

Learning is a Process

A guide for training design and evaluation

Too often we focus only on the learning event itself—preparing presentations, materials and activities, but do not consider preparing for the long-term impacts of our training. This list offers critical factors to consider before, during and after training that help to ensure lasting impacts. As such, they function as aspects to explore in training evaluation. Many of these have been identified as common factors that can limit the success of training if not attended to.

Before learning events

- Gaining senior management support for training
- Gaining direct manager support for the importance of the intended learning outcomes
- Motivating learners by showing relevance and benefits
- Making sure learners and managers are aware of prerequisite skills and knowledge
- Generally, gaining buy-in at all levels for the importance of any training initiative

During learning events

- Being clear about the intended learning outcomes
- Ensuring learning assessments and activities are in alignment with the intended learning outcomes
- Ensuring learners review prerequisite knowledge
- Demonstrating relevance of learning by examples
- Offering enough opportunities to practice new skills and produce evidence of learning
- Providing enough feedback on performance
- Preparing quality learning resources to use during training
- Scheduling training at convenient times

After learning events

- Learners are held accountable for applying learning
- Incentives are in place for applying learning
- Low-risk opportunities are available for practice
- Managers are prepared to coach or monitor learners on the application of new skills
- Learners have access for resources to refresh their knowledge
- Learners have access to other participants and trainers for questions
- Pressures to be efficient are not allowed to prevent application of new skills

(For several items in the list, see Brinkerhoff, R.O (2006), *Telling Training's Story: Evaluation made simple, credible, and effective*, Oakland:Berrett-Koehler Publishers.)