

Author: Nigam, Anuradha

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STUDENT:

NAME Anuradha Nigam DATE: April 30, 2012

ADVISER: (Committee Chair if MS Plan A or EdS Thesis or Field Project/Problem):

NAME Dr. Kat Lui DATE: May 1, 2012

**This section for MS Plan A Thesis or EdS Thesis/Field Project papers only
Committee members (other than your adviser who is listed in the section above)**

1. CMTE MEMBER'S NAME: DATE:

2. CMTE MEMBER'S NAME: DATE:

3. CMTE MEMBER'S NAME: DATE:

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Abstract

To counteract the negative impact of today's faltering economy, the Northwest Wisconsin Workforce Investment Board (NWWIB), a regional organization devoted to providing workplace development services in 10 Northwest Wisconsin counties, sponsored a series of training seminars to help employed and unemployed workers to enhance their marketability. Trainers conducted seminars on topics such as value stream mapping and lean principles. These training programs were evaluated using Kirkpatrick's level 1 evaluation. To evaluate the impact of these trainings, researchers at the University of Wisconsin-Stout sent surveys to 137 participants via the web. The survey asked trainees about their satisfaction with the training and the instructor, the impact of the training on their employability, and the usefulness of the training on the job. The results from 30 surveyed participants indicated that attending a training session improved employability for 80% of unemployed trainees and increased advancement opportunities for 61% of employed trainees. Over 41% of employed trainees indicated that they used their new skills every day on the job. These results provided evidence that NWWIB's training programs were not only successful but also effective in the professional development of the Northwest Wisconsin's workforce.

**The Graduate School
University of Wisconsin Stout
Menomonie, WI**

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Chapter I: Introduction

The Northwest Wisconsin Workforce Investment Board (NWWIB) is a regional workforce development organization operating in ten counties of Northwest Wisconsin: Ashland, Bayfield, Burnett, Douglas, Price, Iron, Rusk, Sawyer, Taylor and Washburn. NWWIB has developed a strategic plan to achieve their goals. The key component of their strategic plans was “communication” to accomplish their mission by collaborating educators, workforce-professionals, community leaders, employers, economic developers, and charitable organizations. The goal of NWWIB is to enhance the quality of the workforce that meets the demanding and changing needs of the industries of these ten counties. They are responsible for employment and training programs at eight Wisconsin job centers.

Jobs in the manufacturing industry have become very competitive with the economic downfall in the country. The recession caused the layoffs throughout the job profiles not leaving any industry untouched. The Northwest Wisconsin manufacturing workforce had to make sure that they have an edge to survive in their respective organizations. The manufacturing industry needs a trained and well-educated workforce to compete with the rest of the industries. The trainings are evidently essential for the manufacturing organizations to survive in the present economical scenario. Thus, the manufacturing organizations in Wisconsin should think about imparting different trainings to improve the effectiveness of the incumbents in the workplace.

The manufacturing training programs delivered by NWWIB in northwest Wisconsin, is an effort to assist the workforce consisting of job-seekers, incumbent workers, and youth, to gain an advantage by honing their skills.

Statement of the Problem

The Northwest Wisconsin manufacturing industry needs to upgrade the skills of its incumbents to tackle the slow economy. The workforce have to face competition within US and globally. They need to be trained for different manufacturing skills and educated for more

effective and efficient production. The concern is that the industries have engaged the workforce in training but the evaluation of those trainings has not occurred. The training evaluation is significant, as it will ensure that the needs of the Northwest Wisconsin businesses have been met. Thus, this is an effort pertaining to the effectiveness of the training programs using Kirkpatrick's evaluation for Level 1, reaction, to determine the level of satisfaction towards the training imparted to the workforce.

Purpose of the Study

The objective of the research is to evaluate the effectiveness of the lean manufacturing training in comparison with the other manufacturing training delivered to both the employed and unemployed workforce in different Wisconsin manufacturing units.

Definition of Terms

Evaluation. A systematic approach to determine conceptualization, design, implementation, and utility of a training program may be defined as Evaluation (Rossi, 2004).

Kirkpatrick's evaluation-Level 1: Reaction. This level measures the participants' reaction about the training program (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 1998).

Limitations of the Study

The limitation of the study is as follows:

1. All the participants were not evaluated because of unavailability of their contact details.
2. The time gap of the study done and the trainings conducted was considerably long.
3. Not all participants responded to qualitative questions.

Methodology

The participants were administered the questionnaire primarily via web survey and mail survey. However, if the need arises, a phone survey follow up will be done. The analysis of the data was mainly done by statistical correlation.

Chapter II: Literature Review

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of the NWWIB trainings delivered at various manufacturing units. Kirkpatrick's Level 1 evaluation was used to determine the participants' opinion towards their satisfaction level of training attended. In order to have successful training programs it is very important that the training programs are effective and efficient to fulfill the training needs satisfactorily. The following is the review of the literature to evaluate the effectiveness of the trainings done at the various manufacturing industrial units. The need of assessment of the trainings imparted led to the evaluation of the various trainings. Evaluation has been done using Kirkpatrick's Level-1 evaluation to determine participants' opinions by measuring the level of training satisfaction.

Training

Training in an organization is provided for effective functioning of the organization by increasing the employee effectiveness in performing the assigned tasks (Delaney, 1987). In other words, the employee will be trained to perform their job in a specific manner that helps in achieving the goals and mission of the organization. Effective training and education efforts can reform company culture by helping employees understand ethical standards and their application to workplace decisions (Leclair & Ferrell, 2000). Several authors emphasized the positive insights of training in the organization's workforce than those working for firms without the training programs in place (Valentine & Fleischman, 2004).

Any organization, may it be an educational organization or any business and industry, needs to train their workforce for better performance results pertinent to customer service, product sales, to expand business, and for growth of technology in business and industry. Hence, needs assessment, training methodologies, and results of an effective training, which play an important role in evaluation of training will be discussed in the later part of the literature review.

Needs Assessment

The advancement in technologies, increasing production volume, and increasing number of employees in an organization is resulting in the need for the training. The economy slow down has resulted in budget cuts, due to which the training and human resources development has been affected the most. For this reason, the job of the training and human resources development department has become very challenging (Callahan, 1999).

To accommodate the increasing demand of the workforce with limited financial resources, a thorough needs analysis has to be done to identify the gaps between the current condition and the desired condition. This will also lead to avoiding any unnecessary training expenses (Gupta, 2007).

The training needs assessment can be further described as the process of identification of requirements of performance. It also identifies the gaps between the required performances and the present job performance of an employee. When a gap is identified, the various methods and procedures are sought out for the closure of the gaps (OPM, 1994).

In another study, a model has been provided for the training needs assessment that is “input process output” model based on the problem-solving approach (Kaufman, 1990).

Allen (1990) summarized about the needs assessment instruments from several contributors that were later developed as a trainer’s toolkit. This toolkit was developed from preciously done needs assessment processes. This collection is a model consisting of various case studies on needs assessment and illustrations about processes of needs assessment instruments. The instrument selected for the toolkit model depicted a variety of audiences, formats, contents, and data collection procedures.

Training Methodologies: Enhancing Effectiveness

Training methodology is an essential component of training. Selecting a structure and methodology for training are extremely vital steps to achieve the target training objectives. The

various methods primarily adapted are similar to off-site coaching, on-site training, and open learning sessions. These methods act as an instrument to determine the appropriateness of the training methods adapted in comparison to the context of the training objectives and goals set in the beginning of the training process (Bartram & Gibson, 1999).

Friedman and Yarbrough (1985) suggested incorporating a variety of training methods to captivate trainee's attention and thus increase the training material absorption. The authors emphasized the importance of encompassing training methods such as abstraction level, source of information, structure, and facets of learning, while assessing the training plan.

