The Impact of a Realistic Job Preview Experience on Training Fluency, Learner Reactions, and Job Performance

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Although the training and development literature has delineated which instructional approaches are most effective, training approaches are often selected based on entertainment value rather than empirical evidence of efficacy (Karthik et al., 2019). One reason for this trend may be learners’ positive reactions to entertaining instruction and negative reactions to effective instruction. Researchers may begin validating a means for addressing this problem by investigating methods for promoting job satisfaction within a training context. The proposed study compared the effects of two training orientation approaches on learner fluency, reactions, and job performance. A total of 175 participants were randomly assigned to one of two conditions: (a) a descriptive Realistic job preview (RJP) orientation or (b) an applied Realistic job preview experience (RJPE) orientation. Participants were paid for their participation in the study and a satisfaction measure was administered before and after exposure to the training. Outcomes suggested the RJPE reduced the time participants required to achieve mastery relative to the RJP and made no difference with respect to job performance or satisfaction. Implications for future research on fluency-based training interventions are discussed.

Keywords: fluency-based training, training effectiveness, training evaluation, learner reactions, realistic job preview experience
THE IMPACT OF A REALISTIC JOB PREVIEW EXPERIENCE ON TRAINING FLUENCY, LEARNER REACTIONS, AND JOB PERFORMANCE

by

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Introduction

Fluency-based training has been demonstrated to be an effective method of instruction for promoting learners’ immediate success in the job environment (Binder, 1988, 1990; Binder & Sweeney, 2002; Parkhurst et al., 2010). In fluency-based training environments, learners are evaluated based on their ability to respond continuously and accurately under timed conditions, with a goal of earning as many correct answers as they are able (Binder, 1993, 1996; Binder & Sweeney, 2002). Any training that enforces both timeliness and accuracy criteria when assessing learners’ mastery of the material is considered fluency-based. Establishing fluency has various benefits, including an increased probability of promoting the long-term retention of trained behaviors (Binder, 1996; Bower & Orgel, 1984; Bucklin, et al., 2000; Ivarie, 1986; Singer-Dudek & Greer, 2005), endurance of trained behaviors in the face of distraction (Binder, 1996), and application or transfer of trained behaviors in new conditions (Binder, 1993; Binder & Bloom, 1989; K. Johnson & Layng, 1992; Singer-Dudek & Greer, 2005).

One of the first documented organizational fluency-based training interventions was designed to improve bank tellers’ consultative sales skills (Binder & Bloom, 1989). Sales opportunities are lost when representatives hesitate or fail to accurately match products with consumer needs. Therefore, fluency-based training provided an opportunity to increase profits by improving tellers’ sales pitch speed and accuracy. The program was conducted at a Canadian bank and evaluated by making comparisons between teller performance on pre-test and post-test measures of fluency. Tellers who participated in the program responded to customer signals 2.4 times faster than non-participants with 5 years of work experience, demonstrating the value of a fluency-based program to all sales staff regardless of tenure.
An additional example of successful fluency-based training was documented with customer service representatives in a telecommunications company call center (Binder & Sweeney, 2002). Prior to intervention, initial job performance representatives spent as much as 30 added minutes researching reference materials while on the phone with customers. A fluency-based training program was developed as a means of increasing representatives’ calls per hour by reducing the need to look up information. Each hour-long session of the program consisted of brief content presentations followed by one- to two-minute timings of target performances. On average, the correct responding of each participant was shown to triple each week and participating customer service representatives’ performance was 60% better than the call center’s goal criteria. Additional comparisons were made between the group that participated in fluency-based training and those who did not. Fluency-based graduates’ calls per hour increased by 40% in the first and second weeks on the job, while non-participants’ calls per hour either remained stable or decreased by 10% during the same period.

**Training Evaluation**

Fluency-based training results in faster performance gains than accuracy-only instruction and has widespread application to any job role in which accuracy and timeliness are relevant evaluation criteria (Binder, 1988, 1990; Binder & Bloom, 2010; Binder & Sweeny, 2002; Parkhurst et al., 2010). Traditional instruction typically assesses learning outcomes using percentage correct scores, yet few industries solely evaluate job performance in accordance with this dimension (Barrett, 1979). Despite this, traditional “accuracy-only” methods of instructional assessment remain more popular (Binder, 1993). The training industry’s disinterest in fluency-based courses may result from an overreliance on learner reaction evaluation measures (D.A. Johnson & Rubin, 2011).
The most popular evaluation model in the training industry is Kirkpatrick’s (1959) four levels, which provides a framework for assessing reactions, learning, behavior, and result measures (Salas & Canon-Bowers, 2001). Reaction measures typically take the form of an end of course survey in which training is evaluated based on student responses to Likert-scale or open-ended qualitative questions about their enjoyment of the training, perceived confidence, appreciation of the instructor, and suggestions for improvement. Learning measures are most often collected through end of course assessments and summarize the knowledge, skills, and abilities that have been mastered in training. Behavior measures are collected through performance monitoring and summarize how much of what employees learned in training has been transferred to the job. Lastly, results measures summarize the extent to which the organization’s goals are met due to the training and may include indicators such as monthly sales volume, employee retention, or customer satisfaction (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2016).

Although four levels of evaluation are recommended, reaction and learning measures are most popular and often collected alone (Arthur et al., 2003a). In a 2019 survey of talent development professionals, 83% of organizations measured reactions and 80% analyzed learning outcomes, but only 54% and 38% collected data on transfer (behavior) and results, respectively (ATD Research, 2019). However, an overreliance on reactions and learning measures may have negative impacts on results.

Firstly, researchers have not found a reliable link between positive attitudes and the other three levels of Kirkpatrick’s model (Alliger, et al., 1997; Arthur, et al., 2003b; Lacerenza, et al., 2017). In addition, a survey of training attitudes revealed “aesthetics, problem-based learning, technical assistance, gaming, storytelling, and social support” to be highly regarded by instructional designers and learners alike, yet most of these features have not been demonstrated
essential to training effectiveness in the literature (Karthik et al., 2019). Likewise, evidence-based features may inspire negative course ratings. While fluency-based instruction has shown merit in improving learning outcomes, its timed mastery criteria can be perceived as difficult or frustrating (Binder, 1990; Lindsley, 1992). Fluency-based instruction also incorporates frequent testing, which “is likely viewed by many learners as an undesirable necessity of education” (Dunlosky et al., 2013, p. 29). Therefore, learners might be able to avoid participating in similar courses again by providing unfavorable ratings.

Second, although organizations also commonly collect learning measures, these might not be assessing fluent responding. When discussing this level of evaluation, the Kirkpatrick (1959) model lists a variety of ways learning developers can assess knowledge, skills, attitudes, confidence, and commitment, but make no specific mention of fluency-based measures. As a result, the data that is usually collected at the learning level of evaluation data may not necessarily justify the use of fluency-based methods to training stakeholders.

Despite their promise, fluency-based courses are often the models learners complain about. As a result, they have not been widely adopted (Lindsley, 1992). Although four levels of evaluation are included in Kirkpatrick’s model, training organizations most often limit evaluation to the first two, learning and reactions (sometimes referred to as satisfaction; ATD Research, 2019). To reduce learner complaints, training departments typically replace fluency-based training with traditional instruction. Over time, this could lessen training’s ability to drive performance outcomes and ultimately, impact the bottom line. Therefore, it is in organizations’ best interest for researchers to begin validating methods for improving fluency-based course satisfaction.
Realistic Job Previews

To promote the probability of organizations adopting fluency-based training, approaches for improving learner satisfaction are needed. However, there is an absence of empirical work on this topic. Researchers might begin establishing an evidence base by assessing whether interventions that have been shown to promote job satisfaction might also be applied to promote training satisfaction within a fluency-based course. Two interventions that may hold promise for improving learner reactions to fluency-based training are the Realistic Job Preview (RJP) and one of its variants, the Realistic Job Preview Experience (RJPE).

An RJP involves providing new employees with an accurate description of their new job’s demands in place of the “sales pitch” normally given to attract their interest in the organization (Miceli, 1987). As a means of securing employees’ long-term investment, organizations are thought to exclusively offer positive information about the job to the new hire, resulting in inflated expectations of what working there will be like (Meglino, et al., 2000; Miceli, 1987; Wanous, 1992). However, an RJP provides new hires with summaries of both good and bad aspects of their prospective role, offering a more realistic perspective before beginning work. RJP formats vary and include, but are not limited to, interviews, audio or video tapes, and brochures (Laker & Shimko, 1991; Wanous, 1989). One variation, the RJPE, additionally provides new employees an opportunity to perform their job under realistic conditions before accepting an offer or beginning work (Laker & Shimko, 1991).

