

# Classroom Alternatives

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Learning is an ongoing process. The formal learning experiences (such as classroom training, conferences, e-learning courses and webinars) are important, they only make up 10% of professional learning experiences. Supervisors and other supportive relationships provide 20% of learning, while the remaining 70% of learning comes from on the job interactions and experiences – the blunders we make, the solutions we stumble upon, or find, and the lessons we take away from going about our daily routine.

Here are some tips for preparing and delivering effective training when there is little or no money in the budget to do with classroom alternatives.

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## A. Classroom Alternatives

### 1. “Alternatives to Classrooms” by ASTD

A great book, from Sept. 2002. It is a How-to Reference Tool for Training & Performance Professionals.

### 2. More Ideas:

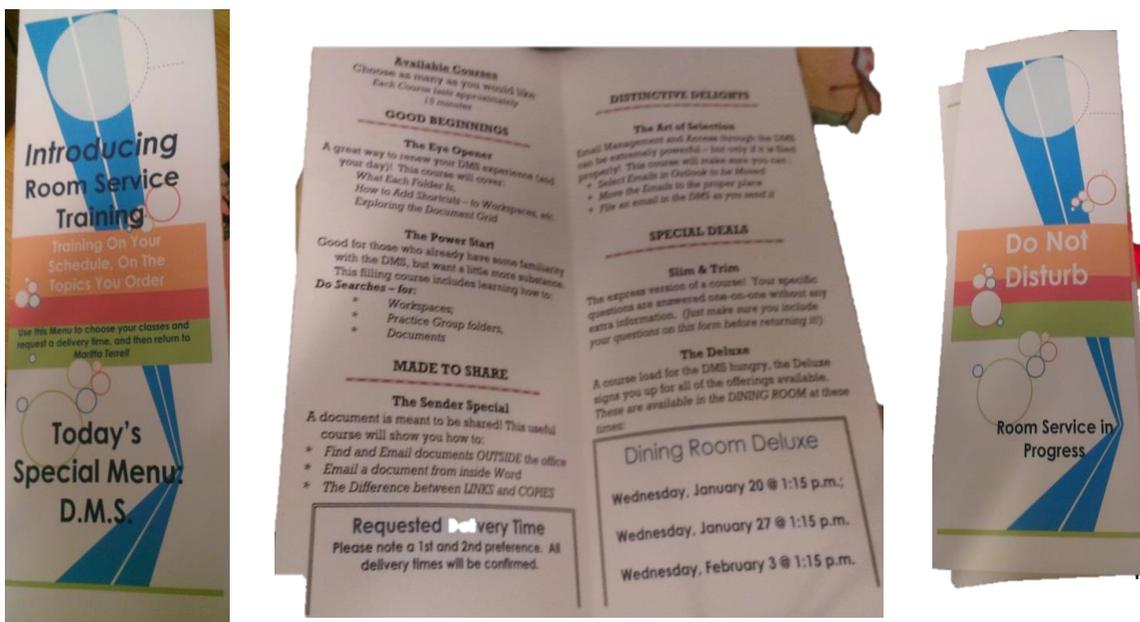
- a. Learning cohorts / peers – i.e., secretaries meet together, and share for that day some targeted item; present for each other a targeted item (i.e., Attorneys teach citations; marketing teach Publisher, etc.)
- b. Learning Centers - just like in Kindergarten, 1<sup>st</sup> grade, etc.!!! – have printable – quizzes at one , a computer at another, with Ribbon Hero, and a timer; have another computer at another table with a “see if you can fix this document in less than 5 minutes”; Westlaw research assignment test; .... And so on
- c. Teachable Moments – this means you have be to be walking the halls a couple of times a day – listening and “sticking your nose in”; or being available as you walk by “hey, do you have a moment to answer....”

- d. Beg, plead and borrow 5 minutes from the monthly Attorney meeting to show them something useful, functional and facilitating their efficiency.
- e. Same for Staff meetings
- f. Lunch and Learn (brown bag lunches)
- g. IT Q & A – monthly ½ to 45 minutes – come ask a question, eat a bagel, stay and listen to the other questions and answers!
- h. Coaching – one-on-one sessions
- i. Mentoring – have a knowledgeable secretary be a resource for another secretary
- j. Performance-support tools
- k. Teleconferences – for multi-office groups – to be learning cohorts
- l. Webinars – grab from YouTube
- m. Podcasts
- n. E-learning (i.e., PowerPoints, videos)
- o. GAMES – “Gamification” – ILTA has two sessions on this topic coming up Tuesday and Wednesday!

