



# Learning Can Be Fun. Really

**safety dept.** *Drivers don't like school much. But they might go for this.*

By Raymond Mercuri

**D**id you know that more than 30 percent of employers feel their workers don't have the skills needed to do their job properly? At least that's what a recent Conference Board of Canada study showed.

Are you among that 30 percent? If so, shouldn't you do something about it?

You already know that staff training improves morale. You also know that how you deliver the training determines whether it will be effective or not.

In the trucking industry, the traditional classroom setting is still widely used and to some degree, it works. Why? For one thing, people are used to sitting in classrooms—it's the way most of us went through school.

Students receive immediate feedback and they benefit from the participation of other students. Adding multimedia tools such as video, computer-based training and print makes class time even more creative and engaging.

Still, the traditional classroom has its drawbacks. It can be expensive, and drivers would almost always rather be somewhere else. Also, classroom training can be ineffective if the programs aren't tailored to the varying adult learning styles.

"There will always be those who burn their way through

the course material and those who lag behind," says Mark Murrell, president of Markham, Ont.-based Cranial Expansion Learning Solutions, an online training system provider.

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through it, you're bored. If you're the guy struggling, you feel bad about holding up the entire class."

My advice? If you have to use a classroom, make it as interactive as you can.

Use interactive learning tools, and make the sessions entertaining. Unfortunately, many carriers' training departments ask drivers to sit in darkened rooms and simply watch videos—that's

hardly interactive, and videos provide only one-way communication. If you want to make the presentation memorable and helpful, have your trainer remain in the classroom and engaged in the discussion during the presentation. Stop the show and

prompt student participation by asking questions.

Staying in the classroom to work with students during a presentation is a simple and guaranteed effective way to enhance the training experience.

But like I said, sometimes you can't drag drivers into a classroom. Fortunately, you might not have to.

The Conference Board also reports that Canada—on a per-capita basis—is the second-most connected country in the world; second only to Korea. More and more drivers now rely on laptops and home PCs, and wireless technology continues to expand in reach and improve in quality. Most truck stops now provide Internet access capability.

Online learning offers distinct advantages. By definition, online learning uses technologies such as web conferencing, virtual classrooms and discussion forums to deliver web-based learning.

Imagine each of your

drivers at a computer screen attending your training programs, no matter where they may be at the time.

The instructor takes participants through the material, sharing presentations, DVDs, or video clips electronically.

Online learning can also include discussion forums in which students post ideas and questions and experts provide answers online. Web-based learning gives students 24/7 access to course material—a feature guaranteed to increase productivity. You might even minimize out-of-route or deadhead miles that you would have had to absorb by getting your drivers into a classroom.

Participants can take training in smaller chunks as it suits their needs and schedules, and content updates can be implemented with little difficulty—a significant benefit given the ever-morphing compliance rules that make the trucking industry so, er, interesting.

Who would have thought that the cab could replace the classroom? Still, the learning experience is going to have to start with you. There are many resources out there, but a good place to start exploring the world of online driver training is Cranial Expansion's Carrier's Edge website at [www.carriersedge.com](http://www.carriersedge.com). ▲

Raymond Mercuri writes about safety and training for *Today's Trucking*.