

THE LEARNING UNIT

Learning unit defined

Learning Unit is a formulation that facilitates change, a change that will result in the trainee being able to do something he or she could not do before going through the Learning Unit. In other words, Learning Unit facilitates 'change in behaviour'.

The Learning Unit can be depicted graphically as in Fig. 4

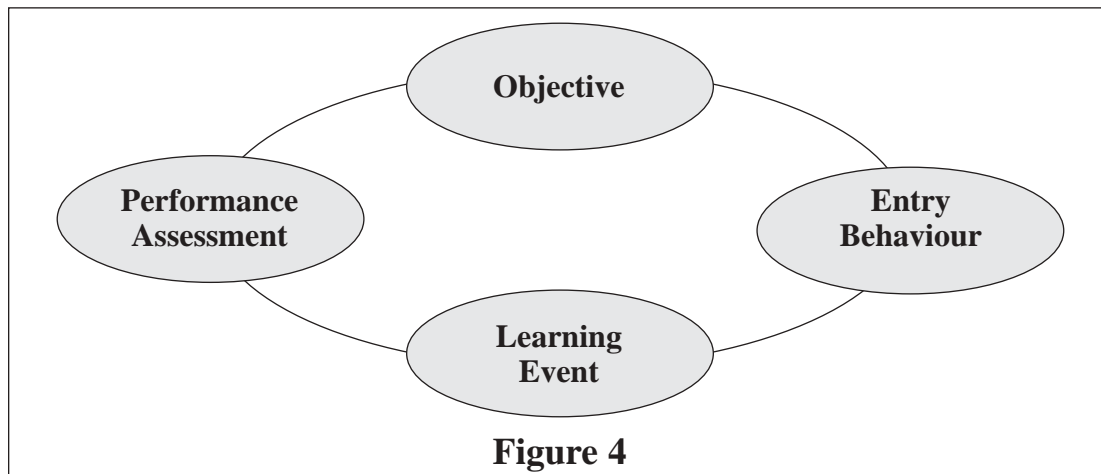


Figure 4

The model shown above in Fig. 4 has four principal stages. These stages are arranged in a circular format to show that they are interrelated. For example:

Establish a clear purpose (e.g. the need to learn how to perform a task) and express as an objective. The starting point for developing the Learning Unit is, therefore, the **objective**.

There is a trainee or a group of trainees to train. Their present capabilities are termed as **entry behaviour**.

In the light of objectives set and the Entry Behaviour of the trainees, the **learning event** is designed. The purpose is to enable trainees to achieve the training objectives.

The trainer, the trainees and the management might like to assess whether the objectives have been achieved. This stage is earmarked for **performance assessment**.

Entry behaviour

Participants come for training because there is a perceptible need to change, i.e., desired change, which will lead to improved performance. The training objective

spells out what and how much change is required and in which direction. In order to bring about the change, one should, in the first place, understand where the trainees stand before the training. Hence specifically, before training takes place, it is important that:

- ◆ The trainee should know he or she has a training need to perform a task effectively.
- ◆ A standard of performance is available to define what the trainee should be able to do.
- ◆ Finally, and most important, the trainee must want to change - to acquire new knowledge, skills or attitudes to enable the task to be performed to the required standard.

We can categorise this body of knowledge as '**Entry Behaviour**', i.e., having an idea about the trainees, his/her background, etc.

Structuring learning event

The next stage is structuring the learning event to solve the trainee's performance problems. The intention is that the trainees, after going through the learning event, should display a change in behaviour. If it is to be successful, it must:

- ◆ Do what it purports to do - change a trainee's behaviour.
- ◆ Treat all trainee's participating in the learning event as individuals: recognise differences in their knowledge, skills and attitudes.
- ◆ Provide sufficient time for each individual to achieve success.
- ◆ Create a learning environment that is pleasant, well organised, free from anxiety and where the trainee will be willing to participate in learning activities designed to bring about the required change(s) in behaviour at work.

Assessment

Once the trainee completes the learning event, it is important that the change is assessed. This can be assessed by:

- ◆ Determining whether the trainee has acquired the proposed knowledge, skills and attitudes.
- ◆ Determining whether the trainee is now able to perform the task, as per the specified standard.
- ◆ Asking the trainee to comment on the value of the newly acquired expertise in relation to performance of the task and to his or her job in general.