Although there is an absence of research on RJPEs, it is possible their experiential component offers advantages over traditional RJPs in a training context. For example, performance demands unique to the job context may do more to motivate new employees to clarify tasks required for success in their role. More specifically, these demands could function
as reflexive conditioned motivating operations (CMO-R; Michael, 2004). While participating in an RJPE, a manager may ask new employees to diagnose the cause of a car’s dead battery. If this request is not resolved, both the manager and the customer will become increasingly upset as time passes. The request additionally evokes all behavior relevant to accurately diagnosing the issue, resulting in an employee who not only engages in troubleshooting of the mechanical components, but also performs other behaviors to develop the knowledge, skills, and abilities required to do so successfully, such as researching manuals, watching instructional videos, requesting help from peers, etc. As a result, learners who have been exposed to RJPEs prior to training may attribute more value to learning experiences designed to promote faster termination of job relevant demands, and therefore, rate fluency-based training more favorably.

Alternatively, both an RJP and RJPE could function as transitive conditioned motivating operations CMO-T; Michael, 2004). A CMO-T involves the presentation of one stimulus (S1), which changes the value of another stimulus (S2) while also evoking behaviors to produce that second stimulus (Michael, 2004). The instructional stimuli (S1) comprising both the RJPE and RJP might (a) establish the sight of positive fluency exercise feedback (CMO-T; S2) as more reinforcing and (b) evoked study behaviors across both conditions. However, it is possible that the exposure to direct acting contingencies in the experiential component of the RJPE will establish more powerful CMO-T effects through the respondent pairing procedure.

Further, the implementation of RJP in recruitment and onboarding is positively correlated with later job performance and satisfaction (Laker & Shimko, 1991; McEvoy & Cascio, 1985; Premack & Wanous, 1985; Reilly et al., 1981; Shibly, 2019; Wanous, 1973, 1992; Weitz, 1956). Therefore, implementing one prior to beginning any style of training may lead to improvements in performance and satisfaction. However, there may be some conditions in which any added
motivation the RJP and RJPE would be an impractical means of improving training satisfaction. For example, dangerous jobs, such as firefighting, could not be safely simulated prior to beginning training.

Currently, no studies have specifically examined the impact of the RJPE on training satisfaction and there is an absence of experimental research on the use of either of these interventions in training orientation. If the connection between fluency-based training and job performance could be made more explicit through the inclusion of an RJP, learners may report greater satisfaction with fluency-based formats on course reaction surveys. Additionally, they may perform better with respect to fluency-based measures, such as the time taken to reach mastery criteria. Further, it is possible the experiential component of the RJPE variant would offer additional advantages by directly exposing learners to performance demands unique to the job context.

However, developing and implementing an opportunity for on-the-job experience requires greater time and effort on the part of training developers, therefore, research validating their potential advantage over a descriptive account is needed. Currently, no research has compared the effectiveness of an RJP with one of its variants, the RJPE. In addition, research on methods for promoting learner satisfaction with respect to fluency-based courses is lacking.

The Present Study

The present study compared the effects of two different training orientation methods on fluency-based course satisfaction: (a) a descriptive RJP and (b) an applied RJPE. Additionally, this study determined whether the added effort of exposing learners to the job during an RPJE provided meaningful performance benefits in both the training and job environments.
Method

Participants and Setting

A total of 175 participants were recruited for the study. Of these, 106 withdrew before finishing the study, leaving a final total of 69 participants. Specifically, 100 withdrew before finishing the fluency-based exercises, three withdrew after the first session, and three additional participants withdrew without completing the post-job task training satisfaction survey.

Participants were recruited through a posting on Prolific, a crowdsourcing platform for online researchers. To be eligible for the study, participants needed to be over the age of 18 years old, have access to a desktop computer with an internet connection, and have completed at least 10 Prolific studies prior to their participation in this experiment. The researchers required prior Prolific experience as a means of reducing attrition based on a finding that inexperienced participants were more likely to drop out of experiments (Moodie, 2018). Further, Prolific prevented participants who had not completed 10 studies and/or were under the age of 18 from viewing the study. The researchers did not exclude participants based on pre-training levels of competence due to the nature of the experimental task, which required participants to enter arbitrary codes. Finally, the researchers hosted the computer-based training courses via Moodle, the LMS chosen for the study. Participants earned $6.50 per hour for their participation in the first session and an additional $15 bonus payment if they additionally completed the second session.

Experimental Design

The researchers used a mixed design. For the two-group comparison, participants were randomly assigned to one of two conditions: (a) a descriptive RJP training orientation and (b) an
applied RJPE training orientation. For the within-subject comparison, participants’ survey responses were compared across time.

**Independent Variables**

**RJP.** The researchers administered an RJP (Appendix A) to participants in the control group during their training orientation activity. Specifically, the researchers gave participants in this group descriptive instructions on how performance on the job task would be evaluated, what it would feel like to work on the job task, and the positives and negative aspects of this type of work. They were not additionally asked to complete a customer service job simulation task. The RJP group’s orientation activity exclusively contained a written description.

**RJPE.** The researchers administered an RJPE (Appendix B) to participants in the treatment group during a training orientation activity. Further, they provided them with descriptive instructions identical to those provided to the RJP group. In addition, the researchers required them to perform in a customer service job simulation task for a total of 20 minutes. Participation in this task was automatically verified and evaluated within Moodle.

**Dependent Variables**

For the two-group comparison, the researchers assessed three different dependent variables: (a) job performance (b) time to reach mastery criterion in training, and (c) satisfaction. As participants engaged with the training, time spent on each fluency practice exercise was automatically recorded in the course’s gradebook. The clock started when participants began their first fluency-based exercise and ended when participants reached the mastery criterion on all three exercises. Next, the researchers assessed participant post-training satisfaction data by administering a feedback survey within Moodle after participants completed the training. After
participants submitted the satisfaction surveys or completed the job task, these responses were also automatically recorded and summarized in the course’s gradebook.

For the within-subject comparison, the researchers compared the mean satisfaction survey ratings of all participants before and after their participation in the job task. The survey was first delivered after the fluency-based training was completed and was administered again immediately after participants completed the job task activity. Questions on both surveys were identical and participants were able to respond to them along a 5-point Likert scale.

**Experimental Procedure**

After reading the study’s posting in Prolific (Appendix C), interested participants clicked the “START NOW” button to open the anonymous online informed consent survey (Appendix D). If the participant selected the “I consent, begin the study” button at the end of the form, the survey automatically randomly assigned the participant to either the RJP or RJPE group by redirecting them to a set of closing instructions embedded with a link to the Moodle site corresponding to their assigned condition. Half of the consenting participants received a link to the “CAI Research Portal” site, in which they were exposed to the RJPE, and half received a link to the “CBT Research Portal” site, in which they participated in the RJP. Alternatively, if participants selected the “I do not consent, I do not wish to participate” button, the survey ended without redirecting the user to any instructions or links.

Next, consenting participants read through a list of guidelines (Appendix E) before proceeding to the Moodle site. First, the guidelines indicated that participants should not include any identifying information in their Moodle profile. Specifically, participants were told not to generate usernames and passwords that include their first names, surnames, address, or other information that could be used to determine their identity. Instead, participants were told to enter
an alias first name, alias surname, and Prolific email address in the required fields of the Edit Profile page, which participants were automatically directed to (after they clicked “Log In” to establish a username and password). The guidelines additionally included step-by-step instructions and screenshots explaining how to find their Prolific account emails and navigate the Moodle site. Finally, the researchers reminded participants to write down their chosen login credentials (to prevent them from being forgotten before participants re-entered the site for the second session). Participants clicked a link labeled “CLICK HERE TO START THE EXPERIMENT” to enter their assigned group’s Moodle site and create their profile.

Once participants created a profile, they reviewed the Moodle privacy notice and cookies policy before indicating whether they agreed to each. Participants could not participate in the rest of the experiment unless they agreed to these terms of use. After agreeing to both policies, participants clicked “Home” to navigate to the front page of the site. Next, participants clicked the “Customer Service Training” course listed below to reveal the self-enrollment menu. Finally, participants clicked the “Enrol [sic] me” button to begin the course’s first session.

**Session One**

In the first Session, participants reviewed navigation instructions, participated in training orientation, and completed a training presentation tutorial on how to operate the computer database contained in the job task. In addition, participants were asked to engage in three different fluency-based training exercises until their performance met each activity’s mastery criterion. Finally, participants reviewed instructions reminding them of an opportunity to complete a second session before they posted a reply to a discussion thread and logged out to end the session.
At the top of the course page, participants accessed a set of instructions (Appendix F) providing them with an overview of how to navigate the course sequence. Specifically, the instructions indicated the course contained a sequence of activities and that each activity would not become available until the previous activity had been completed. They also listed the activities included in the first session and outlined the order in which they would be revealed. For example, they explained that the first activity, “Orientation,” must be completed before the second activity, “Training Presentation” would become available, and that “Training Presentation” must be completed before the fluency exercise activity group could be accessed, etc.

Next, participants additionally reviewed three possible strategies for navigating between activities in the instructions: (a) clicking a link in the lower right corner of each activity screen, (b) selecting activities from the dropdown menu at the bottom center of each activity screen, or (c) clicking on the “Customer Service Training” link at the upper left corner of any screen. The instructions concluded by directing participants to click the first activity, “Orientation,” to begin the first activity.

