elements of employee development. It has occupied an important place in management training and development as a method of simulating real life situations. This method enables participants to understand better the behavior of others as well as their own emotions and feelings. It is also an excellent exercise for analyzing problems, job interview to see how comfortably they communicate, improving selling by applying various selling solutions, developing team work, cooperation and creative problem solving exercises for improving listening skills.

The trainer has to belief the person who are going to play the role describing the role to be played and the manner in which it is be played.After the role play session is over, it is discussed not only with the group but also with the players as to how good as bad they have done it. This discussion facilitates the learning process. Learning is facilitated by active participant rather than passive reception. Lecture method believes in passive reception whereas role playing believes in active participation. Hence, the role playing should be more effective provided it is conducted properly and timely.

This paper throws up the Efficacy of role playing in training and development for trainees/managers to understand the role playing, and their Efficacy so that they can make a training programmes of role playing more effective. This is a conceptual paper which could be used by managers/trainers in organizations as a frame work for designing role playing training programmes.To this end, the researcher attempts to define role playing and understand why role playing is unique and effective for any organization. This paper highlights its implications for trainers/managers team leaders, and all managers in an organization.

Role play is an educational technique and is used for human relations, leadership training, interpersonal skills in general organizational setting such as communication, sales training, performance appraisal, counseling, mentoring and team building. They are used in specific setting such as health care and social service where participants take on the roles of workers, clients and others in those setting.

Its purpose is to give trainees an opportunity to learn human relation skills through practice and to develop insight into one's own behaviour and its effect upon other. Thus, its objective is very narrow i.e. to increase the trainee`s skill in dealing with others. Role playing will be successful if they mirror or intimate the organizational reality and setting and participants relate to it emotionality. If a role play ends up just as entertainments for the participants, learning may be lost.

KEYWORDS: Development, Efficacy, Learning, Role playing, Training.

INTRODUCTION

Role playing are an organisation feature in business training and in insitutions of higher learning. Discussion of case studies, in the area of interpersonal relations, generally remains at an unemotional intellectual level. To correct this deficiency, role playing has been developed.

 In this method, the instructor assigns parts taken from case materials to group members. The role players attempt to act their parts as they would behave in a real life situation working without a script or memorized lines and improvising as they play the parts. It has been shown in a number of experiments that the very act of arguing for another view, even if it is purely an exercise, exposes the person to some of its virtues which he had previously denied. Such as the production manager, mechanical engineers, superintendents, maintenance engineers, quality control inspectors, foreman, workers and the supervisor might play the role of a customer and a trainer may play also the role of a trade union leader and another trainee of a personnel manager/HR manager. Each debates the issues from his/her own role view point with the common objectives of teaching the best solution.

This method of training involves action, doing and practice. The role playing lasts 20-30 minutes after which data are collected about the performance of each role play and a discussion takes place. The participants play the role of certain characters and is mostly used for developing interpersonal interactions and relations. They learn by doing things. Immediate feedback helps them to correct mistakes,Change, switch gears hats and reorient their focus in a right way. The competitive atmosphere spurs them to participate actively, listen to what others say, observe and analyse behavioural responses and improve their own performance by putting their textual learning to test.

Training is a planned process to modify attitude, knowledge, skill, behaviour etc. through learning which should lead to effective performance in an activity or range of activities. The main purpose of training is to develop the abilities of an individual, to satisfy current and future manpower needs to supplement education and to train for taking up higher responsibilities. Every industry aims at having excellent performance so that is gets not only better results but also better reputations in the market. Training is a process that develops and improves skills closely linked with performance a good and purposeful training programme can go a long way in increasing production, reducing labour turnover and manufacturing healthy employer – employee relationship.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To understand the process which can enhance interpersonal skills among participants.
- To promotes insights and emphasizes the importance of acceptability in decision making.
- To develop empathy and sensitivity in participants.
- To realize the importance of human relations and leadership training of participants.
- To develop new insights into their own behaviour and its effect on others.
- To presenting the trainee with opportunities to develop ability to apply knowledge and desired changes in behaviour and attitudes.