Liebman and Balli (1995) developed a unique approach known as 3-5-3 which is a three step method of developing a broad range of instructional strategies for training methods. The authors adapted creative training methods to structure the training such as simulation, relay races, guided imagery, flow charts, and placemats. The combination of traditional and new innovative training methods in the 3-5-3 approach, led to higher engagement and learning rate of the trainees resulting in impactful training.

One more study indicated that between several listed training methods such as films, discussion groups, slide presentations, audiocassette presentations, programmed instructions, customized and off-the-shelf videotapes, teleconferencing, and interactive video programs, the trainees preferred the computerized instructional methods more (Anon., 1986).

West (1996) demonstrated that training might not prove to be effective initially when imparted in the form of a lecture. But when the training is accompanied by practical experience or demonstration of the lecture, the effectiveness of the training increases.

Training in Different Industries

An organization's existence and growth, irrespective of the type of organization, either public or private, is dependent on the quality products and quality services that it renders to the community. The collective efforts of all employees of an organization helps in setting up a

standard for the job performance level, though there can be inconsistencies within the organization as not all employees work at similar levels. This causes a gap between the present performance and the desired standards of performance. To eliminate the performance gap, various trainings are organized (Johnson, 1967).

Dean et al. (1995) assessed performance improvement of a northeast community college in suburban Philadelphia. The target audience was administrator, faculty, and support personnel of the college. A professional development plan was administered that comprised of few components from Gilbert's behavior engineering model (Gilbert, 1978). The effective training used a combination of models and methods to demonstrate a new strategy for selecting professional development options.

West (1996) suggested a "buddy system" for the sales representatives of an industry. In this system, new sales representatives are paired with experienced sales associates who become their mentor. The mentor assists the new employees and trains them by demonstrating performance for the job tasks assigned. This helps the new sales representatives to get accustomed with operations of the organization by learning from observing their mentor perform the duties.

Herman & Eller (1991) demonstrated and discussed the need of training for hybrid industry, namely travel, tourism, and hospitality. The authors have discussed the models of successful consortium and partnership approaches. The authors indicated, Canada's Stratford Chef School runs an apprentice program for hospitality industry that helps in development of skilled workforce by giving them appropriate practical trainings and issuing professional chef licenses.

Evaluating Training

Evaluation is an imperative outcome of the training function with an approach that is user-centric. It plays a very crucial role in an organization for making the trainings more

receptive in the business and industry, by answering some key questions. The user-focused evaluation process is approachable to the needs of the organization and allows modification at any point of time (Gill, 1989).

According to Gordon (1996), training evaluation, measurement of effective training, and return on investment via effective training imply the same meaning, but all have very different implications. A quality training program adds the maximum contribution towards the benefit of the organization's needs in the least time. Training is considered to be significant and worthwhile if the employees' on-the-job performance after training has significantly improved. Thus, evaluating training becomes imperative and facilitates functional development.

Campbell (1998) and Shuell (1986) suggested that most important issues of evaluation are whether the training material are understood and learned by the trainees, and to ascertain that the projected training goals have been achieved.

The Kirkpatrick model of training evaluation. To ensure training program effectiveness, it is necessary to assess whether training program led to desired results. The training program can be improved by drawing conclusions from the feedback given by participants.

Kirkpatrick (1987) defined evaluation as determining that how much effective is the training program. Evaluation is done in order to improve the future training programs and for eliminating the training programs that are not effective.

Fitzpatrick et al. (2004) explained that there are two types of evaluations: formative and summative. Formative evaluation is process evaluation that provides information throughout the entire training. Summative evaluation is product evaluation that occurs at the end of the training.

Kirkpatrick (1975) proposed a model for training evaluation, which deals with summative evaluation. The model has four levels of evaluation:

Level 1 Evaluation: Reaction (Trainees' first reaction)

Level 2 Evaluation: Learning (Trainees' learning transfer)

Level 3 Evaluation: Behavior (Trainees' on-the-job behavioral change)

Level 4 Evaluation: Results (Trainees' positive, attributable results)

All four levels of evaluation play a unique role in evaluating trainings. Level 1 evaluation can be described as reaction of trainees about how well did they like the training program. This is a measure of customer delight. Level 2 evaluation illustrates learning absorbed by the trainees from the training program. Level 3 evaluation determines whether the change in behavior of trainees on-the-job, is a result of training program. Level 4 evaluation is the final result that identifies whether application of training improved organizational performance or not (Kirkpatrick, 1987).

Evaluation Method

The evaluation method must be selected based on the participants, training program objectives, content of the training program, types of data to be collected, learning environment, and cost of training. Several methods for evaluation have been proposed by Phillips et al.(1992). These methods are: action plan audits, participant feedback, performance contracts, participants' follow up, and pre and post training examination.

In any organization, the reaction to training programs is very first step towards evaluation process of trainings delivered. It determines how people feel about training programs, instructor, and training environment (Kirkpatrick, 2001). Trainee's thoughts captured in comment sheet, help executive level management in decision-making.

According to Marsh (1997), student's evaluation of teaching (SET) is multidimensional and primarily comprises of nine factors: "teaching-learning/value, enthusiasm, organization, group interaction, breadth of coverage, examination grading, assignments, individual rapport and workload/difficulty." He included the questionnaire regarding instructor effectiveness for participants to rate their respective training instructors. Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick (2006)

indicated that to ascertain the performance standards for future training programs, the trainers evaluate and measure the trainee reaction. They also suggested that valuable trainee feedback helps to evaluate existing programs and to improve future programs.

Summary

The combination of needs assessment, training strategies and methods, carve out a better way of training evaluation that meets the organizational goals and objectives. The effectiveness of training program can be measured by using Kirkpatrick's Four Levels of Evaluation. They are reaction, learning, behavior, and result. Level 1- Reaction is a suitable for measuring trainees' satisfaction for the training program. The Level-1 evaluation result provides significant information regarding the training program to can be important information for the program to modify or make changes in training content, design, or training delivery methods and strategies.

Chapter III: Methodology

Training evaluation has not been done for trainings delivered at various manufacturing units or companies by NWWIB. Evaluation will help identify training areas that need improvement and also will confirm whether organizational goals have been achieved or not.

The method and process used were Kirkpatrick's Level 1 evaluation, to evaluate the trainees' reactions about the training program.

Method of Study

The summative evaluation was followed in this study instead of formative evaluation. A summative evaluation analyzes more than one learner's performance to examine the success of that group on the basis of the learning materials and methods. The purpose of evaluation was to identify the sections of training that needed improvement to ensure that it achieves the desired objectives of the training program. The quantitative data from study was used to address the problem. The online survey was used as a tool to measure the trainees' perception whether they were satisfied and engaged by the NWWIB training programs or not. An approval from Institution Review Board (IRB) of University of Wisconsin-Stout was issued before administering surveys and participants were kept informed about IRB approval (Appendix A). Development of survey was done online with the help of Qualtrics, web-based survey development software provided by the University of Wisconsin-Stout. Survey was developed to accommodate easy accessibility. Participants were primarily emailed the survey via a web link (Appendix B) and those who did not receive the email were administered the survey via mail. However, a phone survey follow up will be done for further data collection as needed.

Participants

The participants were from various parts of Wisconsin and Minnesota states. The total numbers of participants were 195. Categorization of population was done on the basis of age, education, and employment status. Out of the 195 participants, 137 were administered via online

web survey due to unavailability of their email addresses. Hence, a mail survey (Appendix C and D) was also developed for the rest of the participants. However, in this study, we have presented findings only from online web survey. Another investigator will present the findings from mail survey.