**Orientation.** Participants navigated to the “Orientation” activity in any one of the three ways described by the instructions in the course homepage instructions (Appendix F). The researchers exposed both the RJP and the RJPE groups to a written description of their role as an email customer service agent for a fictional motorcycle seller. Specifically, the description explained that they would be working in a computer database in which they needed to quickly review, diagnose, process, and respond to customer emails. Further, the description indicated that the job is well liked by people who have interest in mechanical topics, enjoy helping others, and/or prefer to work from home. It also indicated that some aspects of the job could be stressful,
such as reading rude customer emails, forgetting the order in which steps needed to be taken to process information in the database, getting lost searching for information in product manuals, or failing to enter accurate information in the database.

Following the description of the upcoming experience, a general overview of the menus included in the database was provided. Specifically, participants read about how a motorcycle manual center could be accessed to look up resources which could help participants diagnose customer issues; determine whether any parts need to be ordered; and look up codes used to keep track of issues, orders, and customer refunds in the system. Additionally, participants read about accessing the task process to help them understand the order that each step needed to be executed in for the system to process information.

The RJP group’s orientation activity exclusively contained this written description, which can be found in Appendix A. However, in the RJPE group, the orientation activity not only provided an identical description, but also required participants to enter the database and perform as an email agent for 20 minutes (see Job Task Exposure). The RJPE group’s description (Appendix B) additionally introduced the job task, reminded participants to meet the task mastery criteria, and explained the task could be started by clicking “Enter” at the bottom of the page.

Job Task Exposure. The job task (Appendix G) was modeled after the hypothetical work of an email customer service agent at a fictional motorcycle company. It required participants to use their mouse and keyboard to navigate a computer system to review, classify, process, and reply to customer emails (Appendix H) for a 20-minute interval. For participant responses to be classified as correct, participants needed to use information from each customer email to accurately enter information about the customer’s issue into the database. After accurate
information had been entered into the database (in the order indicated by the task process), participants needed to select the appropriate email response and send it to the customer. While participants were engaged with the task, a 20-minute countdown timer was displayed in the upper right corner. When 20-minutes had passed, the course calculated and displayed the results of their performance on a final screen before they could proceed to the last course activity. Additionally, this screen also presented participants with an evaluative feedback statement corresponding to their performance level. If participants answered thirteen emails, a “Success” screen automatically appeared that stated, “Fantastic, you’ve mastered the task.”. If participants answered between twelve and eight emails, an “Average” feedback screen appeared that read “Good, but not great. You’ll need to answer thirteen to be considered good at this job”. Finally, if participants answered eight emails or less, a “Failure” screen appeared which stated, “Your performance was poor. You’ll need to answer thirteen to be considered good at this job”. These criteria were determined based on observations of performers who demonstrated fluency in pilot testing. Performers who were able to demonstrate enough fluency to avoid relying upon the motorcycle manual would be able to answer roughly 13 emails within 20 minutes.

**Training.** After the orientation sessions were completed, participants navigated to the first training activity, “Training Presentation,” (see Appendix J) using one of the three methods described in the course homepage instructions. Once participants accessed the activity, they read a set of instructions (Appendix J) which explained how they would learn to navigate the computer database, of the purpose of each of the menus within the database, and the steps required to process and respond to each email. After participants reviewed these instructions, they clicked the “Enter” button at the bottom of the page to enter the training presentation.
In the training presentation, participants watched a video screencast of the full task. After each step was introduced, the screencast paused, and participants read a text-based explanation of what was occurring. Following the explanation, further text-based instructions prompted participants to use their mouse and keyboard to execute the step themselves. If participants executed the step correctly (either by clicking on the correct part of the screen or typing the correct information in an answer field), they received positive feedback, such as “Nice! You’ve got this.” Conversely, if participants executed the step incorrectly (by clicking on any other part of the screen or entering the wrong information in an answer field), they received a negative feedback statement, such as “That’s not quite right, please try again.”

After participants worked through the demonstration screencasts, they watched an additional screencast demonstration explaining the task process menu within the database. Specifically, text provided in the screencast explained to participants that the task process could be referenced if participants are unable to remember the correct order of the steps in the task sequence, but that participants would be faster email agents if they committed the steps to memory. Following the screencast demonstration, participants completed a series of practice opportunities requiring them to apply their understanding of the task sequence. Three questions required them to correctly sort a series of steps in the task. In addition, they participated in practice opportunities which asked them to accurately perform task steps in the appropriate sequence.

**Fluency-Based Exercises.** After participants completed the training presentation activity, the fluency-based exercises became available, and participants could navigate to them using one of the three ways indicated in the course homepage instructions. The researchers included three different fluency-based exercises, each of which provided participants with practice recalling
reference information about a different aspect of the task. Participants could complete the fluency-based exercises in any order and the activities assessed fluent recall of (a) problem codes, (b) part numbers, and (c) saved solutions. Problem codes needed to be entered in the system when email agents described the customer issue in the database. They consisted of three random capital letters (e.g., AJI, KJW, LAK) and were used to represent problems customers might be having with their motorcycles, such as “spongy breaks.” Part numbers were entered in the system when motorcycle problems required new parts. They consisted of four random numbers (e.g., 2934, 0590, 1839) and represented different parts, such as “fuel tank,” “taillight,” or “brakes.” Last, saved solutions had to be selected based on the problems customers were facing. They consisted of email templates with abbreviated descriptions (e.g., “Check for air leaks” or “Align the wheels”).

Once participants navigated to the fluency exercise, they had access to instructions (Appendix K) indicating they should answer as many questions as possible within a one-minute time limit. Further, participants read that they must reach the mastery criteria of all three fluency-based exercises to be eligible for the second experimental session. Additionally, the instructions informed participants of their ability to retake each quiz as many times as needed in order to reach the criterion. To begin the fluency-based exercises, participants clicked a button labeled “Attempt quiz now” located below the instructions.

During the fluency-based exercises, participants used their mouse and keyboard to enter problem codes, part numbers, or saved solution descriptions into a text-entry field located beneath question prompts, which consisted of motorcycle problem or part names. Once participants typed an answer, they clicked the “Next page” button to submit their response. After “Next page” was clicked, participants were presented with another question. As participants
answered questions, they were able to view a timer counting down in seconds from the one-
minute time limit on the left side of the screen. Participants had one minute to reach or exceed
the mastery criterion for each exercise. For the first two exercise sets, participants needed to
answer three questions correctly before the time limit expired. For the last exercise set, they
needed to answer two questions correctly. Each correctly answered question earned participants
one point toward their grade for the exercise.

If the one-minute timer expired before participants reached the end of the fluency-based
exercise, the exercise automatically took them to a review page. Once participants arrived at the
review page, they viewed a table comparing the correct answers to their responses to each
question. After participants finished reviewing their responses, they clicked the “Finish Review”
hyperlink in the lower right corner to proceed to the “Summary of your previous attempts” page.
The “Summary of your previous attempts” page displayed the points participants earned out of
the total number available. Each quiz contained 20 questions drawn randomly from a 50-question
bank.

**Post-Training Survey.** After participants reached the mastery criterion on all three
fluency-based exercises, the “Post-Training Survey” (Appendix L) feedback activity became
accessible. Participants navigated to the survey in one of the three ways indicated in the course
homepage instructions. The first page of the survey provided instructions (Appendix M)
indicating that the survey would ask participants to rate their degree of agreement with a series of
statements along a Likert-scale. The statements also asked participants questions about their
preference for and perceived usefulness of the fluency-based exercises. Next, participants were
directed to click the “Answer the questions” button to begin the survey and then, the “Submit
your answers” button after they selected their responses on the survey page.
Exiting the Session. After participants met completion criteria for each of the fluency activities and completed the Post-Training Survey, a forum activity titled “CLICK HERE for the Prolific Completion URL” became available. On the first page of the forum activity, participants reviewed instructions (Appendix N) indicating they need to click the Prolific completion URL to receive payment for the first session. The instructions also reminded participants of an opportunity to earn an added $15 for participating in the second session. The instructions also informed participants that the second session’s activities would not become available until two replies have been posted to the discussion topic below. Participants were prohibited from posting the second reply until 24 hours had passed after their first posting. Next, participants clicked a discussion topic labeled “You MUST click the Prolific Completion URL found here to record your submission.” The discussion topic contained an additional set of instructions (Appendix O) reiterating the importance of clicking the Prolific completion URL at the bottom of the topic. Participants then reviewed step-by-step instructions directing them to reply to the topic by clicking the “Reply” link in the lower right corner of the topic, entering text into the “Write your reply” window that will appear, and finally, clicking the “Submit” button located below the window.

After learning how to reply to the discussion topic, participants reviewed additional instructions reminding them to write down their username and password information for later use. Participants also reviewed an explanation that they should send me a Prolific message requesting new login information if for some reason, they cannot enter the site. Prolific messages are communications sent within the Prolific website. Specifically, they allow participants and researchers to correspond without revealing personally identifying information.
After reviewing all the instructions provided in the forum activity, participants clicked the Prolific completion URL provided in the posting. When participants clicked this URL, it ensured their submission was recorded as complete on Prolific’s website. Each day, the student researcher monitored a record within Prolific to determine time invested, completion status, and administer payment. Participants earned $6.50 per hour for their time invested in this session. Next, participants reviewed instructions to log out of Moodle by clicking their alias in the upper right corner, and then clicking “Log Out” from the drop-down menu that appeared.