ROLE PLAYING – ITS BEGINNINGS

This method was developed by J.L. Moreno, a venetian psychiatrist in the United States before the Second World War for therapeutic treatment. He coined the terms "Role playing", "Role – reversal", "sociodrama" , "Psychodrama" and a number of other specialized terms, with emphasis on learning human relations skills through practice and insight into one`s own behavior and its effect upon others. The Psycho-drama method is akin to role playing but unlike role playing which incorporates imaginary situations, the psycho-drama consists of creating real life situations.

DEFINITION

Role playing has been defined as an educational or the ------ technique in which some problem solving human interaction real or imaginary is presented and then spontaneously actual out. The enactment is casually followed by a discussion and/or analysis is determine what happened and why and if necessary, how the problem could be better handled in the future. (Carig, R.L. etal, 1967).

Maier, Norman, R.F (1975), has pointed out a "role playing experience soon demonstrates the gap between `thing and 'doing'. The idea of role playing involves action, doing and practice".

Role playing, essentially is one of the earliest from of simulation technique in training. It has been increasingly accepted as a valuable training tool in recent years. The method being dramatic and a fun is highly interesting and entertaining for participants. It is rather a very flexible training method. It is both corrective as well as instructive. This is a good practice exercise which attempts to promote understanding, and is well suited for obvious problem situations-as much involved with personal interaction, closely corresponding with real life situations.

UNIQUE VALUES OF ROLE PLAYING

The unique values of role playing include the following:

➢ It requires the person to carry out a thought or decision he/she may have reached. For e.g. a participant may conclude from a case study that Mr. X should apologies to Mr. Y. In role playing, X would be asked to go to Y and apologies. Role playing experience soon demonstrates the gap between thinking and doing.
➢ It permits the practice of carrying out an action and makes it clear that good human relations require skill in the same sense as playing of golf.
➢ Attitudinal changes are effectively accomplished by placing persons in specified roles. It becomes apparent that a person's behavior is not only a function of his personality, but also of the situation in which he/she finds himself/herself.
➢ It trains a person to be aware of, and sensitive to the feelings of others. This information serves as a feedback of the effect his behavior has on other people.
➢ A fuller appreciation of the important part played by feelings in determining behavior in social situations is developed.
➢ Each person is able to discover his own personal faults. For e.g. the person who enjoys making wise cracks may discover how often these hurt others.
➢ It permits training in the control of feelings and emotions. For e.g. a supervisor who shows irritation on receiving complaints could be placed in the role of a supervisor and his irritations can be pointed out making him aware of his/her behavior, thus helping him change.

PROBLEM AREAS IN CONDUCTING ROLE PLAYING

Trainer based problems:
- Failure to distinguish between content and process training objectives.
- Failure to establish supportive climate when moving into post-enactment discussion focusing on the attitudes and behavior of role players.
- The trainer might be unclear in his mind about objective of the training and as a result may fail to set clear cut target.

- Trainer should be careful in selecting role playing case.

Trainees based Problems:
- Trainees/Participant may sometimes make-up facts that are not there in the role.
- Despite instruction to the contrary, player might step out of the role of "open up".

Intervention interview can be successfully used to tackle these problems. Role play cannot be used for technical subjects.

EFFECTIVENESS OF ROLE PLAYING

Success of role playing, mainly depends on the abilities of the trainees, as they exhibit in adopting their prescribed roles, and react in a manner, as if, they were truly in a work situation.

Some experts are of the opinion, that the technique of role playing should be used in conjunction with some others instructional methods, such as; lecture or conference or others hold a view that role playing is far more gainful when it is followed by class discussion.

METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURE

Role playing may involve two or more persons depending upon the particular purpose, for which the instructor uses the session.

In the usual procedure a "case" is outlined to all participants. The instructor prepares the role of each actor and group, describes the central theme of the role and as much background as required by the trainer to play it. He may also suggest crucial areas for the study group to observe later he may use these areas as a framework for subsequent discussion. Role players are provided with either written or oral descriptions of situations and are assigned to play before the rest of the class. The actors have to enlarge or develop their roles from the core facts as described in their role descriptions. There are no lines to memories and no rehearsals. The central idea of the role playing is that the trainee understands the situation from a perspective different from his own.