Instrumentation

The instrument used in the study was a web-based survey. The survey was administered to participants of NWWIB trainings to measure the level of satisfaction towards the training program. Survey tools are frequently used to evaluate and measure the opinions of the participants (Fitzpatrick, 2004).

A well-designed and well-organized survey can contribute detailed information. The survey was developed from various sources. Both quantitative and qualitative questions were embedded. Quantitative questions were based on a likert scale and responses ranged from Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree. The questionnaire in the survey asked what the participants gain from the training, what type of certificates do the trainees have, did training help the trainees in gaining a promotion or a job.

The survey had total of 20 questions, out of which 4 were qualitative questions. The email and mail surveys contained an introductory paragraph about the study and participants were briefly informed that the study has gone through Institutional Review Board. Participants were also informed that they have all had the right to withdraw at any point while doing the survey. The survey was developed such that there were no mandatory questions. The survey link was directed to the Qualtrics survey.

Data Collection Procedures

A 20-question survey was administered to 137 participants. Email invitations were sent to participants to take survey. Thirty online surveys were completed and returned.

Data analysis. Survey results were captured in Qualtrics and the data collected was exported in Microsoft Excel to construct a database for further analysis. The data was analyzed by using Microsoft Excel Data Analysis.

Summary

Training participants were contacted and asked to complete a brief online that asked about:

- Satisfaction with training and instructor
- Impact of training on employability
- Usefulness of training
- Employment status

Out of 195 participants, the web-based survey was sent out to 137 participants. Thirty participants completed and returned the online surveys.

Chapter IV: Results

In 2009, Wisconsin was one of five states to receive federal funding to implement a State Sector Strategy as a part of federal effort to revitalize the economy.

What is a State Sector Strategy?

State Sector Strategies create “regional collaborations to address the workforce needs of employers, and the needs of workers for relevant training to advance into skilled jobs. Sector partnerships can be particularly effective for low-skilled and low-income workers. Sector strategies are more responsive to industry demand than traditional job-matching and training services because they are problem oriented, not program oriented; address needs interdependently, not independently; and work with employers in an industry collectively, not as individual firms.” – The National Governors Association (Nigam et al., 2011).

The State Sector Strategy targets key industries in specific regions of a state and provides the industries in that sector with multiple forms of support, one of which is to provide training to workers in those industries with cutting-edge skills that enhance industry competitiveness and worker marketability. In the Northwest Wisconsin region, manufacturing and similar industries were targeted as they represent the future of the region.

The Northwest Wisconsin manufacturing industry needs to upgrade the skills of its incumbents to tackle the slow economy. Industries engaged the workforce in diverse industrial skill trainings to educate them, to achieve goal of effective and efficient production. The concern is that evaluation of those trainings has never been conducted. Training evaluation is significant; it ensures that needs of northwest Wisconsin businesses have been met. Hence in this study, evaluation of trainings was done using Kirkpatrick's level I evaluation: reaction, to determine level of satisfaction towards training imparted to workforce.

Demographic Details

The total number of participants was 195. Categorization of population was done on the basis of age, education, and employment status. Out of 195 participants, 137 were administered via online web survey. 30 surveys were completed by participants and returned.

Only 11% of participants were under the age of 30. A majority (71%) of participants were between 30 and 49 years old, and 18% were over 50. A quarter (24%) had a high school diploma or G.E.D. Over a third (38%) completed some college, and remaining participants (38%) were college graduates. Most (83%) had a job when they attended a training session, but some participants (17%) were unemployed post-training and looking for work.

Types of Trainings Evaluated

The University of Wisconsin – Stout, in partnership with other area universities, local businesses, and the Northwest Wisconsin Workforce Investment Board, provided training to over 200 workers in this region on several topics (See Figure 1).

The major types of trainings given were principles of lean manufacturing, critical core manufacturing skills, and A3. Out of 195 participants, 41.03% attended the Principles of Lean Manufacturing, 12.82% participated in Critical Core Manufacturing skills, and 10.26% were a part of A3 training.

Lee (2003) indicated that Korean auto assembly plants adapted the lean production systems in mid 1990 by witnessing the success of Toyota and other Japanese auto firms. Luria (2010) suggested that the lean production system refers to a mass production while maintaining the quality, systematic organizational learning, minimal waste, and a maximized utilization initiative of skilled workforce. Similar views were shared by Lieberman et al. (1999) stating that lean production in the industry used flexible technologies which enabled a flexible work environment resulting in maximizing the employee efficiency and high productivity while maintaining quality of the product.

The other two major trainings evaluated in this study were Critical Core Manufacturing Skills and A3 training. Sobek II and Smalley (2008) reflected on their experiences of A3 training program evaluation in Toyota and concluded that the A3 training program was utilized to enhance the intellectual development of the employees to direct their skills towards logical thinking process and real-time problem solving.

The Welding NTC, Industrial Maintenance Course, Advanced Manufacturing, High Performance Manufacturing, Industrial Maintenance Flex Lab, Value Stream Mapping, and Quick Change Over trainings contributed towards the rest of the 35.9% of the participants. The contributing factor of the low participation rates for the above training programs was that these trainings might have been provided to highly skilled workforce.

