CHIIEF GUEST'S ORATION AT THE "DIPLOMA AWARD CEREMONY 2022"

FOR THE STUDENTS OF THE 2020 INTAKE

HELD AT AUDITORIUM 2 OF SRI LANKA AIRPORT & AVIATION ACADEMY

Delivered by

Major General (Rtd.) G. A. Chandrasiri RWP USP VSV ndc psc

Chairman

Airport & Aviation Services (Sri Lanka) (Private) Limited

The Distinguished members of the Board of Directors of AASL who are present here

Heads of divisions and other senior officers of AASL

Other distinguished invitees

The academic and other Senior Staff of our Sri Lanka Airport & Aviation Academy

Dear Parents

Young ladies and gentlemen who are to receive the "Diploma in Aviation Studies"

It gives me great pleasure to stand before you to deliver this ceremonial oration at this occasion where the students of the 8th batch who have successfully completed the "Diploma in Aviation Studies Programme" conducted by our Sri Lanka Airport & Aviation Academy during the academic year 2020/2021. While it is undoubtedly a happy occasion for you, it is a happy occasion for us too, as the institution that accommodated you, educated and trained you to successfully earn your diploma.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Recently, I passed the milestone completing two years as Chairman of Airport & Aviation Services and this happens to be the first public event that is organized by our company that I am gracing as the Chief Guest. As I rejoice in passing this milestone, I am happy to reflect upon my long and distinguish carrier as a senior officer in the Sri Lanka Army and also as the Governor of the Northern Province of Sri Lanka.

One word that I have extensively come across in my carrier is the word "Training". Training is something intimately linked to the carrier of a soldier. But training is not something limited to the military sphere. Its value extends to the civilian world as well. So, at the foremost academic occasion of our academy which is our company's training arm, I chose 'the importance of training and particularly, the importance of acquiring necessary facilities for training' as the topic for my ceremonial oration.

"Learning" is defined as the change in behaviour of an individual brought about through a structured learning experience. "Training" on the other hand, refers to a more specific change in behaviour, where an individual is enabled to react to a specific situation appropriately in a well-defined manner.

During training the trainee undergoes various experiences which we call lessons. Each lesson is aimed at inculcating some knowledge, skill or attitude that will determine how the trainee would react in a specific situation later on in a responsible capacity which we call the Job. In that sense training could be regarded as the foundation of a job. When properly trained the trainee will be able to perform the job well. On the other hand, if the trainee does not perform well in the job, the cause could most probably be traced to improper or inadequate training.

For training to be effective it must be imparted under circumstances that closely resemble the actual situation in which the trainee would eventually perform. If training is imparted in a comfortable environment free of the actual circumstances in which the trainee would be exposed to in the actual performance of the job, he or she is guaranteed to fail. No matter how well the trainee has grasped the techniques of the tasks to be performed, if it has not been learned under the same circumstances or at least those closely resembling the circumstances in which he or she would eventually perform, the trainee would not be able to replicate the performance effectively. Therefore, ensuring that training is undertaken within circumstances that are similar to those in which the trained tasks will actually be performed is a fundamental requirement every training institution has to fulfil.

There are several reasons why meeting this requirement is not easy.

First and foremost, the trainee should be at liberty to make mistakes during training. He or she should have the opportunity to observe the consequences of the mistakes and learn from them. Making mistakes is an effective way of learning. But it is also a very expensive way of learning. That being said, a training who trains without making any mistakes during training is an exception.

The possibility for trainees to make mistakes during training is the primary reason why training cannot be provided under the same circumstances the training is to be applied. In a real-life situation, any mistake made by the trainee could result in disastrous consequences which may even include the loss of life or limb. Training in the military sphere would probably be the most serious example of this. However, it is not limited to the military sphere. Disciplines such as Aviation, Astronautics, and Medicine also have similar situations where it is not conducive for training to be undertaken within real life scenarios.

This is where the need for simulation arises.

Simulation is a word that is widely used in the training industry. Yet it is not a concept that is readily understood by the layman. The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines simulation as the "*imitative representation of the functioning of one system or process by means of the functioning of another*". As implied by that definition, simulation is essentially not real. It is something artificial and imitative.

Within this artificially created scenario the trainee can learn the relevant skills while feeing free to make mistakes. When the simulation closely resembles the actual scenario, the trainee will get the same feeling that he or she would get in the actual situation. However, the consequences of any mistakes that he or she may make will be confined to the artificial environment and will not extend to the real world. This makes it possible for the trainee to undergo training without undue fear of blunder and therefore, undergo more effective training.

Closer the resemblance of the artificial scenario to the real-life scenario, better would be the simulation. However, this is more easily stated than achieved in practice. For example, Astronauts experience loss of gravity

during their missions. This experience is essential during training. However, creating the artificial loss of gravity is a very difficult task. This is an extreme example. Nevertheless, simulating a real-life scenario effectively has always been a challenging feat.

Technology plays a key role in all types of simulation. With the recent advancements in Information Technology and Computer Science & Engineering, simulation of real-world scenarios has become more and more effective. Today simulators exist in almost all spheres of training and almost all of them are computer based. In addition to the very effective imitation of the real-life scenario, computer-based simulations also provide several additional advantages. Ability to record training sessions for play back during debriefing, the possibility for instructors to easily create complex scenarios, the ease of customizing simulators to accommodate changes in the real environments, and the ease of upgrading simulators to keep abreast with technological advancements are some of them. In addition, the advancements in Communication Technology have enabled simulator training to be provided even remotely.

We take pride in the fact that our academy possesses several state-of-the-art simulation facilities. It has enabled us to provide training of the highest standard to our company trainees as well as commercial trainees. Our simulators have also attracted the approval of the regulatory authorities where relevant.

It must also be mentioned that these simulation facilities have been acquired at a tremendous cost. These massive investments have been done while catering to developmental needs of operational entities such as our airports and air navigation service centres. Investing on infrastructure at operational facilities will have immediate benefits and could be readily justified. In contrast, investments made on training do not provide immediate returns. As a result, it is often a challenge to justify such investments to

authorities that approve the funding and even to the stakeholders. Nevertheless, we have always maintained the policy of investing on training facilities in a timely manner.   This is because we have properly understood the value and the importance of possessing highly trained personnel for deployment in safety critical operations.

Ladies and gentlemen

What I attempted through this oration is to impress upon you the value of investing in training infrastructure. I hope that all these young ladies and gentlemen who are receiving their diploma today would value the investments we made. I wish to congratulate you all on your achievement. You have earned your diploma through your own hard work. I hope that you would embark on your careers in a manner that your parents, all your instructors at the SLAAA and we, as the institution that educated you can be proud of you.

I would also like to congratulate our Sri Lanka Airport & Aviation Academy for the valued services it renders to the aviation industry. I congratulate the SLAAA team headed by our Head of Civil Aviation Training on a job well done. I together with the board of directors like to see you continuing the good work with even more vigour in future.

 I wish all of you gathered here a pleasant afternoon.

Thank you!

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