After being allowed sufficient time to plan there actions and get ready, they must then act out their roles implied in a given situation spontaneously before the group they then switch role play the other roles out. The other members of the group observe and make notes of the presentation. The group then discusses, criticizes and evaluates actions of the players. The instructor summarizes all comments and conclusions pointing our lessons to be remembered. Learning takes place both in the playing of roles and in the evaluation of role playing.

TYPICAL ROLE PLAYING SITUATIONS

Typical role playing situations may be:

- Supervisor discussing a grievance with an employee.
- Supervisor conducting a post appraisal interview with an employee.
- Employment interviewer conducting a hiring interview.
- A production executive playing the role of a sales supervisor, a supervisor taking the roles of his subordinates.
- A manager playing the role of a trade union leader,

on say, indiscipline by the employee, or.
. Salesman making a presentation to a purchasing agent, and so forth.

For simple illustration purposes, we discuss here, the role playing situation, that of handling a grievance. The actor participants in this case are grieved employee, his foreman and shop steward. Now members from the study group are selected to act out each of these roles. Sometimes several casts of characters enact the scene one after another. The actors start acting their roles. The rest members of the group deserve and make notes on these presentations. The group then discusses and criticizes action of the players. The leader (or the instructor) summarizes all comments and conclusions pointing our lessons to be remembered.

Typically role playing sessions are brief and include subsequent discussions of what the actor and other trainees have observed.

In this connection, there is an important point in the procedure to be emphasized and that is the careful management of time or repeat plays are likely to be left out. The time generally allocated for play should not be less than 10 minutes and twice as much time for discussion.

ROLE PLAYING – LEARNING AS IT PROVIDES
There are various kinds of learning that can take place through role playing. Those important includes:
1. Learning by doing – a good exercise for achievement of desired skill.
2. Learning through imitation – participants become prove to imitate desirable behaviour.
3. Learning through observation and feedback – participants while observing and evaluating each others performance and behaviour can learn about their strong points and deficiencies.

4. Learning through analysis and conceptualization – exercises in role playing help building up conceptual skills so vital for learning the principles and problem solutions in human relations.

ROLE PLAYING – ITS UTILITY AREAS
 Some of the important areas of utility of role playing include:
• Role playing is best used as a tool to develop implementation skills;
• Its most common uses are for training supervisors in human relations skills;
• Training sales personnel in sales techniques; and
• It is often used in the training programmes in the areas of interviewing performance review, and conference leadership.

TYPES OF ROLE PLAYING
 The role playing can be classified broadly under two categories:
• Structured role plays and
• Spontaneous role plays

STRUCTURED ROLE PLAYS:
 The structured role plays have pre planned fairly specific role description with structured roles. All the necessary information is known to the participants and they are even told the points of conclusion to which the interaction should conclude. This method is suited for the development of job related skills and the enactment is supposed to gradually evolve to fulfill this expectation. One way of doing this type of role play is to give role brief material to the participants which indicates the nature and scope of the role they have to play. Similarly, the observers who are members of the learning group, but are non-participants to that specific role play, are given the observer ship in which they have to record the observations regarding the processes that they observe. This category of role play is significant in the sense that the participants are supposed to conduct their interaction in a manner where they are supposed to be arriving at a given point. Thus, structured role play is characterized by the use of written cases related from text or written to meet organizational training objectives.

SPONTANEOUS ROLE PLAY:
 The second type of role play is more spontaneous. It can be loosely structured in terms of giving some briefing to the participants of what they are supposed to enact and every brief outlines the roles of the persons involved. However, the rest in left fairly open to be spontaneous in their interpretation. Comparatively, little advance planning is made and practically no written role descriptions are used. The method involves generating material for the role play from the participating group on the spot based upon their perceptions of the problem posed. The identification of the problem itself need not be necessary done by the facilitator but the group itself may generate its own problem of interest.
 In contrast to structured role playing, spontaneous role playing is used more often to help the participant acquire an insight into his own. Problem and not on skill development. The trainee elicits some problem from the group itself and does not use written material.
 The advantages is it tends to develop more deeply into the motivations and assumptions that influence a role players behavior.
 The disadvantages are:
• It require extremely high skill on the past of the trainee.
• It may embassies players; and
• Only few persons get an opportunity to actively participate.