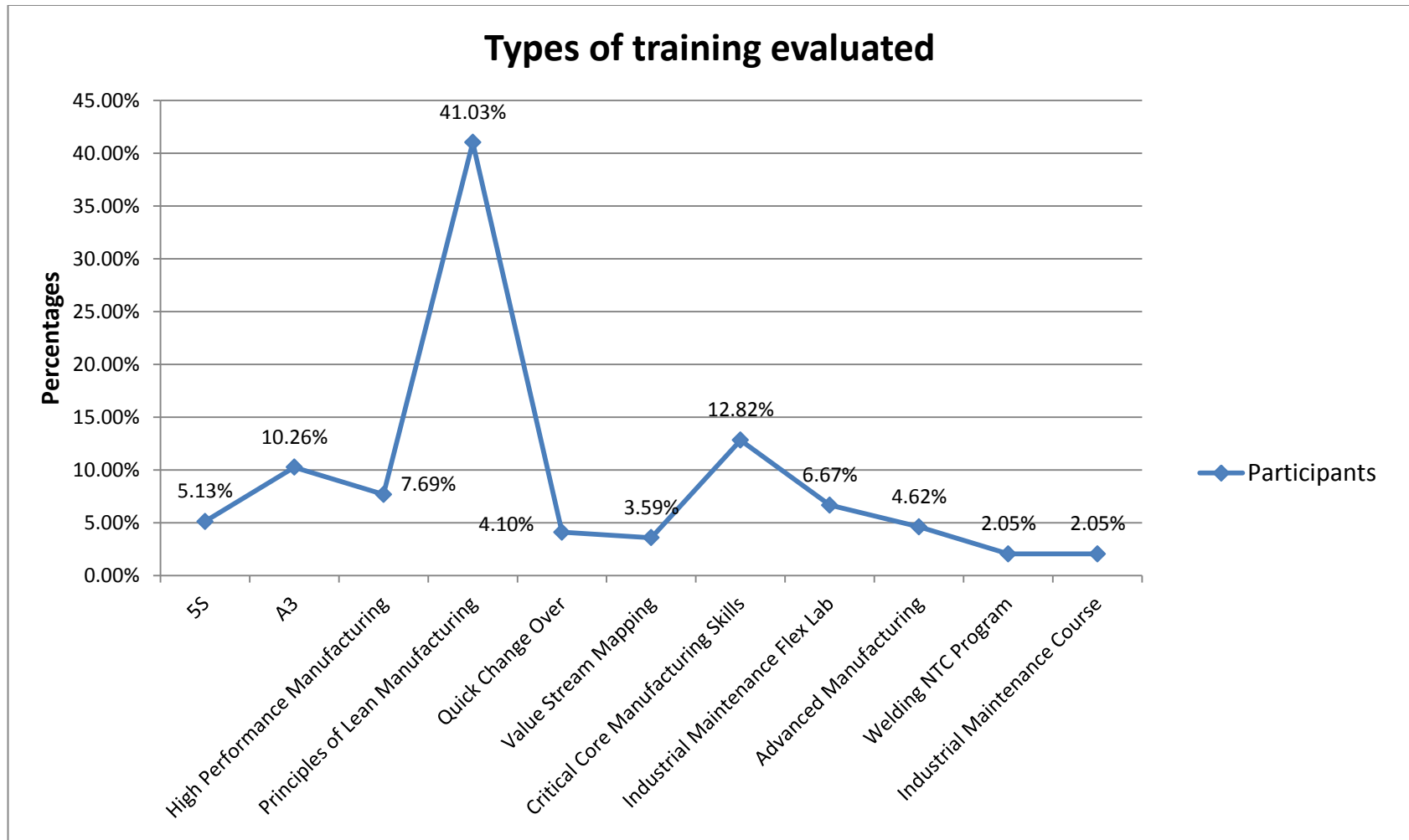


Figure 1. Types of training provided by NWWIB in various industries across northwest Wisconsin

In this study, evaluation of the training was performed by Kirkpatrick's level-1: reaction. It presents the preliminary results of an ongoing evaluation of the training programs conducted by NWWIB. Training participants were contacted and asked to complete a brief online 20-question survey that was categorized in the following major sections which is discussed in the later part of the study:

- Instructor effectiveness
- Training effectiveness
- Training usefulness
- Increase in employment

Instructor Effectiveness

In this study, the survey has been used as the evaluation instrument for the trainings imparted by NWWIB. The survey can enable improvements to be made, as suggested by the trainees, to provide more effective instructors during the course of the trainings (Phipps et al., 2005). It is one of the deciding factors to determine the required changes in the delivery of instructions and the needs of the individuals in a group.

In the study, few survey questions were enquired to understand the trainee's perspective of instructor effectiveness (See Figure 2). 97% of participants felt comfortable in learning from the instructor. 90% of the participants agreed that the instructor helped them in understanding how to utilize the training on the job. Nearly all the participants (97%) liked the real world examples used by the instructor during the training program. Clark (2004) indicated that the instructor's skills and course structure are two important aspects that can potentially influence learning. He also suggested that in addition to these factors, the instructor's ability to use the illustrations to clarify concepts helps the trainee to understand the topics in a better manner.

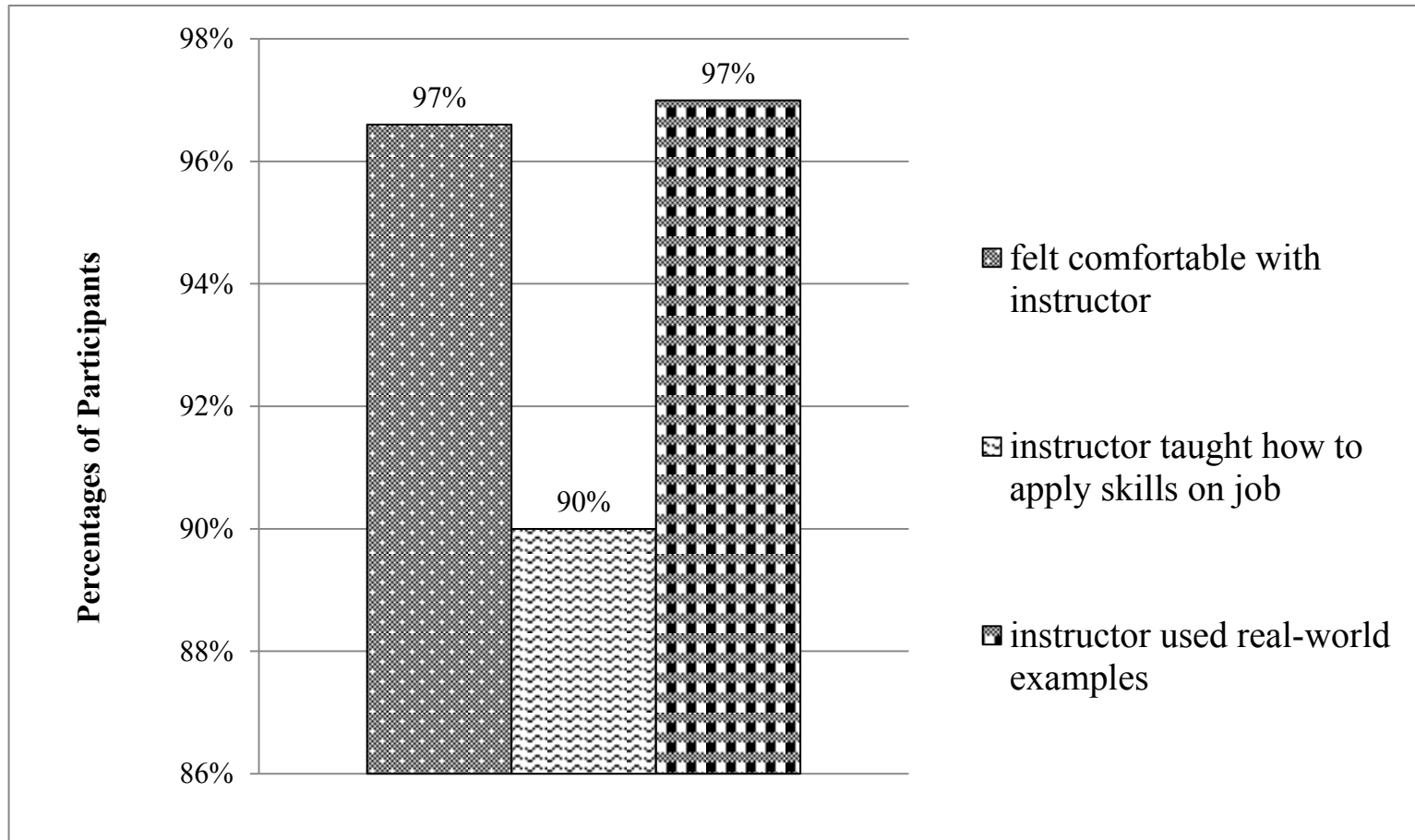


Figure 2. Participants' (N=30; responses received via web survey) reactions on the effectiveness of the instructor for the trainings provided by NWWIB

Training Effectiveness

Effectiveness is the bottom line for almost all of the trainings delivered, but why it is effective for one trainee and ineffective for the other? This has not been researched thoroughly (Noe, 1986). The author also emphasized the trainee's satisfaction with the training stating that it is significant in the learning process of the trainee.

Figure 3 illustrates several variables used in this study to evaluate the effectiveness of trainings provided by NWWIB in the manufacturing industries across northwest Wisconsin. The study suggests that 90% of the participants said that they learned important skills. 61% of participants indicated that the training helped them in achieving a raise, promotion, or good performance evaluation on the job. This suggests that one third of the participants were not satisfied with the trainings and felt that the training did not give them advancement opportunities at the workplace. However, two third of population who attended the trainings felt that the training gave them a personal sense of accomplishment. According to Training Today (2011), the organizations are relying upon capitalizing the full potential of their human resource capital and to utilize their full potential, the workforce needs to be trained. The trained employees show more efficiency and effectively utilize the resources with a great sense of accomplishment in them.

