TRANSFER FOR DELAYED APPLICATION OF TRAINING

A guide to creating learning transfer for delayed application of learning

Use this template as a basis to inform your training and transfer design

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The need to scale learning can mean that some participants won’t apply their skills immediately.

The implications of that are that, some knowledge and skills will naturally decay or be lost completely until the participants are asked to use them on the job.

The loss of technique or the degradation of memory happens pretty quickly, and so to make scaled programs effective we need to develop strategies to maintain knowledge and skills over time.

However, unlike other areas of training where a skill or knowledge is maintained during application phases, in the case where there is no application at all we should think of alternative ways to maintain skills and knowledge.

That need involves getting creative. You should start out researching from your participants and the company in general about what your options are and how they can be realistically achieved.

You’ll also need to do some external research and think in general about how skills and knowledge can be applied in related situations.

Whatever you choose to suggest as extra-curricular activities you’ll need to make them engaging and motivating in order to keep people interested in doing them once the formal learning is complete.
How to use this template

The diagram on the following page illustrates a fictional training program. It is mocked up to demonstrate how learning transfer can facilitate the use of knowledge in the workplace.

Use this diagram as a reference when looking at the more detailed program elements page to see where in time each of the elements sit.

Each of the program elements pages describes what the element is and how it should be used.

There are also images of what a sample of each element could look like. These samples are for illustrative use, and can be your launchpad to creating your own elements.

Take time to understand the program overview and each of the elements in order to adapt what is in this template to suit your own knowledge-heavy program design.
Design Overview
Transfer for Delayed Application of Training

This diagram represents a mocked-up standardized and scaled learning program. The elements play out from left to right over time. What made this a scaled program was the need to reach a large portion of the organization over a wide geographic area.

It has been determined, through surveying, that some of the participants do require the skills but will not realistically implement them in work for a number of months. That could be due to either waiting for a promotion, a change of job function, or the end of a current project. There are many reasons why this happens, the main thing is to understand why and to make arrangements to maintain skills until they are needed.

The training content itself is not so relevant to the overall design except to say that it will be necessary to the participant’s success in the future.

Remember to use this design overview as a time frame for designing your solutions. The descriptions on the following pages give more detail about each element.
Program Elements

Pre-training survey

For this type of solution a pre-training survey fulfills two requirements. The first is to find out from all the participants who will and who will not need to apply the skills or knowledge within a reasonable time frame in their work. It’s up to you to decide what a reasonable time frame constitutes, but it is likely to depend on the complexity and type of training.

Once you know who will apply the training in a reasonable time you can decide if there is an alternative learning transfer solution that makes sense for them – they might need knowledge transfer or skills transfer support, for example.

For those who won’t use the training in a reasonable time you should allow a gateway or second questioning part of your survey to find out why they are taking the training and how they will eventually intend to use it. You can also ask questions about what strategies they intend to apply to maintain their skills. Then you can start planning how to manage learning transfer.
for that reason, we don’t prescribe here how to design the training event itself – there are just too many variable in the type of learning that could be applied to list them all here with appropriate design specifications.

However, it is worth noting that most training that will be delayed involves the use of knowledge as a base and some skills application.

So we do recommend that you check the Knowledge and or the Skills learning transfer templates to support your learning design for those types of trainings.

There you will find good hints and tips for designing those events, and at the same time prepare to support people who do need to apply the learning later down the road.

There are no specific types of training that fall into the delayed application or preparing to apply learning transfer category.

It is unlikely that compliance training will be a good fit for this because generally compliance training has an immediate need, which might require a different form of learning transfer solution but unlikely this one.

Instead, it is likely that skills relating to general communication or productivity are a good fit here.
One of the elements you will need to be quite creative with is how to support people to apply what they learned in the training inside and outside work. Inside work is relatively easy. You can design small group or individual tasks that gets learning practiced. You need to make sure that the tasks are structured in a way that is easy to comply with and can be measured. More on that later.

For outside work, you should have already done some research through surveying to find out what people can realistically do away from the office, and have spoken to HR to find out what is permissible from a policy perspective.

You also need to communicate your plan through a newsletter or email shot or downloadable PDF describing where and how to apply skills. Those could include events, meetings, meet-ups, family activities, interest groups, etc. Anything is ok within a realistic framework that is interesting, motivational, and gets the skills and knowledge used.
Program Elements

Monthly report

The monthly report is based on the measurement of tasks completed both inside and outside of work, and acts as a comparison or benchmark of how and how much the skills form training are being applied by participants in a cohort.

This is an important element because it acts as a motivation to participants to apply or to keep on applying what they learned. Of course this kind of extra-curricular activity cannot go on forever, so deciding, as you can see in the graphic, how long the formal application will continue is critical to maintaining the right level of motivation.

The best thing to do is to design a simple online questionnaire that asks people what they have done and how much they have done of it. You can then collect the results and post two items. The first is a group chart that shows where people are in a leaderboard of applied skills. The second is a personal report that charts an individual’s progress over the measurement period.
One additional spin off you can create, of many possibilities depending on your circumstances, is to give the top leaders on your monthly leaderboard a bonus call. In effect this is a reward for doing well over the measurement period.

We advocate a bonus call over other types of reward incentive for a number of reasons. The first is that handing out things like vouchers or tokens can miss the intended outcome if people don’t value what they were given.

The second is that to be selected for a special meeting and to hear a person’s voice praising what you have done is a pretty strong intrinsic motivator. People like to be praised.

The third is that you can also gather information about how, when, and where the skills were applied and use that information to improve future offerings for the advice about what to do with the training outside of work.
**Summary**

*Delayed transfer can apply to a number of types of training especially when those training events are scaled.*

If you have determined that there is a possibility that your scaled learning event won’t be applied immediately by everyone on the course it’s worth thinking about designing some extra-curricular activities that gets learning maintained. Consider the following advice.

Begin by creating a survey that separates two groups, one that will apply the learning in a reasonable time and one which will have to delay the application of the learning. For those who will apply the training soon then think about if they need an alternative transfer solution.

For those who won’t apply the skills soon look at how you can support them in the following ways.

First design work-based activities that mimic the course content and can be done individually and, or in small groups. Make sure that the structure of the design includes timeframes for practice and some kind of measurable element.

Second, get creative suggesting outside work activities where participants can use the training in situations related to how they would in the workplace. Make sure that they are realistic, varied and permissible according to your company’s employment policies.

Third, design a leaderboard and populate that with data gained through questionnaires sent periodically to participants – send a group and individual reports.

Finally, select top achieving participants for rewards that act as continuous motivators.