 Broadly these categories of role plays can be conducted in four different manners:

1. Single Role plays: Most widely used form of role play is single role play which consists of two or these playing out roles in front of a class. It is very useful to demonstrate how certain types of problems can be dealt with or to show what complications may ensure if the problem is not well handled.

 The basic advantage of this method is that it allows class to examine in depth all the dynamics and complexities involved when individuals attempt to solve a problem and or understand one another.

Three basic disadvantages of the method are:

• Some players tend to feel embarrassed performing in front of the entire class;
• It players do badly it may be difficult for the trainee to handle the negative comments about them that are likely to emerge in the discussion that follows role play; and
• Regardless of the number of roles in any written role play burden is placed on only one of the players.

2. Multiple Role plays: In the multiple role play all trainees are players. The class is broken up into groups of two, three or whatever number of roles are called for by the particular role play. Each player is given a written role or an assignment as an observer and then the entire class, role plays at the same time.

The advantage of this types of role plays are:

• It allows all class members to participate;
• Demonstrates the broad variety of conclusions and decisions that may be reached by many individuals all starting with the same data; and
• Causes almost no embarrassment to the players and sharply reduces the problems related to negative comments about ineffective role playing behavior.

The disadvantage of this type of role play are:

• Some groups will finish before others;
• Very little time can be allowed for the discussion of process experience of each individual group.

3. Rotation Role plays and 4. Reverse Role plays:

In these methods the same enactors are encouraged to play different roles of a similar situation. Illustratively, if there is a role play between a general manager (Production) and general manager (Finance) over problems of inventory, then after two participants have enacted the role of the general manager (Production) and the general manager (Finance) the roles are switched. The person who was playing general manager (production) is asked to play the role of general manager (finance) and the person who was to play the role of general manager (finance) is asked to play the role of general manger (production). This several of roles helps in getting the views and understanding of another person.

On many occasion, positions which appeared to be irreconcilable can be ironed our by seeing how the other person feels. These methods are also useful if one wants to see how one is perceived by others. The freshness of another point of view is a learning experience in its even right and several role play techniques are directed towards encouraging this perspective.

These methods require sensitive monitoring by the instructor and the facilitator. It would be very useful for them to have appropriate judgment on when to reverse the roles. During the feed-back session all the participants get a chance to exchange and share the feelings which they have experienced during the enactment. These techniques are known to be extremely useful in improving negotiating skills as it focuses on the importance of understanding the perspectives of the other person and ensuring that one does not lose wars for the sake of inning batters. They also demonstrate how not to loose oneself in the quick sand of ones own rationality. The perception that other sequences of reasoning can be just as valid and persuasive as ones even, is a soulful experience.

STEPS IN ROLE PLAYING PROCESS

The typical role play involves there phases:

PHASE – I : THE WARM UP:

Structured role play requires considerably more planning than spontaneous role play. The objective of the warm up is to get the trainers participate in a constructive manner with minimum anxiety and maximum motivation. The seating arrangement should be such that participants can see each other. The trainers introduction to the session should be such that it would arouse interest of trainers.

PHASE II- THE ENACTMENT:

Before conducting the role play- enactment, the trainer should carry out the following:

• Read aloud general information;
• Those who have volunteered to role play are given briefing sheets and sent out of the room with the instruction not to communicate amongst themselves;
• The instructor should clarify all the doubts that role player might have;
• Role players take their positions facing the class; and
• To begin the role play the trainer sets the scene by rotating the identity of the roles being enacted and making a brief statement about what has just happened when the action began.

In Structured role plays the trainer allows the role play to come to conclusion. He also points out if a particular point is repeated too often. He take an "intervention interview", if necessary. In case of multiple role play, the trainer in addition to other duties, has to divide the class into groups, classify doubts of each and every participant and then start the role play himself.

