

Chapter 1

Introduction

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This volume offers new insights about learning transfer in organizations and their implications for both research and practice.

Learning transfer, as a phenomenon of workplace learning and of further training in organizations, includes the application of what was learned to the work context. Learners are both individuals and organizational units or organizations. In this volume, a complex perspective is adopted with regard to the phenomenon of learning transfer in organizations and the explaining factors.

The study of the actual state in practice provides the foundation for improvements in the design and evaluation of further training measures that are conducive to the transfer of learning. The further development of theoretical models of learning transfer in further vocational training has the function of gaining a deeper understanding of the transfer of learning. Concepts that are conducive for ensuring the transfer of learning in organizations and that are based on improved explanatory models are developed. Further training measures are evaluated on different levels on the basis of relevant criteria. This volume pursues these four functions.

In accordance with the transfer process model developed by Baldwin and Ford (1988), the factors that affect learning transfer (*learner, training and working environment*) are portrayed in this volume. In this context, training also includes accompanying measures in addition to the range of further training programs in the narrower sense.

In the article, *Transfer of Learning in German Companies*, Käthe Schneider, Maria Pältz, and Helmut Stauche examine the actual situation with respect to the ensuring and evaluation of learning transfer in German companies. In an online survey of 107 listed and individually or family-owned German companies with at least 1,000 employees, the methods for fostering and evaluating the transfer of learning are collated. The study does not just offer a German national cross section on this topic, but also provides insights into the methods used to ensure and evaluate learning transfer.

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In the article entitled *Enablers and Inhibitors of Learning Transfer from Theory to Practice*, Karima Bouzguenda examines the evaluation of learning transfer in 110 Tunisian companies based on a theoretical analysis and by means of a survey. With the help of a focus group, the author analyzes the employees' perception of training and learning transfer. The theoretical analysis provides the model of a learning transfer cycle. On the empirical level, the results of the survey and the case study document a gap between theory and practice in Tunisian companies.

Jean-François Roussel refers to the learner in the essay entitled *Learning Transfer in Organizations: An Adaptive Perspective Centered on the Learner and the Development of Self-Regulation* and shows that the memory processes involved in the maintenance and reproduction of acquired knowledge are not adequate for the transfer of learning, taking the requirements of learners in organizations into account. Competencies of self-regulation and meta-cognitive skills are also necessary for the transfer of learning. Roussel develops an empirically supported didactic concept for the promotion of these competencies and skills.

Constantine Kontoghiorghes adopts *A Systemic Perspective of Training Transfer* on the design of environments that are conducive to the transfer of learning; Kontoghiorghes, who also examines the *working environment* in particular, notes the lack of studies and models linking training transfer to organizational culture. Because of the influence of organizational culture on employee behavior and performance, the cultural dimension of an organization must be incorporated into a framework of training transfer models and research designs. The author develops a holistic framework.

Doo Hun H. Lim and Brent Nowell regard training from a complex point of view and in the article entitled *Integration for Training Transfer: Learning, Knowledge, Organizational Culture, and Technology*, they bring individuals' learning and performance improvement of workplace organizations together, while developing an approach for both individual and organizational levels. This approach for an effective training transfer process includes training transfer management, knowledge management systems, and organizational learning practices utilizing technological systems and tools.

In their article, *Training Transfer in Teachers Training Program: A Longitudinal Case Study*, Francesco Pisanu, Franco Fraccaroli, and Maurizio Gentile study individual and organizational factors that facilitated the transfer of an in-service training for teachers in Italy. The authors use the *Learning Transfer System Inventory* and a nonparticipant structured observation as methods of investigation. The set of factors that influence learning transfer in this action research project is centered on the learner and the training. Organizational issues seem to exert less influence on learning transfer, and this may be related to the fact that the project did not include specific interventions related to the organization.

In the chapter, *Evaluation of Training Transfer Factors: The FET Model*, Pilar Pineda-Herrero, Carla Quesada-Pallarès, and Anna Ciraso-Calí develop a theoretical model, the *FET model*, which is an instrument to measure training transfer indirectly and to predict it. The FET model is based on the three transfer dimensions of *trainee*, *training*, and *organization*, and on the training results. The authors tested

this model on a random sample of 1,142 trainees in the context of Spanish companies. The results show that the model has construct validity, and that the instrument made it possible to reliably assess factors in learning transfer.

Paul Donovan describes the development of the evaluation of learning transfer from the beginning to the present in the chapter entitled *The Measurement of Transfer Using Return on Investment*. On the basis of a systematization and critical assessment of existing approaches the author describes Kirkpatrick's four-level model and Phillips' return on investment (ROI) approach. The contributions and criticisms of both approaches are discussed, and the implications of using ROI approaches for evaluating training interventions are considered.

References

- Baldwin, T. T., & Ford, J. K. (1988). Transfer of training: A review and directions for future research. *Personnel Psychology, 41*(1), 63–105.