**Session Two**

Once participants met criteria to begin their second experimental session, the researcher sent them a Prolific message (Appendix P) reminding them to complete the second session. The second session’s reminder message had a subject heading reading “$15 Bonus Opportunity – Second Session Reminder” and its content began by thanking participants for completing the first session. Next, the researcher reminded participants of the opportunity to earn an added $15 bonus for completing a second session and reiterated the necessary steps for accessing the second session (revisiting their Moodle site, logging in with their username and password, navigating to the forum activity, and posting a second reply to the discussion topic). However, the second session reminder email additionally included the URL for the participant’s Moodle site.

Next, the researcher’s message explained to participants that they needed to complete the second session’s activities within three days of the date they had completed the first session’s activities. The researchers enforced this requirement in order to provide participants a scheduling range which best simulated a work week. The researcher then told participants that they would receive any earned payment for the second session within one week of its completion. Last, the message invited participants to ask questions to the researcher about the experiment by sending a
reply message in Prolific. Of the participants who messaged the researcher, most reported having lost the URL for their Moodle website. The student researcher responded by sending a Prolific message that included the link. Other participants asked for their passwords or for clarification on the second session’s completion criteria. In the former case, the student researcher sent a Prolific message containing a new password. In the latter, the student researcher sent a reply clarifying that the participant would need to complete both the Job Task and Post-Job Task Training Survey activities. To begin the second session, participants waited 24 hours after posting their first discussion topic reply, to log-in to the Moodle site and finally submit a second reply to the discussion topic.

**Job Task.** After a second reply had been submitted, the “Job Task” activity became accessible to participants. The first page of the Job Task activity provided instructions (Appendix Q) indicating participants would apply what they learned in training to a simulation of an email customer service agent’s work and that, while working in the role, they would be evaluated based on how many emails they responded to within 20 minutes. Next, they emphasized to participants (a) the importance of following the steps in the correct order and (b) entering accurate information to their success in the task. Finally, they directed participants to click the “Enter” button to begin the task. The Job Task used in this activity was identical in appearance and functionality to the one provided in the RJPE group’s orientation (Appendix B). However, it included a different set of customer emails (see Appendix R). Once participants engaged with the task for 20 minutes, their performance was automatically calculated and displayed on their screen and the “Post-Job Task Training Survey” became accessible to them.

**Post-Job Task Training Survey.** The first page of the post-job task training survey (Appendix S) provided instructions (Appendix T) identical to those which were provided for the
Post-Training Survey and its questions were also identical to those provided in that survey. Next, participants were directed to click the “Answer the questions” button to begin the survey and then, the “Submit your answers” button after they selected their responses on the survey page. Participants followed the instructions to respond to the survey and submit their ratings. Once participants’ responses had been submitted, the “Job Task” activity became accessible to them. Additionally, the last activity, “Congratulations! You’re eligible for the bonus. CLICK HERE for more information,” became available and participants navigated to it using one of the three ways described in the course homepage instructions.

**Exiting the Training.** After clicking on the last activity, participants read a final set of instructions (Appendix U) thanking them for their contribution to the experiment and letting them know they earned the $15 bonus award. Additionally, the instructions informed participants they could expect to receive a bonus payment within one week of finishing the experiment. Last, they directed participants to log out of the session by clicking their alias first and surname in the upper right corner of their screen and selecting “Log Out”.

Following the conclusion of participants’ second session, the student researcher monitored the course gradebook to determine whether participants met requirements for receiving the $15 bonus payment. To earn the $15 bonus, participants were required to complete both the Post-Job Task Training Survey and the Job Task activities. The student researcher awarded the bonus after looking up the email address each participant registered into Moodle. The student researcher then used the string of numbers preceding each email domain to process their $15 payments in Prolific.
Results

To determine the most appropriate test of performance differences between groups, we first ran Pearson’s correlation coefficient analyses to determine whether the strength and direction of the relationships between each of the dependent variables: (a) job performance (b) time to reach mastery criterion in training, and (c) satisfaction. The results of these analyses indicated that time to mastery and job performance demonstrated a statistically insignificant positive correlation, \( r(70) = .07, p = .232 \); time to mastery and the satisfaction survey delta demonstrated a statistically insignificant negative correlation, \( r(67) = -.14, p = .569 \); and job performance and the satisfaction survey delta demonstrated a statistically significant weak positive correlation, \( r(67) = .35, p = .003 \). These findings are shown in Table 1.

Table 1

*Pearson Correlation Coefficients for Study Variables*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Job Performance</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Time to Mastery</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Satisfaction Delta</td>
<td>.35*</td>
<td>-.14</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\*p < .05

Due to the absence of highly negative or moderately positive correlations between variables, the researchers applied four separate independent samples t-tests to detect differences between groups among each of the four dependent variables. Given the number of dependent variables, the researchers additionally applied the Bonferroni correction using \( p = .0125 \). Each time an experimenter conducts an independent t-test using \( p = .05 \), there is a 5% probability of committing a Type I error. Therefore, when four independent t-tests are conducted, the probability of committing a Type I error increases to approximately 20%. This increased
probability can be reduced by applying a Bonferroni correction, which lowers the p value of the current analysis by dividing the original p value by the number of tests being performed.

**Between-Subject Comparisons**

The results of the first independent samples t-test found no significant difference in the job performance measure for the RJP ($M = 4.46$, $SD = 4.35$) and RJPE ($M = 5.81$, $SD = 4.15$) conditions, $t(70) = 1.35, p = .091$. The second independent samples t-test compared minutes taken to reach the mastery criteria between groups. There was a significant difference in the training timeliness measure for the RJP ($M = 85.7$, $SD = 32.3$) and RJPE ($M = 60.4$, $SD = 32.6$) conditions, $t(73) = -3.38, p = .001$. Last, no significant differences were found in the Post-Training Survey satisfaction measure between the RJPE ($M = 3.09$, $SD = 1.00$) and RJP ($M = 3.097$, $SD = 0.961$) conditions, $t(73) = -0.01, p = .504$ and the Post-Job Task Training Survey satisfaction measure for the RJP ($M = 3.19$, $SD = 1.15$) and RJPE ($M = 3.246$, $SD = 0.829$) conditions, $t(67) = 0.24, p = .406$. The results of these analyses are summarized in Table 2.

**Table 2**

*Results of Independent Samples t-Tests*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>RJP</th>
<th>RJPE</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>d</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$M$</td>
<td>$SD$</td>
<td>$M$</td>
<td>$SD$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Performance</td>
<td>4.46</td>
<td>4.35</td>
<td>5.81</td>
<td>4.15</td>
<td>1.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training Timeliness</td>
<td>85.7</td>
<td>32.3</td>
<td>60.4</td>
<td>32.6</td>
<td>-3.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Training Satisfaction</td>
<td>3.097</td>
<td>0.961</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Job Task Satisfaction</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>3.246</td>
<td>0.829</td>
<td>0.24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* $p < .0125$, one-tailed
**Within-Subject Comparison**

In addition, the researchers used a repeated measures t-test to assess whether any differences in mean question ratings between the post-training survey and post-job task survey were statistically significant. There was not a significant difference in the scores for the post-training survey \((M = 3.116, SD = 0.984)\) and post-job task training survey \((M = 3.118, SD = 0.993)\) measures, \(t(1) = -0.79, p = .785\). These results suggest that satisfaction was not affected by exposure to the job task.

**Discussion**

Exposing participants to the job task in the RJPE condition proved to be no more effective at improving job performance than simply describing the job task in the RJP condition. However, pre-exposure to the job was demonstrated to be more effective at reducing the time participants required to achieve mastery with respect to the fluency exercises. Finally, satisfaction survey ratings were not influenced by exposure to the job task after training and participants in the RJPE group did not rate fluency-based training any more favorably than participants in the RJP group. In sum, the RJPE made no difference with respect to job performance or satisfaction, but had a medium-sized effect on training timeliness.

The present study extends previous fluency research by specifically assessing the impact of a pre-training variable on job performance and satisfaction within training. While previous researchers have collected social validity data after implementing a fluency-based intervention (Lenwood et al., 2014; Shearer, 2014; Takaya et al., 2017), none have made experimental comparisons between orientation methods, such as the RJP and RJPE. Further, although much work has been done to document fluency-based instruction’s benefits in education settings, few studies have been published on its use in training job relevant behaviors (Binder & Bloom, 1989;
Likewise, both the RJP and RJPE have traditionally been studied in an onboarding context (Laker & Shimko, 1991; McEvoy & Cascio, 1985; Premack & Wanous, 1985; Reilly et al., 1981; Shibly, 2019; Wanous, 1973, 1992; Weitz, 1956) and this study is the first to assess their effectiveness in a training and development context. Finally, this study served as the first experimental comparison of the RJP and RJPE.