PHASE III – POST ENACTMENT DISICUSSION:
In conducting post enactment discussion of the single role play, reaction to role play should be obtained first from the person who has the skill burden then from other participants and finally from the audience.
The multiple role play enactments discussion is characterized by

- Each role playing group being asked to state the outcome of the role play;
- A report from each group on the seasons and for the rationale for the outcome.
- A class discussion in which the varying outcomes and their supporting reasons are compassed and
- One-to-one role plays designed to improve communication effectiveness and understanding.

In conducting post enactment discussion for role rotation exercise trainers should ask questions that focus on certain elements of all the role plays rather than on any individual role play.

TRAINING EXPERIENCES WITH ROLE PLAY
ILO'S Handbook on training methodologies has indicated the following experiences in role play:

- Places a problem in a life like setting;
- The problem involves on going processes;
- The problem typically involves the participants themselves.
- Emotional and attitudinal aspects are dealt with in a similar frame of reference;
- Emphasizes the importance of feelings;
- Participants are psychologically inside the problem situation;
- Makes for emotional involvement;
- Provides practice in interpersonal skills;
- Provide for testing ideas and hypothesis;
- Trains in emotional control;
- Provides for execution of action or solution; and
- Allows continuous feedback.

ROLE PLAYING- ITS ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

ADVANTAGES

Of the advantages as role playing offers as an effective technique in training and development those important include the following;

- It emphasizes learning by doing;
- It stimulates human sensitivity and interactions students put into practice knowledge they have aborted from text books, lectures and discussions, they become sensitive to the way their behaviors affects others. (This is the only method other than the more recent simulations, which involves actual communication and interaction with others).
- It renders knowledge of results immediately, because the role players themselves as well as the study group participate in the discussion after the role playing, analyze, eroticize and evaluate the performance and behavior of players.
- With role playing, trainee interest and involvement tend to be high;
- In role playing, situation are so nicely maneuvered that the trainees would act out, as they would in real life;
- It develops skills and the ability to apply knowledge particularly in areas like, human relations and leadership;
- It brings about desired changes in behaviors and attitude;
- It helps trainees to appreciate others point of view as for example; when a foreman plays the role of a union steward;
- It permits trainees to show imagination and coverage in devising solutions; no harm is feared even if they make a mistake; and
- It encourages group members to act, as well as it think.

DISADVANTAGES
Role playing is disadvantages in certain respects, as follows;
- It is time consuming and expensive;
- The number of persons that can be actively involved is limited however, entire group can be divided into numbers role playing sessions to give greater participant involvement; and
- The problems or cases as formulated by the instructor may not be those that actually bother the trainee. These may be unrealistic (cases must of necessary be over simplified since they focus the players interaction and tend to ignore the environment in which the problem arises).

RESULTS
Role playing will be successful if they mirror the organizational reality, setting and participants relate to it emotionally. If a role play ends up just as entertainments for the participants, learning may be lost.

CONCLUSION
Role playing have assumed an important role in education and training for industry and commerce. It provides an opportunity for developing human relations understanding and skills and to put into practice the knowledge they have acquired from textbooks, lectures, discussions etc. It is learning by doing. The interview may be recorded to provide the trainees a chance to listen to their performance and note their strengths and weaknesses. Thus, knowledge of results is immediate because the trainees as well as the observers analyze the behaviour of the role players.

SUGGESTIONS

Video tapes are always used to record role play situations and should be later shown back to the role players. This is increasingly being used in recent years. It should be used by trainer to point out the trainee's mistakes later. The following points must be kept in mind:

- Fixed cameras should be used as moving cameras are often distracting;
- Video tape should be played back only in private situation;
- Trainee should be careful in carrying out the discussion in which whole class participates after seeing that recorded role play;
- Prior consent for playback and taping the group should be obtained;

Many trainees are often uncomfortable in role.

-Playing situations, and trainers must introduce the situations well so that learning can take place. To this end, trainers should;

- Ensure that members of the group are comfortable with each other.
- Select and prepare the role players by introducing a specific situation;
- Help participants prepare; ask them to prepare potential characters;
- Realize that volunteers make better role players.
- Prepare observers by giving them specific tasks (e.g. evaluation, feedback);
- Guide the role play enactment over its humps (since it is not scripted);
- Keep it short;
- Discuss the enactment and prepare bulleted points of what was learned.

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