



How to Apply Training Insights Practically in the Workplace

Description

We have all been in workshops where we felt we learned something new, had our existing ways of doing things challenged, and left motivated to do things differently. Unfortunately, these good intentions often fail to translate into sustained behavioral change back in the workplace.

How can we transfer what we learn more effectively into our daily practice? I want to look at three areas: the organization, the learning we provide, and the role of a coach. By addressing these points, I believe we can create more supportive learning environments, use learning more effectively and efficiently, and bring about the sustained behavioral change we desire.

How supportive is the culture of the organization?

How involved, for example, are managers in monitoring and encouraging their team members on their personal learning? My colleague, [Jo Lee](#), has written extensively on this but suffice to say that taking a more systemic approach to learning that co-opts the manager into the learning process is essential—we have developed a simple yet powerful mechanism to do this in our [Performance Tracker](#).

How well does the learning set up the transference?

Research (Perkins & Salomon, 1992) tells us that active learning experiences such as simulations, mental practice, and teaching for the most likely applications are the best strategies in “teaching for transference.” Yet so much corporate learning is consumed passively and, unintentionally, swamps the learner with details that are irrelevant to their immediate needs. Put simply: how easy is it to find the fix you need for a particular problem in your LMS?

We require better-targeted learning that is in the flow of work rather than an adjunct to work. In part, this means making better and more extensive use of learning as a resource—providing aids and guides.

It also means thinking about how we use synchronous learning activities. The current situation (as well

as cost and logistical factors) means that we are likely to make more use of live online experiences supported and complemented by asynchronous digital learning assets. Our use of these to run simulations, and to create experiences that are relevant to the learner's needs and context, convinces me that, despite the apparent limitations of the modality, these are ideal vehicles through which to teach for transference.

If the learning materials offer the *what*, how do we provide the *how*?

The transfer of learning takes place when people apply insights, knowledge, and skills they have learned in one environment to a new situation or context. As such, transfer is an integral part of the learning process.

This is where coaching is invaluable. Picking up where the learning experience left off, the coach acts to help the learner bridge to find connections between what they have learned and to apply this in their work. This is the missing part of the jigsaw in many learning experiences. This is why so much time and money invested in corporate learning fails to pay off. The coach's role in being a thinking and learning partner to the learner both accelerates the learning process and sets them up to apply what they have learned.

The cost of coaching has been a major obstacle to making it more widely available. However, the advent of digital technology means we can remove this barrier, making coaching more affordable and accessible. In effect, we can democratize coaching and bring about a revolution in corporate learning.

References: Perkins, D. N., & Salomon, G. (1992). Transfer of learning. International Encyclopedia of Education (2nd ed.). Oxford, UK: Pergamon Press

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