The results of our study are mixed. Contrary to our expectations, the researchers found no statistically significant differences between groups’ job performance. Additionally, the results of both the within-subject comparison and two between-group comparisons were also found to be statistically insignificant. In other words, the RJPE demonstrated no advantage over the RJP orientation at improving learner satisfaction ratings. This finding may be due to the difficulty of both conditions’ training. Regardless of what condition participants were exposed to, the rigor of the fluency-based training exercises remained the same. In addition, although a positive correlation has been observed between the implementation of an RJP and job satisfaction (Laker & Shimko, 1991; McEvoy & Cascio, 1985; Premack & Wanous, 1985; Reilly et al., 1981; Shibly, 2019; Wanous, 1973, 1992; Weitz, 1956), our measures specifically assessed fluency-based training satisfaction and were modeled after examples from *Kirkpatrick’s Four Levels of Training Evaluation* (2016). In contrast, when the RJP has been studied in an onboarding context, researchers have measured job satisfaction by implementing other assessments such as the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire or the Job Descriptive Index (Phillips, 1998).

Further, we also expected to observe a statistically significant difference between each group’s training timeliness. The RJPE reduced the time participants required to reach the mastery criteria, indicating its potential for improving training efficiency. This finding may result from the RJPE functioning as a relatively more powerful CMO-T than the RJP. The instructional
stimuli (S1) comprising both the RJPE and RJP might have (a) established the sight of positive fluency exercise feedback (CMO-T; S2) as more reinforcing and (b) evoked study behaviors across both conditions. However, exposure to direct acting contingencies in the experiential component of the RJPE may have established more powerful CMO-T effects through the respondent pairing procedure. In comparison, the RJP merely provided participants with descriptions of rules outlining relationships between job related antecedents, behaviors, and consequences.

Finally, it is important to note that while the training timeliness measure included the total number of minutes participants spent on fluency-based exercises, it did not encompass the total amount of time they spent completing all training activities. Therefore, practitioners should interpret the results of this study with caution. While the difference between groups was statistically significant, any practical benefits could potentially be cancelled out by the added time participants in the RJPE group spent participating in the job task prior to training. For example, if a 20-minute constant was added to the RJPE group’s timeliness data, this would also result in 20 minutes to the RJPE group’s mean. Then, if the one-tailed independent samples t-test were run again after adding this constant, no statistically significant differences would be found between the RJP \((M = 85.7, SD = 32.3)\) and RJPE \((M = 80.4, SD = 32.6)\) conditions, \(t(73) = 0.707, p = .241\).

**Limitations**

This study carries a number of potential limitations. First, it is possible both the RJP and RJPE demonstrated statistically significant effects on job performance, but this is impossible to detect without conducting additional comparisons between a “no orientation” control condition.
Future researchers should consider replicating the experiment with at least three groups, such as an (a) RJP, (b) RJPE, and (c) no orientation group.

Second, a significant number of participants withdrew from the study. Overall, the study had an attrition rate of roughly 60%. However, attrition was relatively equal between groups. For example, while 86 participants were randomly assigned to the RJP group, 49 dropped before reaching the mastery criteria on the fluency-based exercises, two dropped before participating in the job task, and one dropped before submitting the post-job task satisfaction survey. In comparison, 89 participants were randomly assigned to the RJPE group, 51 dropped before passing the fluency-based exercises, one dropped before completing the job task, and two dropped before filling out the satisfaction survey. Therefore, differential attrition was not a concern, but the very high overall rate may have created an imbalance between the characteristics of each group.

Across both groups, 100 participants withdrew before reaching the mastery criteria on the fluency-based exercises, three withdrew before completing the Job Task, and an additional three withdrew before completing the Post-Job Task Satisfaction Survey. Therefore, the high attrition rate may be due to the fluency-based exercises requiring significantly higher response effort than the other components. For example, the orientation activity merely required participants to read instructions and/or explore the job simulation for 20 minutes, and the training presentation only asked them to answer “accuracy only” multiple-choice, hotspot, or sorting questions. The addition of a timeliness criterion in the fluency-based exercises may have required such greater response effort that some participants’ studying behavior was put under extinction, leading them to quit the study and potentially perceive it “unfair” or “impossible”. For example, a number of
participants who dropped sent Prolific messages to the experimenter expressing frustration with
the fluency-based exercises and noted their difficulty.

Moreover, the high dropout rate may also relate to the recruitment method the researchers
chose. Prolific is typically used by survey researchers. Although some researchers use it to
recruit participants for experiments as well, the fluency-based exercises may have been relatively
more rigorous than other tasks found on Prolific. Future researchers may be able to reduce
dropout by utilizing a different recruitment method or breaking up the fluency exercise activities
across sessions.

An additional limitation concerns this experiment’s ecological validity. It is possible that
the RJPE may have been more effective if job performance were tied to other valued
consequences, such as promotions, pay raises, or positive feedback from managers and peers.
Future researchers might replicate the current study in an applied setting to determine whether
variables unique to participants’ employment status play a role in RJPE effectiveness. Additional
lab research may offer participants incentives of increasing magnitude with respect to different
classes of performance (satisfactory, good, exemplary). Further, the present study utilized a
relatively simple, contrived task. Therefore, replicating the study in an applied setting may allow
researchers to assess whether the findings generalize to more complex job tasks.

Yet another limitation of the current study concerns the integrity of the independent
variable. Although participants in both the RJP and RJPE groups were provided with a written
description of the job and its pros and cons, no steps were taken to verify whether participants
read and understood the information that was presented. Future researchers may be able to
address this issue by implementing a knowledge check after the introduction of both the RJP and
RJPE. The check could be programmed with true/false questions assessing whether different
pieces of information were mentioned in the description and participants could be prevented from proceeding to the next activity until they earned 100%.

Further, while the researchers programmed the job task to automatically confirm whether participants completed the RJPE, they did not code it to verify whether participants put continual effort into the experience. Therefore, participants may have simply given up on the task and waited for the timer to expire to move on to the next activity in the session. Depending on the software used to program the task, it may be possible to design the simulation so that the task timer automatically pauses after periods of inactivity. This way, the participants would not be able to complete the task unless they engage with it periodically over the 20-minute period.

Additionally, continuing this line of research in an applied setting may allow researchers to collect meaningful data on intervention maintenance. While this study collected data on learner reactions, the relationship we have between these ratings and long-term adoption is merely an inference. It is possible a highly rated fluency-based course would still be replaced by their more popular accuracy-only alternative over time. In these contexts, manager and training developer ratings of fluency-based instruction could also be collected.

Finally, future researchers may improve the design of the satisfaction surveys by including reversed scale questions within both measures. Without having taken this measure, it is possible some of the participants answered the questions by providing the same rating on every question of the survey to get through it faster. The inclusion of some questions in which the numbers of the scale are listed in reverse order would make it easier to identify which participants may have simply “pencil whipped” through the surveys instead of providing authentic responses.
Conclusion

The current study contributes to the fluency-based training literature by examining the impact of a realistic job preview experience on training performance, learner reactions, and job performance. While the added effort of exposing learners to the job task during an RJPE did not result in any meaningful differences in learner reactions or job performance, this practice did produce significant effects on the time participants required to reach the mastery criterion within training. Despite their demonstrated promise, fluency-based training continues to be less favorable than traditional, accuracy-only training exercises. Future researchers would do well to continue examining variables which may promote the maintenance of these interventions.
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Appendix A

RJP Orientation Instructions

Welcome to training orientation!

Before we get started, let’s cover some of the nitty-gritty details of the job you’re being trained for.

After this training, you’ll begin work as an email customer service agent for a major motorcycle seller.

Email agents respond to messages from customers within a computer database used to store information about customers, products, and their histories. Our system also contains a part order center, refund processing center, task process, company announcement center, help center, and a place to document each new customer’s information in the system. Finally, motorcycle manuals can be accessed to diagnose customer issues, determine which (if any) parts are needed, and look up codes used to keep track of issues, orders, and customer refunds in the system.

When beginning your work, you’ll use your mouse and keyboard to navigate the system to review, diagnose, process, and reply to each customer email.

This job can be a lot of fun because of all the mechanical knowledge you’ll begin to learn. After just a few days on the job, you might pick up a new tip or two about common engine, brake, or electrical system fixes (maybe even enough to inspire a new hobby).

Also, each time you respond to an email, you’re making a big difference to another person. Whenever you answer an email correctly, you’re really saving that person’s weekend. It feels good knowing how much the work I’m doing means to our customers.

Plus, this job can be done from home in your pajamas (something I really appreciate about it). While on the clock, you can listen to your favorite music, have your coffee, munch on snacks, etc. Just don’t leave your workstation- it’s important that you attend to any new emails sent to your database.

However, this job can also be a little stressful at times. First, you need to work very quickly to do well here. The rate at which you answer emails is automatically recorded by the database and you’ll be able to see this reported on your screen after each shift.

It’s also important to remember the order that each step needs to be taken in the system. Therefore, I encourage you to access the task process to start getting a feel for what information needs to be entered next. If you don’t follow the order, you won’t get very far (most steps are dependent on the previous step’s correct execution).