Dubinsky (1996) investigated sales training program effectiveness of 42 companies on various assumptions such as: the trainer's knowledge, product knowledge, selling skills, and market and company information. He concluded that almost all of the assumptions he made had significantly no effect on effectiveness of training program, rather designing a quality training program, giving trainees their independence to bring new ideas in workplace, and maintaining competitive viability will help in making the training program effective.

Schumaker (2004) established the three dimensional relationship to training effectiveness with these three elements: organizational environment, pre-training motivation, and relevance of

training to the job. Similar findings were reported by Orpen (1999), where he discussed that training program elements had a greater influence on training effectiveness than trainee's attitude. Thus, training material and organizational environment are significant markers of training program effectiveness.

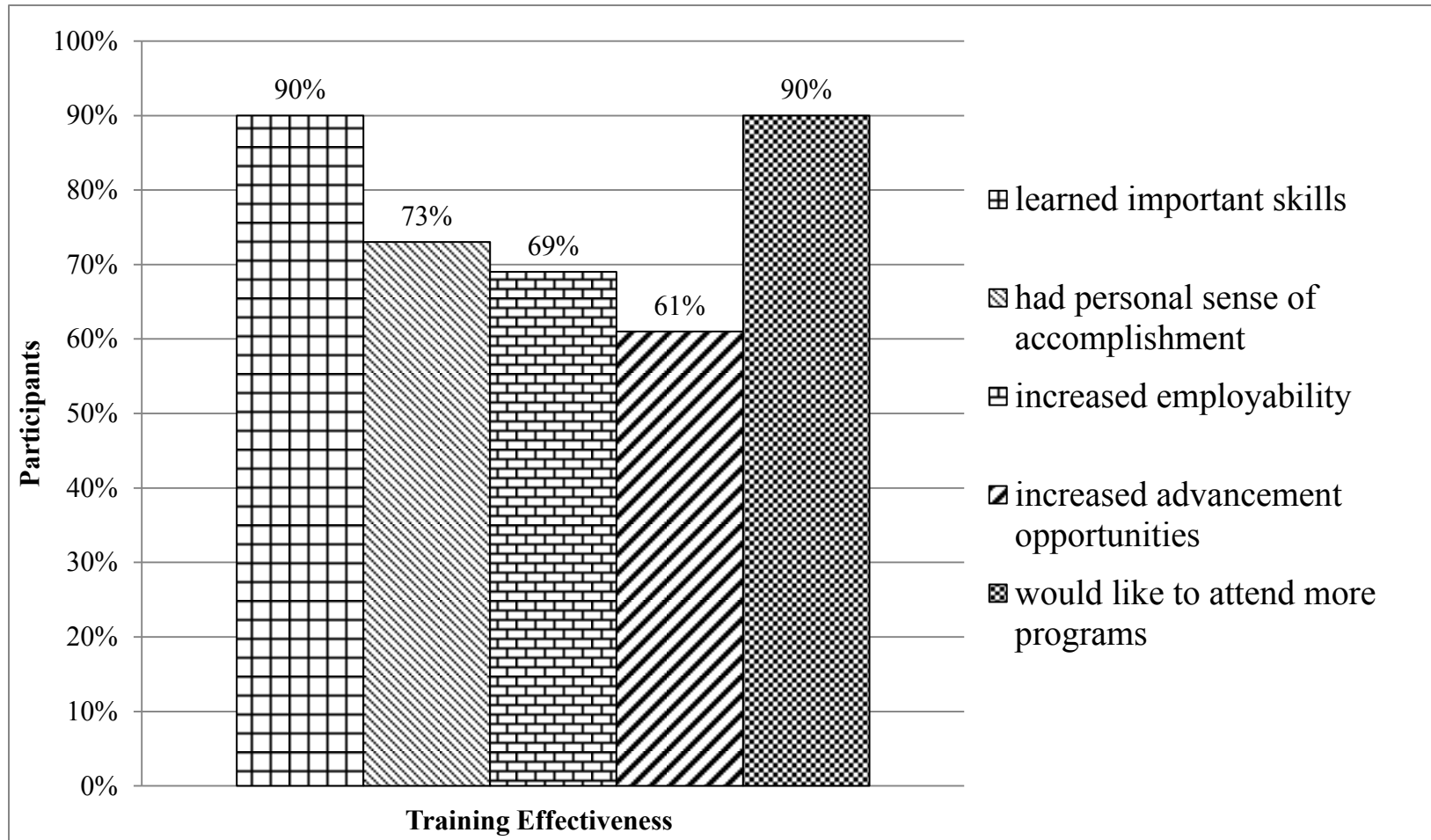


Figure 3. Significant elements identified by the trainees (N=30) to measure the NWWIB training effectiveness

Increased Employability

In today's economy, organizations seek for candidates who possess specific skills to increase their productivity. Training enables the workforce to inculcate those skills and become more marketable and thus increase their employment rate. According to "Employability Skills for the Future 2002" report of Department of Education Science and Training, Australia, skills and knowledge needs to be revised and expanded on a regular basis to accommodate the demands of an ever-changing world of work, which can be facilitated by imparting training on a broader range of skills.

In this study, as per Figure 4, more than two third of participants, who were unemployed before the training, acquired a full time job after successful completion of their trainings. Most of the trainees who got a job attended the principles of lean manufacturing training program. This is also supported by the fact that 41% of the trainees attended the principles of lean manufacturing training program delivered by NWWIB. However, only 1/4th of the participants were unemployed even after receiving the training in various modules. These trainees participated in the principles of lean manufacturing, critical core manufacturing principles, and industrial maintenance flex lab. Real facts are unknown for unemployment after these training courses. However, according to McCausland and Theodossiou (2004), hiring in industry also depends on demand shocks in economy. Training on specialty skills enhances worker's productivity and hence wage rate also increases.

Several comments made by participants of the training were that it increased employability because it:

- "Opened my eyes to new methods and possibilities in my career."
- "Aligned with what's going on in marketplace today."
- "Is helpful to have training in problem-solving skills."

- “Gave me good information on efficient production methods and workspace organization.”

Thus, training evaluation is critical in any industry as the evaluation maps the trend of the training effectiveness on the basis of trainee’s skills, employment status, and various behavioral characteristics. Organizations, on the basis of employability trend, can also identify which training program is more beneficial for employees to enhance their skills and make them more efficient.

