Why CBT Nuggets Works

Executive Summary | Laura Strait, University of Oregon

Given the rapidly changing nature of technology, training is tremendously important for IT professionals. Common training challenges include cost, limited learning retention, and lack of motivation to keep training. E-learning is a cost-effective method for providing team training. Among e-learning providers, CBT Nuggets' unique style is shown by research to be particularly effective. Training is made up of numerous video lessons, with each video typically lasting 5-10 minutes. Expert trainers create all of the course content and deliver it in a "whiteboard" style.

Extrinsic & Intrinsic Motivation

Extrinsic motivation is the desire do something in order to gain external value such as getting a raise or earning a certification. Intrinsic motivation is the desire to do something for personal pleasure or satisfaction. CBT Nuggets appeals to both ends of the motivation spectrum: the known work-improving benefits (higher pay, promotions, etc.) appeal to one's extrinsic motivation, while the entertaining style of the videos can increase the user's intrinsic motivation.

Behavioral Modeling

Behavioral modeling refers to the observation and reproduction of someone else's actions. With CBT Nuggets' "whiteboard" method, learners not only view programming methods and processes in real-time on screen, but also walk through steps with the trainer as he write out problems and solutions. Research continuously confirms that behavioral modeling, when used in technology training, yields more effective learning outcomes than other training methods.

Outcome Expectation

Observing a trainer troubleshoot a problem in a CBT Nuggets video provides the end user with an expectation of a scenario in which a problem may occur, and gives the end user the confidence to know how to solve the problem, which in turn improves the learner's perception of her/his self-efficacy.

Use of Humor

CBT Nuggets trainers frequently use humor and anecdotes in their videos, which not only entertains learners, but contributes to improved learning. Research has shown that enjoyment and retention of information help the learner gain confidence and maintain desire to continue training. Humor also improves a user's mood, which contributes to improved detail-association recall (the ability to recall specific details). The user is then more likely to maintain a positive association with the material, which improves the likelihood that the user will continue to use the training.

CBT Nuggets compared to slide-based training

Survey of 336 CBT Nuggets users.
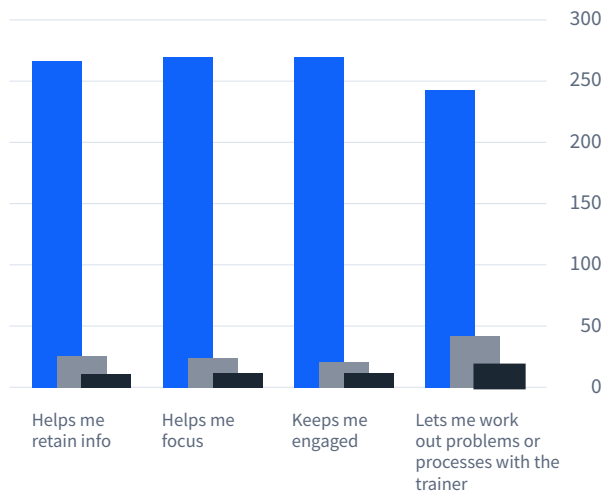
Sources: Gupta, S., Bostrom, R., & Huber, M. (2010). End-User Training Methods: What we know, need to know. Bandura, A. (1986) Social foundations of thought and action Interviews with CBT Nuggets customers, 2013.