Last, the information you enter into some of the database’s fields will not process unless it’s accurate. For example, if you enter the wrong issue code or part number, it will not register into the system and you will be stuck on that step until it’s corrected.

However, this is a good thing! It prevents us from sending the wrong parts out, providing the wrong information, or otherwise failing our customers. Luckily, the correct codes and other
diagnostic information can be found in the motorcycle manual center. This center is going to be one of your best friends in this job (so keep it in mind). Just be careful because it is easy to get lost looking for the correct information.

Now that you’ve been given an overview of what it’s like to work in the job you’re being prepared for, you’re ready to begin training! Navigate to the next activity, “Training Presentation,” to get started.
Appendix B

RJPE Group Orientation Instructions

Welcome to training orientation!

Before we get started, let’s cover some of the nitty-gritty details of the job you’re being trained for.

After this training, you’ll begin work as an email customer service agent for a major motorcycle seller.

Email agents respond to messages from customers within a computer database used to store information about customers, products, and their histories. Our system also contains a part order center, refund processing center, task process, company announcement center, help center, and a place to document each new customer’s information in the system. Finally, motorcycle manuals can be accessed to diagnose customer issues, determine which (if any) parts are needed, and look up codes used to keep track of issues, orders, and customer refunds in the system.

When beginning your work, you’ll use your mouse and keyboard to navigate the system to review, diagnose, process, and reply to each customer email.

This job can be a lot of fun because of all the mechanical knowledge you’ll begin to learn. After just a few days on the job, you might pick up a new tip or two about common engine, brake, or electrical system fixes (maybe even enough to inspire a new hobby).

Also, each time you respond to an email, you’re making a big difference to another person. Whenever you answer an email correctly, you’re really saving that person’s weekend. It feels good knowing how much the work I’m doing means to our customers.

Plus, this job can be done from home in your pajamas (something I really appreciate about it). While on the clock, you can listen to your favorite music, have your coffee, munch on snacks, etc. Just don’t leave your workstation- it’s important that you attend to any new emails sent to your database.

However, this job can also be a little stressful at times. First, you need to work very quickly to do well here. The rate at which you answer emails is automatically recorded by the database and you’ll be able to see this reported on your screen after each shift.

It’s also important to remember the order that each step needs to be taken in the system. Therefore, I encourage you to access the task process to start getting a feel for what information needs to be entered next. If you don’t follow the order, you won’t get very far (most steps are dependent on the previous step’s correct execution).

Last, the information you enter into some of the database’s fields will not process unless it’s accurate. For example, if you enter the wrong issue code or part number, it will not register into the system and you will be stuck on that step until it’s corrected.

However, this is a good thing! It prevents us from sending the wrong parts out, providing the wrong information, or otherwise failing our customers. Luckily, the correct codes and other
diagnostic information can be found in the motorcycle manual center. This center is going to be one of your best friends in this job (so keep it in mind). Just be careful because it is easy to get lost looking for the correct information.

Last, before starting training, we’d like you to have the direct experience of working as an email agent.

Therefore, you’ll end this activity by actually entering the database to answer emails.

During this experience, you’ll be evaluated based on how many emails you respond to within 20 minutes. Specifically, you’ll need to answer (mastery criteria to be determined as a result of pilot testing) emails in order to be considered good at this job. However, be careful not to work too quickly- once again, if you don’t follow steps in the correct order or don’t enter the correct information, the system will not process your data.

Click the “Enter” button below to get started.
Appendix C

Prolific Advertisement

Thank you for your interest in our computer-based training study!

In this study, we are trying to find out whether an aspect of training design will impact performance during training, reactions to training, and performance in the job setting learners are being prepared for.

This study is comprising two sessions. In the first, you will be offered an hourly rate of $6.50 for your time invested. In the second, you will be offered a $15 bonus payment for completing the activities made available in the session.

If you later consent to participate, you will be required to create a Moodle account. In order to create a Moodle account, you will need to create a username, password, alias first name, alias last name, and provide your Prolific account email address.

NOTE: We are committed to keeping your data anonymous. Therefore, it is critical that you use ALIASES and your PROLIFIC ACCOUNT EMAIL address when creating your Moodle account. If you consent to participate, more detailed instructions will be provided on your Moodle site’s login page.

Additionally, if you would like your data removed from the dataset, you may send me a Prolific requesting for your Moodle account to be deleted.
Appendix D

Informed Consent

Western Michigan University
Psychology Department

Principal Investigator: Heather McGee, Ph.D.
Student Investigator: Jessica M. Rocheleau

You are invited to participate in this research project titled “The Impact of a Realistic Job Preview Experience on Computer-Based Fluency Training Performance, Reactions, and Subsequent Job Performance”.

STUDY SUMMARY: This consent form is part of an informed consent process for a research study and it will provide information that will help you decide whether you want to take part in this study. Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may choose to not answer any question. The purpose of the research is to: determine how well individuals perform in training and a job simulation under different conditions and will serve as Jessica M. Rocheleau’s thesis for the requirements of the Industrial/Organizational Behavior Management master’s degree. If you take part in the research, you will be asked to participate in training orientation, complete computer-based fluency course activities under timed conditions, complete a post-training reaction survey, and perform timed work in a job simulation.

Your replies will be completely anonymous, so do not put your name anywhere on the survey. Your participation in the study will take up to six hours total.

Possible risk and costs to you for taking part in the study may be the chance that others could learn personal information about you if (in violation of the experimenters’ instructions) identifying information is entered when registering for your Moodle account. Additionally, you may experience mild fatigue and/or stress from participation in timed instructional recall exercises contained in both the experimental task and computer-based fluency course. The only costs to you will be the time invested.

Potential benefits of taking part may be the opportunity to earn $6.50 per hour invested, eligibility to earn an additional $15 for completing the second session of the experiment, and the chance to learn about research regarding the impact of realistic job preview experiences on training performance, reactions, and subsequent job performance and contribute to the knowledge base in this area.

Your alternative to taking part in the research study is not to take part in it.

What are we trying to find out in this study?
In this study, we are trying to find out whether an aspect of training design will impact performance during training, reactions to training, and subsequent performance on the job learners are being prepared for.

Who can participate in this study?

To be eligible for the study, participants must be over the age of 18 years old, have access to a desktop computer with an internet connection, and have completed at least 10 Prolific studies prior to consenting to participate in this experiment.

Where will this study take place?

This study will be completed online via Prolific and Moodle.

What is the time commitment for participating in this study?

The time limit for completing this study will not exceed six hours. Participation in both sessions will require you to complete some of the experiment’s activities after a 24-hour waiting period.

What will you be asked to do if you choose to participate in this study?

If you choose to participate in this study, you will be asked to participate in training orientation, complete computer-based fluency course activities under timed conditions, complete post-training reaction surveys, and perform timed work in a job simulation.

What information is being measured during the study?

During the study, information regarding your training and job performance will automatically be collected via Moodle, the learning management system hosting the training. Additionally, your attitudes and feelings toward the training will be measured via survey activities within Moodle.

What are the risks of participating in this study and how will these risks be minimized?

We expect no more than minimal risk to you for participating in this study. The principal risk of study participation is the chance that others could learn personal information about you. Although you will receive explicit instructions to only enter alias information and anonymous Prolific emails when registering for your Moodle account, you ultimately may still choose to enter identifying information. To minimize this risk, you will be given instructions for how to create an account using alias information on your Moodle site’s login page.

Additionally, you may experience mild fatigue and/or stress from participation in timed instructional recall exercises contained in both the experimental task and computer-based fluency course. Potential fatigue and/or stress will be minimized by your having the opportunity to take breaks at any time for as long as you like. Additionally, you may choose to withdraw from this study at any time.

What are the benefits of participating in this study?

You will have the opportunity to earn $6.50 per hour invested. In addition, you will be eligible to earn an additional $15 for completing the second session of the experiment.
You may also learn about research regarding the impact of realistic job preview experiences on training performance, reactions, and subsequent job performance and contribute to the knowledge base in this area.

**Are there any costs associated with participating in this study?**

The only cost to you for participating in the study will be the time spent completing each of the two sessions.

**Is there any compensation for participating in this study?**

You will have the opportunity to earn $6.50 per hour invested. In addition, you will be eligible to earn an additional $15 for completing the second session of the experiment.

If you choose to drop out of the study prematurely, you will be offered a partial payment for your total time invested.

**Who will have access to the information collected during this study?**

The information collected during this study will only be accessible to the Principal and Student Investigators.

The confidentiality of information collected in this study will be protected to the maximum extent possible. You will only be distinguishable by their anonymous Prolific ID numbers and Moodle account aliases (names will not be included on data records). Your responses to this consent document will be kept on Qualtrics servers for at least three years. Additionally, your participation data will be kept on Moodle servers for at least three years, unless you choose to follow instructions provided for deleting your Moodle account.

Electronic data downloaded from Moodle will be organized into an Excel spreadsheet, kept on an external flash drive, and kept in a locked cabinet at the student investigator’s home office. Only the student investigator will have keys to the cabinet. Data will remain on the external flash drive for at least three years.