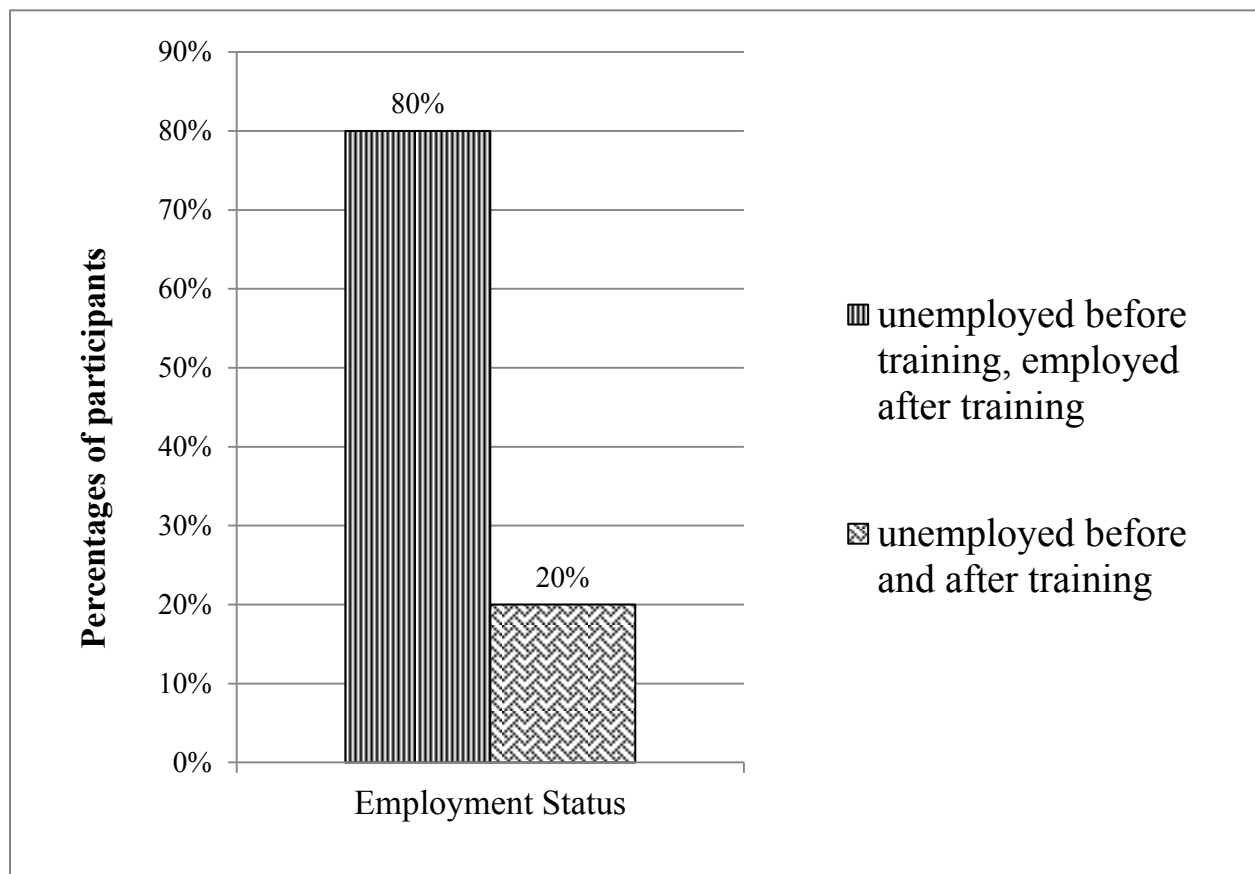


Figure 4. Pre- and post-training employment status of the NWWIB training participants (N=30)

Training Usefulness

Training effectiveness can be measured as how often trainees utilize the newly gained knowledge and skills at their work place. Pham et al., (2010) discusses that training transfer can be introduced in workplace by undertaking the skills and learning developed in training environment. They also emphasized the importance of providing work-related examples during the training sessions to help the trainees learn by example and encourage them to utilize the learning at a regular basis and in an effective manner at their workplace.

In this study, 41% of the participants claimed to utilize learning from the training on the job on a daily basis (See Figure 5). Nearly half of the participants admitted use of knowledge gained from various trainings on either weekly or a monthly basis as needed. Only 14% of the trainees were not able to fit learning from the training programs in their work environment on a regular basis.

Haskell (1998) described the difference between the learning principles and the principles of transfers of learning as two different aspects. The self-transfer of learning in different contexts to situations that are similar to the learning gained during the training programs is very crucial. He states that increasing the frequency of information about errors to learners during practice improves their performance. Hence, transfer of learning will also improve.

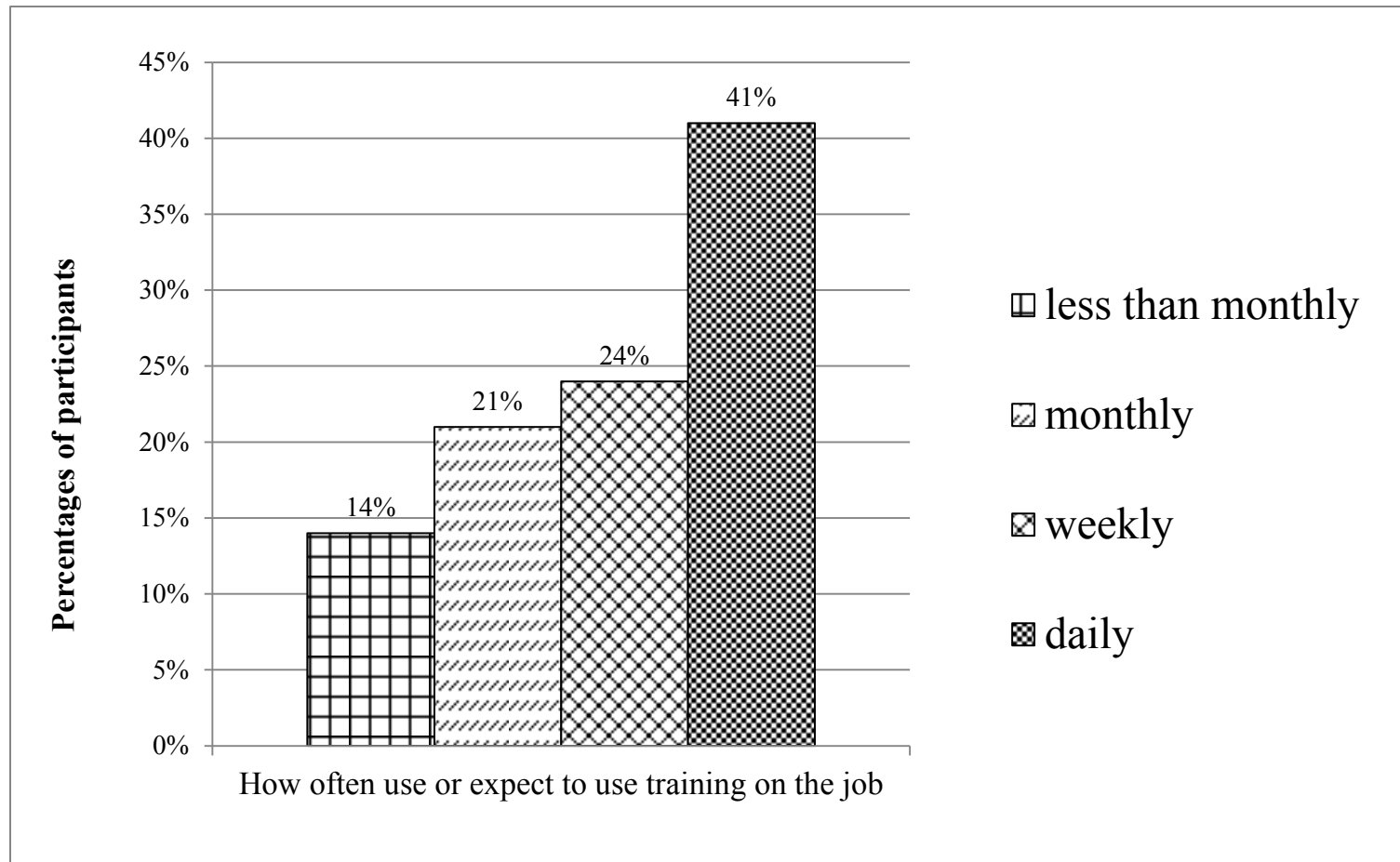


Figure 5. Frequency of the participants (N=30) utilizing the skills and learning from NWWIB training programs at the workplace

Chapter V: Discussion

This study was an effort to evaluate various training programs delivered by the Northwest Wisconsin Workforce Investment Board (NWWIB) for industries located in 10 counties of northwest Wisconsin. The goal is to enhance the quality of workforce that meets demanding and changing needs of industries of these 10 counties. The northwest Wisconsin manufacturing workforce had to make sure that they have an edge to survive in their respective organizations during times of economic slowdown. Trainings were delivered as an effort to upgrade skills of the incumbents to tackle slow economy. As stated in the statement of problem in Chapter I: Introduction, this study evaluated training program following Kirkpatrick's evaluation for Level I, reaction and discussed findings in Chapter IV: Results.

