

Time Out: An Implicit Training Ingredient

Written by Robert C. Baldwin, CMRP, Editor
Monday, 01 September 2003 12:42



Robert C. Baldwin, CMRP, Editor The maintenance and reliability workforce is aging and youngsters are choosing other professions. Maintenance personnel from managers to apprentices are in short supply.

That means all of us will be putting more energy into training, education, and professional development initiatives. MAINTENANCE TECHNOLOGY magazine's Professional Development Quarterly (published in March, June, September, and December) will do its part by gathering and publishing helpful information about all modes of training and education, including on the job, classroom, distance learning, conference work-shops, CD-ROMs, and the Internet.

One of the professional development resources on the Internet that caught my eye is the Open Courseware initiative rolled out last year by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). I counted more than 200 courses for which material has been made available at www.ocw.mit.edu. The university says it expects to have virtually all its course material online by 2007.

As pointed out on the OCW website, the program is for publishing MIT course materials, free and open to the world. It is not a degree- or certificate-granting program, nor an MIT education.

All types of course materials are served up, including syllabi, calendars, readings, lecture

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notes, video lectures, assignments, exams, and projects, but the amount of material for each course varies. I browsed through some of the offerings and found them promising.

I reviewed several video lectures, including “Educational Technology Initiatives in Business Education in the Sloan School of Management” by Toby Woll, director of learning technology initiatives.

She pointed to three explicit and two implicit elements of education. The obvious are delivery of content, practice and application, and learning from peers. The less obvious implicit elements, in a school setting, are socialization and babysitting.

The latter two elements are important in adult education also. The socialization element becomes networking and the development of friendships. The babysitting element is turned inside out to provide a “time out” from the normal working environment to allow learning to take place in a different atmosphere where it should be more effective.

This suggests that the smart manager will budget some time for off-site training at conferences, courses, and workshops. Opportunities abound. Check our event calendar (page 9) and Professional Development Quarterly (page 23) for specifics. **MT**