**What will happen to my information or biospecimens collected for this research project after the study is over?**

The de-identified (anonymous) information collected for this research will not be used by any other investigators for other experimental research. It is possible that this experiment’s findings will be included in future meta-analytic studies summarizing the research area.

**What if you want to stop participating in this study?**

You can choose to stop participating in the study at any time for any reason. You will not suffer any prejudice, penalty, other personal consequence by your decision to stop your participation and will receive hourly compensation for the time you spent participating.

Should you have any questions prior to or during the study, you can contact the Principal Investigator, Heather McGee, at 269-387-4460 or heather.m.mcgee@wmich.edu or the Student Investigator, Jessica M. Rocheleau, at 734-560-0276 or cbtmoodle@gmail.com. You may also
contact the Chair of the Western Michigan University Institutional Review Board at 269-387-8293 or the Vice President for Research at 269-387-8298.

This consent has been approved for use for one year by the Western Michigan University Institutional Review Board (WMU IRB) on “(study approval date)”.

Participating in this survey online indicates your consent for use of the answers you supply.

Add radio buttons to select:

I agree to participate in this research study (Randomly assigned to end of survey instructions listing a link to their group’s Moodle site)

I do not agree to participate in this research study (Survey closes)
Appendix E
Moodle Login Instructions

ATTENTION:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in our experiment. Please read through the following before proceeding to your assigned Moodle site to create an account.

We are committed to keeping your data anonymous. Therefore, we ask that any information used to create your Moodle profile be kept UNIDENTIFIABLE.

1) When creating an account, you’ll need to enter your chosen username and password into the data entry fields shown on the login page. We request your choices DO NOT include pieces of your first or last name, birthdate, address, or ANY other information that could be used to IDENTIFY you.

2) After deciding on this information and clicking “Log In,” you’ll be taken to an “edit profile” page. In the interest of keeping your data anonymous, we ask that you do not enter your real information on this page.

Instead, please enter an ALIAS first name, ALIAS surname and your PROLIFIC ACCOUNT EMAIL into the edit profile page before clicking “Save.”

To determine your PROLIFIC ACCOUNT EMAIL, you’ll need to look up your Prolific account number on your profile page.

Your PROLIFIC ACCOUNT EMAIL is your account number followed by @email.prolific.ac (e.g., 12345678910@email.prolific.ac).

3) Once Logged in, navigate to the front page of the Moodle site by clicking “Home”
On the site’s home page, you’ll be able to view the course listing, “Customer Service Training.” Click on the course to reveal the self-enrollment menu.
Next, click the “Enrol me” button. This should bring you to the course’s homepage, where additional instructions will be provided.

4) Finally, please write down your chosen username and password before clicking “Log In” (in case it is forgotten). You will need this information to re-enter the site for the second session.

If, for some reason, you’re unable to use your credentials to re-enter, send me a Prolific message requesting access and I will forward you new login information.

CLICK HERE TO START THE EXPERIMENT
Welcome to the customer service training course! We’re delighted to have your participation in this experiment. Before you get started, let’s take a few moments to learn about the course sequence and navigation.

First, you might be wondering what we mean by sequence, given only one activity, “Orientation,” is visible below. That’s because each activity won’t be made available until the previous activity (or activity group) has been completed.

For instance, the first session contains two activities and one major activity group consisting of separate exercises. You will not be able to access the fluency-based training activity group until “Orientation” is completed. Likewise, the forum containing the Prolific completion URL will not become available until you’ve reached the mastery criterion on each of the fluency-based exercise activities.

Next, let’s cover how to navigate between course activities. Once the subsequent activity becomes available, there are three major ways to access it:

1) Clicking a link that will appear in the lower right corner of the present activity’s screen
2) Selecting the activity from the dropdown menu at the bottom center of the present activity’s screen
3) Clicking on the “Customer Service Training” link at the upper left of your screen to navigate back to this page and select the activity from the list below

Once you feel comfortable with these instructions, go ahead and get started by clicking on the first activity below. Happy learning.
Appendix G

Screenshot of Job Simulation
Appendix H

RJPE Job Task Customer Emails

Email 1
Hiya

My bike won’t start… it does have good spark and fuel though, so I can’t figure out what’s going wrong. It does turn over, too. It’s a Triumph Thruxton. What’s wrong with it?

Brandy

Email 2
Hello

I have a Honda VRF 800 that’s been acting up lately. I’d say it’s erratic. When I start it, it doesn’t really idle right. It also starts hard. What’s the issue?

Peter

Email 3
My Kawasaki Ninja H2R is real busted up. Whenever I decelerate, the engine backfires. Do you have any idea of what I should try?

Rocky Davis

Email 4
Help Inquiry

This KTM 1190 of mine shudders whenever I stop. Lever kind of pulses, too. What’s the deal with my new bike?

Markie

Email 5
Hi

This bike seems broken whenever I brake. The front end keeps diving. I’ll never waste my money on a Kawasaki AR 50 again. Oh, it can’t handle small bumps, either.

Emily Robinson

Email 6
Morning

Triumph X75 Hurricane smokes all the time and uses up all my oil. I can’t ride this. Please help.

Cassie
Email 7
Hi
The battery on my Honda VRF 800 bike seems overcharged. I’m not sure what to try.
Michelle

Email 8
Hello
Can you help me find out what the issue is with my Honda SP1/SP2? I can’t go over any small bumps without my front fork reacting kind of harsh. It feels like it’s stuck or stiff.
Barret

Email 9
Hi
I have a Norton Commando with a surging engine. It’s worse if you maintain any kind of throttle. Advice?
Liz

Email 10
I can’t shift gears on this bike I got a few years back… I knew I shouldn’t have went with a Harley. What can I do to fix it?
Carl

Email 11
I have really loud brakes and don’t know what to do about them. This is a Honda SP1/SP2 bike.
Clark

Email 12
Dear staff
This Yamaha XT500 of mine has a busted brake lever. I don’t know what to do about it. It comes back way too far.
Margie

Email 13
I regret buying this Honda VRF 800… the transition doesn’t work right. I can’t shift it at all. Is there anything I can try?
Dana
Email 14

Hello

Would it cost me much to get my Triumph X75 fixed up? It’s got some noisy brakes.

Tom Nook

Email 15

Hi,

Whenever I try to ride my bike, it vibrates way too much. I think something is wrong with it because this just isn’t normal. It’s a Ducati 1098.

Thanks

Millie

Email 16

Good morning

The brakes on my BMW R69S stopped working. Do you have any idea of how I could fix them up?

May

Email 17

Help inquiry

My battery is dead and I’m not sure where to start. Bikes aren’t really my thing, but I wanted to try something new. The bike is a Harley Davidson.

Mike

Email 18

Help request

The Ducati 350 Desmo I purchased here only turns how it’s supposed to on one side… I’ve felt pretty unsafe out there.

Valerie

Email 19

Hi

I bought a Kawasaki AR 50 a few years ago and the brakes have gotten spongy. I don’t know a lot about bikes, but want to try to fix it myself. Where should I start?

Ann

Email 20
Morning

Why isn’t my BMW R100S running right? I can’t decelerate without it backfiring on me. I’m tired of this.

Bradley
Appendix I

Screenshot of Training Presentation
Appendix J

Training Presentation Instructions

Welcome to the training presentation!

The training portion of this course will provide you with the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to work effectively in your new role as an email customer service agent.

In this initial presentation, we will cover how to navigate the computer database you will be using, provide an explanation of each of the menus within the database, explain each step that needs to be taken to process and respond to emails, and teach you the order each step needs to be taken in. You’ll also obtain some basic skills in diagnosing and troubleshooting motorcycle problems.

To begin the training presentation, click the “Enter” button below.
Appendix K

Fluency-Based Exercise Instructions

Each of these exercises will present you with a timed quiz in which your goal is to answer as many questions correctly as possible during the one-minute time limit.

In order to proceed to the next activity, you must reach the mastery criteria for each of these exercises. You will be able to retake each quiz as many times as needed until you reach mastery (until the time limit indicated by Prolific expires).

To begin the activity, click the “Attempt quiz” button below.
Appendix L

Post-Training Survey

What I practiced in the fluency exercises will help me succeed in this job.

I found the exercises in this training to be an effective teaching tool.

I would prefer to do fluency-based exercises as part of training.

I like doing fluency-based exercises better than answering multiple-choice questions.

The fluency exercises were an enjoyable training activity.

There are required fields in this form marked.

Submit your answers Cancel
Appendix M

Post-Training Survey Instructions

Welcome to the Post-Training Survey activity.

To begin the survey, click the “Answer the questions” button below.

You will be asked to rate your degree of agreement with a series of statements about the training along a Likert-scale.

Once you’ve selected your responses, click the “Submit your answers” button to complete the activity.
Appendix N

Forum Instructions

Congratulations on reaching the end of the first session! For your response to be recorded as complete, you MUST click the Prolific completion URL found in the discussion topic below.

Additionally, if you’d like to earn $15 for participating in the second session, you MUST post a reply within the discussion topic below before logging out today.