The study was conducted with a 20-questions online survey administered to 137 participants of the NWWIB training programs. 30 surveys were completed by the participants and returned. Based on Kirkpatrick's evaluation level-1, findings of training evaluation, was categorized into four groups: instructor effectiveness, training effectiveness, training usefulness, and increased employability.

Limitations

The limitation of study was that due to unavailability of trainees' contact details, they could not participate in survey for evaluating the trainings. Also, time gap of study done and trainings conducted was considerably long. This may have been a factor affecting responses of participants as an obstacle because of memory recall. Not all of the participants responded to qualitative questions, which would have helped the researchers in this study furthermore to restructure and redesign training program.

Conclusions

Results of online survey, returned from 30 participants, were evaluated in an effort to evaluate trainings delivered by NWWIB. Out of 195 participants, 41.03% attended Principles of

Lean Manufacturing, 12.82% participated in Critical Core Manufacturing skills, and 10.26% were a part of A3 training.

Gordon (1974) indicated that a relationship must exist between the instructor and learner. They should have some connection to make learning process via training session effective. Instructor effectiveness was reflected in survey results when 90% of participants agreed that instructor helped them in understanding how to utilize training on the job. Also, nearly all participants (97%) liked real world examples used by the instructor during training program.

As mentioned earlier in the study, nearly 60% of the participants indicated that the training helped them in achieving a raise, promotion, or good performance evaluation on the job. However, two third of population who attended the trainings felt that training gave them a personal sense of accomplishment.

Muir (2001) supported the notion that adult learning is at its best when the application of training is relevant to the trainee's job duties. In the survey, one of the participants commented that the training gave good information on efficient production methods and workspace organization.

Trainee's reaction was studied for evaluating various trainings delivered by NWWIB. Erfmeyer et al., (1991) supported that trainee's positive reactions ascertains the future of training program but favorable reaction may not give assurance that learning has taken place. They listed the advantages of studying reactions of trainees which is in line with findings of the study:

- The positive reactions support organization for current and future trainings.
- Trainee's reaction is also a measure of the training program's and the instructor's success.
- It provides information to layout the future training program or help in redesigning the existing training.

- The data collection is immediate and relatively easy.

Thus, Kirkpatrick's Level 1 evaluation tool proved to be very critical in this study for data collection and drawing important inferences, which gave directions to NWWIB for the future trainings to make them effective. This study also gave insight that evaluation of training programs has to be performed as soon as the training is completed so as to capture trainee's perceptions of training content, training environment, and instructor's teaching performance.

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Appendix A: IRB Approval form.



715/232-1126
 715/232-1746 (fax)
<http://www.uwstout.edu/irs>

February 24, 2011

Susan Stages
 Anuradha Nigam
 UW Stout

Dear Susan and Anuradha,

In accordance with Federal Regulations, your project, "Northwest Wisconsin Workforce Investment Board (NWWIB) Training Evaluation" was reviewed on February 24, 2011, by a member of the Institutional Review Board and was approved under Expedited Review through February 23, 2012.

If your project involves administration of a survey or interview, please copy and paste the following message to the top of your survey/interview form before dissemination:

This research has been approved by the UW-Stout IRB as required by the Code of Federal Regulations Title 45 Part 46.

If you are conducting an online survey/interview, please copy and paste the following message to the top of the form "This research has been approved by the UW Stout IRB as required by the Code of Federal regulations Title 45 Part 46."

Responsibilities for Principal Investigators of IRB approved research:

1. No subjects may be involved in any study procedure prior to the IRB approval date or after the expiration date (Principal Investigators and Sponsors are responsible for initiating Continuing Review proceedings.)
2. All unanticipated or serious adverse events must be reported to the IRB.
3. All protocol modifications must be IRB approved prior to implementation, unless they are intended to reduce risk.
4. All protocol deviations must be reported to the IRB.
5. All recruitment materials and methods must be approved by the IRB prior to being used.
6. Federal regulations require IRB review of ongoing projects on an annual basis.

Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB and best wishes with your project.

Should you have any questions regarding this letter or need further assistance, please contact the IRB office at 715-232-1126 or email foxwell@uwstout.edu.

Sincerely,

Susan Foxwell
 Research Administrator and Human Protections Administrator,
 UW-Stout Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research (IRB)

*NOTE: This is the only notice you will receive – no paper copy will be sent.

Appendix B: NWWIB Training Evaluation Online Survey

NWWIB Training Evaluation

Thank you for agreeing to complete this brief survey. Please answer each question below by clicking the button next to your answer choice or typing your answer. Scroll down a page to make sure you answer each question. To go to the previous or next page, click the buttons on the right-hand bottom of the screen. Your feedback is very important to us, and so is your privacy. There is no way ANYONE will know that you took this survey or be able to connect you to your answers. You do not have to answer any question that makes you uncomfortable. Don't think too much about how to answer any one question. Just go with your first feeling or gut response.

I attended the following training sessions:

- A3 Method (1)
- 5S Method (2)
- Advanced Manufacturing (3)
- Critical Core Manufacturing Principles (4)
- High Performance Manufacturing (5)
- Industrial Maintenance Flex Lab (6)
- Principles of Lean or Principles of Lean Manufacturing (7)
- Quick Changeover Method (8)
- Value Stream Mapping (9)
- Don't know or can't remember (10)

I got a certificate for completing this training.

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- Don't know or can't remember (3)

Thinking back to the training you received and what you learned during the session, please rate your level of agreement with each of the following statements.

The training gave me important knowledge or skills.

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)
- Agree (4)
- Strongly Agree (5)

Completing the training gave me a personal sense of accomplishment.

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)
- Agree (4)
- Strongly Agree (5)

Overall, I was satisfied with the training.

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)
- Agree (4)
- Strongly Agree (5)

I would like to attend more training sessions like this one.

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)
- Agree (4)
- Strongly Agree (5)

Thinking about the teacher who taught the training session, please rate your level of agreement with each of the following statements.

The teacher used examples to help me understand what I was learning.

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)
- Agree (4)
- Strongly Agree (5)

I felt comfortable learning from the teacher.

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)
- Agree (4)
- Strongly Agree (5)

The teacher helped me understand how I could use what I learned on the job.

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)
- Agree (4)
- Strongly Agree (5)

Overall, I was satisfied with the teacher.

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)
- Agree (4)
- Strongly Agree (5)

Now, thinking about the training and employment, answer the following questions. If you have a job now, think about your current job. If you don't have a job now, think about your next job.

When I took the training, I had a job.

- Yes, I had a full time job or worked for myself full time. (1)
- Yes, I had a part-time job or worked for myself part-time. (2)
- No, but I was trying to get a job. (3)
- No, and I was not trying to get a job. (4)
- Prefer not to say (5)

The company I was with when I took the training was supportive of the training.

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)
- Agree (4)
- Strongly Agree (5)
- Did not have a job when I took the training (6)

I have a job now.

- Yes, I have a full time job or work for myself full time. (1)
- Yes, I have a part-time job or work for myself part-time. (2)
- No, but I'm trying to get a job. (3)
- No, and I'm not trying to get a job right now. (4)
- Prefer not to say (5)

The training helped me (or can help me) get a job.

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)
- Agree (4)
- Strongly Agree (5)

The training helped me (or can help me) get a job because: (Click in the box below, and type the answer.)