- [Applications and Desktop Gaming with Lawyers To Drive KM Adoption and Contribution](#) Tuesday, 08/19/2014 11:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
- [Applications and Desktop Gamify Learning for Serious Results \(Part I\)](#) Wednesday, 08/20/2014 1:30 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.
- [Applications and Desktop Gamify Learning for Serious Results \(Part II\)](#) Wednesday, 08/20/2014 3:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.

### 3. Bring the training to the users

Coaching – which is "Training To Go" or "Room Service Training" to deliver short (10-15 minute) training sessions to users on their schedules and on the subjects that they want to learn. Example (thank you to Carol Gerber for the Menu!!):



#### 4. Competition

- a. **Friendly competition** among users has been used to increase attendance and participation. Prizes for winners can be as free as a mention in the firm newsletter (see "Rewards," below).
- b. **Compete Anyway** Where competition between users does not fit with the firm culture, you can encourage users to compete against themselves.
- c. **"Stump the Trainer"** sessions challenge people to bring their toughest documents in so the whole class can see how an expert approaches a challenging situation.
- d. **Ribbon Hero** – use this free program to have a competition – or learning opportunities <http://www.ribbonhero.com/>

#### 5. Rewards

You don't have to spend a lot of money to show users that the firm appreciates their efforts.

- **Certificates:** Find a PowerPoint template on <http://office.microsoft.com>, adjust it to fit the firm's color scheme, add the logo, scan in the managing partner's signature, swipe some nice paper from Marketing, and you're in business.
- **Public acknowledgment:** Mention high achievers' names in a newsletter, in a news item on your intranet home page, or in department meetings. Have a "Learner of the Month" trophy that rotates to the desk of the person who demonstrates the most commitment to learning each month, Stanley Cup-style.
- **Have a "Denim Day"** or find another way to relax the dress code for those who have reached a specified learning goal.

#### 6. Hand-outs

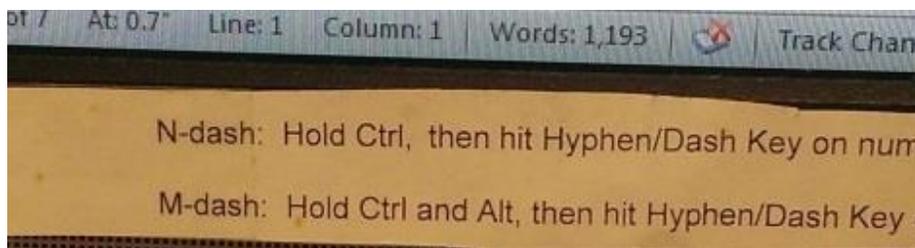
- Wallet-sized – i.e., phone/voicemail instructions to put in their wallet
- Bookmarks
- Bulletin Boards – all over firm, at their desks
- Monitor sticky's

**While listening to messages:**

- Press and hold 0 to pause
- Press 9 to skip current message and/or header
- Press # to fast forward message
- Press \* to rewind message
- Press 4 to delete the message
- Press 5 to save the message
- Press 7 to repeat the message

**After listening to messages:**

- Press 1 to play old messages
- Press 2 to play saved messages
- Press 3 to edit greeting
- Press 6 to access forwarding options
- Press \*04 to change mailbox passcode



## **B. Formal vs. Supervised vs. Frontline Lessons**

From:

<http://trainlikeachampion.wordpress.com/2013/07/10/beyond-the-classroom-alternatives-to-formal-training/>

*The list of formal training opportunities that employers may offer include:*

- In-house training classes
- External, vendor-offered training classes
- Conferences and seminars
- ELearning courses
- Webinars
- Certificate and university degree programs

*Manager supervision and support includes activities such as:*

- Identifying specific skills gaps
- Setting performance goals
- Setting expectations and goals around formal learning experiences
- Following up on goals and expectations once a formal learning experience has been completed
- Providing ongoing coaching
- De-briefing on-the-job learning experiences and mistakes to sort out potential lessons learned

*Lessons from the Frontlines (aka: On the Job Learning)*

Most of the time, we're neither sitting in a training class nor are we sitting in our supervisor's office. We're doing our jobs. And as we do our jobs, we're learning – what to do and what not to do. Informal learning opportunities include:

- Mentors
- Journaling
- Stretch assignments
- Participation in communities of practice
- Participation in online discussion boards
- Membership in professional associations or trade groups
- “Water cooler conversations” with other co-workers
- Job aids
- Checklists
- User guides
- Tutorials
- Employee manuals
- Reading trade magazines or books (or participating in book clubs around professional topics)