Once this is done, the second session’s activities will become available after a waiting period of 24-hours. Specifically, the following actions must be taken:

1) Revisit this Moodle site and login using your username and password
2) Navigate back to this activity, “CLICK HERE for Prolific Completion URL”
3) Post a SECOND reply to the discussion thread below
4) This can only be done after one day has passed after your first posting

When the second reply has been posted, the first activity, “Post-Training Survey” will appear on the course homepage and can be navigated to in one of the following ways:

1) Clicking a link that will appear in the lower right corner of the present activity’s screen
2) Selecting the activity from the dropdown menu at the bottom center of the present activity’s screen
3) Clicking on the “Customer Service Training” link at the upper left of your screen to navigate back to the course homepage and select the activity from the list

As a reminder, the $15 bonus will be awarded to participants who’ve completed each of the session’s activities. There are two activities total (the Job Task and the Post-Job Task Training Survey).
Appendix O

Forum Discussion Thread Instructions

Welcome to the discussion thread.

Once again, for your response to be recorded as complete, you MUST click the Prolific completion URL found in the discussion topic below.

Additionally, if you’d like to earn $15 for participating in the second session, you MUST post a reply to this thread before logging out today.

To post a reply:

1) Click the “Reply” link in the lower right of this post
2) Enter text into the “Write your reply…” window that will populate
3) Click the “Submit” button below

Once this is done, the second session’s activities will become available after a waiting period of 24-hours. Specifically, the following actions must be taken:

1) Revisit this Moodle site and login using your username and password
2) Navigate back to this activity, “CLICK HERE for Prolific Completion URL”
3) Post a SECOND reply to the discussion thread below
4) This can only be done after one day has passed after your first posting

When the second reply has been posted, the first activity, “Post-Training Survey” will appear on the course homepage.

As a reminder, the $15 bonus will be awarded to participants who’ve completed each of the session’s activities. There are two activities total (the Job Task and the Post-Job Task Training Survey).

Prolific Completion URL: “Completion link”

Last, before logging out, be sure to write down your username and password for this site for use in logging in to the second session. If for some reason, you still forget your username or password, you can recover it by sending me a request through the Prolific message system.

To log out of Moodle, click your alias first and surname in the upper right corner of this screen. Next, select “Log Out” from the drop-down menu that populates.
Appendix P

Second Session Reminder Email Script

Subject Heading: $ Bonus Opportunity – Second Session Reminder

Hi Participant _____,

Thank you for your completing your first session! This message is being sent as a reminder of your opportunity to earn an additional $15 bonus payment for completing the second session.

To begin the second session, the following actions MUST be performed:

1) Revisit your Moodle site and login using your username and password
   (Either https://cai.moodle.school/login/index.php or https://cbt.moodle.school/login/index.php, depending on their group)
2) Navigate back to the activity labeled “CLICK HERE for Prolific Completion URL”
3) Post a SECOND reply to the discussion topic

When the second reply has been posted, the first activity, “Post-Training Survey” will appear on the course homepage.

Finally, to meet criteria for the $15 bonus, you must complete each of the second session’s activities within three days of having completed the first session. There are two activities total (the Job Task and the Post-Job Task Training Survey). Over the next few days, I will be monitoring your eligibility for the bonus via Moodle and will award any earned payment within the next week.

If you have further questions, please forward via a reply to this message.

Thank you and happy Moodling,

The Investigator
Appendix Q

Job Task Instructions

Welcome to the Job Task activity. This activity will provide you with the opportunity to apply what you learned in training to a simulation of an email customer service agent’s work.

While working in this role, you’ll be evaluated based on how many emails you respond to within 20 minutes. However, be careful not to work too quickly- if you don’t follow steps in the correct order or don’t enter the correct information, the system will not process your data.

To begin the activity, click the “Enter” button below.
Appendix R

Job Task Customer Emails

Email 1
Hello
My BMW R100S engine keeps backfiring. Happens whenever I decelerate. What should I try?
Jerry

Email 2
Hi there,
My brakes are really spongy. Can you help me? I have a Kawasaki AR 50.
John Smith

Email 3
I was out for my afternoon ride and my Ducati 350 Desmo stopped tracking straight. It turns better to the right side than the left.
Scholtiem Reinbach VIII

Email 4
Hi
My battery is dead and I’d like to fix it. Got a Harley-Davidson low rider.
Mary Beth

Email 5
Dear rep
I’m having some problems with my bike. My breaks no longer work. BMW R69S.
Alexis Robertson

Email 6
Good afternoon
Ducati 1098 engine is vibrating out of control on my new bike. I just bought it, what do you recommend?
Andy Brown

Email 7
Hello
The transition is really hard to shift on my bike. I tried to fix it myself and nothing worked. I’m not sure what else to try.
Jim

Email 8

Hi

The brake lever on my bike comes back too far. What’s wrong with it? Can you send someone out? Yamaha XT500.

Greg Chagas

Email 9

Greetings

My brakes are so loud I don’t even want to ride my Norton Commando. What can I do?

Lori

Email 10

When I was out riding this morning I noticed the rear suspension on my bike is pretty harsh. Is there a problem with a part?

Email 11

This evening the engine was surging whenever I was going at only a moderate speed… When I tried to maintain a throttle it got worse.

Christian Rossum

Email 12

Dear staff

I don’t know what to do about my bike. The front fork feels stiff and reacts harshly to small bumps. Honda SP1/SP2.

Ike

Email 13

I’m reaching out today because my battery has been showing symptoms of overcharging. I have a Honda VRF 800. What can I do?

Cody H

Email 14

Hello

My Honda VRF 800 engine starts hard and idles poorly. It’s been running kind of erratically lately. Please help!

Elora White
Email 15

Hi,

My bike’s brake lever pulses whenever brakes are applied, and I feel a shudder through the handlebars when this happens, too. It’s a KTM 1190.

Sarah Robertson

Email 16

Hello

My bike has really been consuming oil like crazy, and I’m seeing some smoke, too. Used Triumph X75 Hurricane.

Email 17

Help

Cannot shift into one of my gears on my Yamaha PW50 bike.

Bo

Email 18

Evening,

I’m having problems with my Kawasaki AR 50 bike. My front end dives excessively under braking and whenever I ride over small bumps.

Pete

Email 19

Hi

Engine backfires during deceleration. Got a Kawasaki Ninja H2R

KT

Email 20

Hi there,

My engine turns over and has good spark and good fuel, but still won’t start. Just got the bike last year. Model: Triumph Thruxton.

Jaqueline Jorgenson
Appendix S

Post-Job Task Training Survey

What I practiced in the fluency exercises will help me succeed in this job

I found the exercises in this training to be an effective teaching tool

I would prefer to do fluency-based exercises as part of training

I like doing fluency-based exercises better than answering multiple-choice questions

The fluency exercises were an enjoyable training activity

There are required fields in this form marked .
Appendix T

Post-Job Task Training Survey Instructions

Welcome to the Post-Job Task Training Survey activity.

To begin the survey, click the “Answer the questions” button below.

You will be asked to rate your degree of agreement with a series of statements about the training along a Likert-scale.

Once you’ve selected your responses, click the “Submit your answers” button to complete the activity.
Appendix U

Closing Activity

Nice work! By finishing this session’s activities, you’ve met criteria for the $15 bonus award.

No Prolific completion URL or code will be necessary to complete this session. Instead, I’ll manually confirm completion status after reviewing your progress in the Moodle gradebook.

I monitor participant progress in Moodle every two to three days. Therefore, you can expect to receive your award within three days of viewing this message.

Thanks again for your help in making our experiment possible. 😊

To log out of Moodle, click your alias first and surname in the upper right corner of this screen. Next, select “Log Out” from the drop-down menu that populates.
Appendix V

HSIRB Approval Letter

Date: July 29, 2021

To: Heather McGee, Principal Investigator
Jessica Rocheleau, Student Investigator for thesis

From: Amy Naugle, Ph.D., Chair

Re: IRB Project Number 21-07-03

This letter will serve as confirmation that your research project titled “The Impact of a Realistic Job Preview Experience on Computer-Based Fluency Training Performance, Reactions, and Subsequent Job Performance” has been approved under the exempt category of review by the Western Michigan University Institutional Review Board (IRB). The conditions and duration of this approval are specified in the policies of Western Michigan University. You may now begin to implement the research as described in the application.

Please note: This research may only be conducted exactly in the form it was approved. You must seek specific board approval for any changes to this project (e.g., add an investigator, increase number of subjects beyond the number stated in your application, etc.). Failure to obtain approval for changes will result in a protocol deviation.

In addition, if there are any unanticipated adverse reactions or unanticipated events associated with the conduct of this research, you should immediately suspend the project and contact the Chair of the IRB for consultation.

The Board wishes you success in the pursuit of your research goals.

A status report is required on or prior to (no more than 30 days) July 28, 2022 and each year thereafter until closing of the study. The IRB will send a request.
When this study closes, submit the required Final Report found at https://wmich.edu/research/forms.

Note: All research data must be kept in a secure location on the WMU campus for at least three (3) years after the study closes.