The training helped me (or can help me) get a raise, promotion, or good performance evaluation on the job.

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)
- Agree (4)
- Strongly Agree (5)

I am using (or can use) what I learned in training on the job:

- Never (1)
- Less than Once a Month (2)
- Once a Month (3)
- 2-3 Times a Month (4)
- Once a Week (5)
- 2-3 Times a Week (6)
- Daily (7)

I am not using (or will not use) what I learned in training on the job as much as I would like because: (Click the box below, and type the answer.)

On the job, I supervise (or expect to supervise) other people:

- Never (1)
- Less than Once a Month (2)
- Once a Month (3)
- 2-3 Times a Month (4)
- Once a Week (5)
- 2-3 Times a Week (6)
- Daily (7)

I get paid (or expect to get paid) enough money to meet my basic needs.

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- Not sure (3)

The training makes me more confident that I can get a good job or succeed at my current job.

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)
- Agree (4)
- Strongly Agree (5)

These are the last questions - please tell us a bit about yourself.

My age is:

- over 70 (1)
- between 60 and 69 (2)
- between 50 and 59 (3)
- between 30 and 49 (4)
- under 30 (5)
- Prefer not to say (6)

My highest level of education is:

- college graduate or post graduate (Associate's degree, Bachelor's degree, Master's degree, etc.) (1)
- some college classes (2)
- high school graduate or G.E.D. (General Education Diploma) (3)
- some high school (4)
- no high school (5)
- Prefer not to say (6)

If you wish, please use the space below to tell us any personal or professional stories about how this training affected you or anything else you would like researchers to know about the training.

Thank you for taking this survey! If you have any questions about the survey, please contact Dr. Susan Staggs at 715-232-2179 or Staggs@unvstout.edu.

Appendix C: NWWIB Mail Survey Cover Letter



Department of Psychology
220 10th St. E., 312 McCalmont Hall
University of Wisconsin-Stout
Menomonie, WI 54751
Phone: 715/232-2653

Susan L. Staggs, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, Department of Psychology
220 10th St. E., 303 McCalmont Hall
University of Wisconsin – Stout
Menomonie, WI 54751
Phone: 715-232-2179
E-mail: staggs@uwstout.edu

Dear <Participant Name>:

Our records indicate that you recently completed a Northwest Wisconsin Workforce Investment Board training seminar. Researchers at the University of Wisconsin-Stout want to hear about your experiences with that training, so I'm writing to ask you to complete the enclosed survey and return it to us in the self-addressed stamped envelope provided. It only takes about 5 minutes to answer these questions, and the information you provide to us is very important. We will use what you tell us to ensure that others like you get the most benefit from the NWWIB training sessions. Before completing the survey, please review the Consent to Participate in UW-Stout Approved Research page, which describes the survey and informs you of your rights as a research participant.

We are looking forward to receiving your feedback!

Sincerely,

Susan L. Staggs, Ph.D.



Appendix D: NWWIB Mail Survey

NWWIB Training Evaluation

Thank you for agreeing to complete this brief survey. Please answer each question below by checking the box next to your answer choice or writing your answer. Go through the survey to make sure you answer each question. Your feedback is very important to us, and so is your privacy. There is no way ANYONE will know that you took this survey or be able to connect you to your answers. You do not have to answer any question that makes you uncomfortable. Don't think too much about how to answer any one question - just go with your first feeling or gut response.

I attended the following training session:

- A3 Method (1)
- 5S Method (2)
- Advanced Manufacturing (3)
- Critical Core Manufacturing Principles (4)
- High Performance Manufacturing (5)
- Industrial Maintenance Flex Lab (6)
- Principles of Lean or Principles of Lean Manufacturing (7)
- Quick Changeover Method (8)
- Value Stream Mapping (9)
- Don't know or can't remember (10)

I got a certificate for completing this training.

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- Don't know or can't remember (3)

Thinking back to the training you received and what you learned during the session, please rate your level of agreement with each of the following statements.

The training gave me important knowledge or skills.

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)
- Agree (4)
- Strongly Agree (5)

Completing the training gave me a personal sense of accomplishment.

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)
- Agree (4)
- Strongly Agree (5)

Overall, I was satisfied with the training.

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)
- Agree (4)
- Strongly Agree (5)

NWWIB Training Evaluation

I would like to attend more training sessions like this one.

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)
- Agree (4)
- Strongly Agree (5)

Thinking about the teacher who taught the training session, please rate your level of agreement with each of the following statements.

The teacher used examples to help me understand what I was learning.

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)
- Agree (4)
- Strongly Agree (5)

I felt comfortable learning from the teacher.

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)
- Agree (4)
- Strongly Agree (5)

The teacher helped me understand how I could use what I learned on the job.

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)
- Agree (4)
- Strongly Agree (5)

Overall, I was satisfied with the teacher.

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)
- Agree (4)
- Strongly Agree (5)

Now, thinking about the training and employment, answer the following questions. If you have a job now, think about your current job. If you don't have a job now, think about your next job.

When I took the training, I had a job.

- Yes, I had a full time job or worked for myself full time. (1)
- Yes, I had a part-time job or worked for myself part-time. (2)
- No, but I was trying to get a job. (3)
- No, and I was not trying to get a job. (4)
- Prefer not to say (5)

NWWIB Training Evaluation

The company I was with when I took the training was supportive of the training.

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)
- Agree (4)
- Strongly Agree (5)
- Did not have a job when I took the training (6)

I have a job now.

- Yes, I have a full-time job or work for myself full-time. (1)
- Yes, I have a part time job or work for myself part time. (2)
- No, but I'm trying to get a job. (3)
- No, and I'm not trying to get a job right now. (4)
- Prefer not to say (5)

The training helped me (or can help me) get a job.

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)
- Agree (4)
- Strongly Agree (5)

The training helped me (or can help me) get a job because: (Click in the box below, and write the answer.)

The training helped me (or can help me) get a raise, promotion, or good performance evaluation on the job.

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)
- Agree (4)
- Strongly Agree (5)

NWWIB Training Evaluation

I am using (or can use) what I learned in training on the job:

- Never (1)
- Less than Once a Month (2)
- Once a Month (3)
- 2-3 Times a Month (4)
- Once a Week (5)
- 2-3 Times a Week (6)
- Daily (7)

I am not using (or will not use) what I learned in training on the job as much as I would like because. (Check the box below, and write the answer.)

On the job, I supervise (or expect to supervise) other people:

- Never (1)
- Less than Once a Month (2)
- Once a Month (3)
- 2-3 Times a Month (4)
- Once a Week (5)
- 2-3 Times a Week (6)
- Daily (7)

NWWIB Training Evaluation

I get paid (or expect to get paid) enough money to meet my basic needs.

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- Not sure (3)

The training makes me more confident that I can get a good job or succeed at my current job.

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)
- Agree (4)
- Strongly Agree (5)

These are the last questions - please tell us a bit about yourself!

My age is:

- Over 70 (1)
- Between 60 and 69 (2)
- Between 50 and 59 (3)
- Between 30 and 49 (4)
- Under 30 (5)
- Prefer not to say (6)

My highest level of education is:

- College graduate or post-graduate (Associate's degree, Bachelor's degree, Master's degree, etc.) (1)
- Some college classes (2)
- High school graduate or G.E.D. (General Education Diploma) (3)
- Some high school (4)
- No high school (5)
- Prefer not to say (6)

If you wish, please use the space below to tell us any personal or professional stories about how this training affected you or anything else you would like researchers to know about the training.

*Thank you for taking this survey! If you have any questions about the survey, please contact **Dr. Susan Staggs** or 715-232-2179 or staggs@uwstout.edu.*