

6

HOW PEOPLE EVALUATE OTHERS IN ORGANIZATIONS

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9

Training Effectiveness: Assessing Training Needs, Motivation, and Accomplishments

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The objective of this chapter is to consider how people evaluate others in organizations and the processes by which these evaluations are used as input into training and development systems within organizations. Specifically, we examine the processes by which supervisors, trainers, and others evaluate employees' learning and developmental needs, make decisions affecting their career motivation or expectations for training, and track their progress through training. Our emphasis is on the effects of interpersonal perception and evaluation processes on employee training and development, particularly in terms of diagnosing training needs, facilitating trainee learning, and measuring training transfer or impact.

Broadly then, this chapter is on the relationship between interpersonal perception and evaluation and training effectiveness. Training effectiveness refers to the individual and organizational factors that influence employee learning, development, and transfer (Tannenbaum, Mathieu, Salas, & Cannon-Bowers, 1991). Unlike classic instructional systems models (e.g., Gagne & Briggs, 1974), training effectiveness models put a premium on social influences as determinants of the extent to which trainees learn and apply training content. Therefore, training effectiveness becomes an ideal

framework for understanding the impact of person perception and interpersonal judgment on training-related processes. Robert Benchley once wrote, there are two kinds of people in the world—those who classify the world as two kinds and those who don't. In this chapter, we make one important distinction: There are two broad classes of determinants of training effectiveness: Factors that are related to processes of interpersonal perception and evaluation and factors that are not. Included in the latter category are critical variables, such as organizational support (often financial) for training, the training medium (e.g., instructor-led vs. computer-based), the quality of training design, and the quality of training delivery. As important as these variables appear to be, theory and research on training effectiveness over the past 15 years has highlighted other motivational, perceptual, and attitudinal variables that seemingly play as large a role in determining training success. These are the factors that we highlight in this chapter.

One assumption we make in the chapter is that classroom-style instruction is the predominant form of organizational training.¹ Thus, perceptions of learners by trainers and of trainers by learners are a critical component of the learning environment. A second assumption is that the design, conduct, and evaluation of training and development programs usually relies on various forms of input from organizational members: input on training needs, participation in training (as learner or instructor), evaluation of training impact, and decision making regarding the need for new or more training (Baldwin & Magjuka, 1997). This is not always the case, as training can be done from habit or spring from management decree. At best, though, training is built with social input. Supervisors continuously make assessments regarding subordinates' skills, abilities, learning and development needs, motivation, accomplishments, and so forth. In addition, supervisors observe career progress, provide subordinates with information regarding goal achievement, provide feedback regarding their training and overall performance, and track subordinates' progress over time. These assessments and behaviors occur in the context of a unique supervisor-subordinate dyadic relationship (e.g., Aguinis, Nesler, Quigley, Lee, & Tedeschi, 1996). By understanding the dynamic nature of the interpersonal factors inherent in relationships such as these, one can evaluate better the accuracy and usefulness of human input into training systems.

¹ Although alternative forms of training (such as technology-based training) are increasingly popular, a recent survey by the American Society of Training and Development confirms that instructor-led training remains by far the most prevalent form of organizational training (McMurrer, Van Buren, & Woodwell, 2000).

We organize the chapter as follows: discussion of interpersonal perception and evaluation factors affecting training success at three temporal stages (a) pretraining, (b) during training, and (c) post-training. For each stage, we identify and define relevant person perception constructs that would most likely have an impact on individual attitudinal variables that, in turn, are likely to affect employee learning and development.

INTERPERSONAL PERCEPTION AND EVALUATION INFLUENCES ON PRETRAINING PROCESSES

According to common training effectiveness models, there are two sets of pretraining influences on training effectiveness: organizational and individual factors (Noe, 1986; Tannenbaum et al., 1991). Organizational support for training is an example of the former set and individual motivation to learn is an example of the latter. Because needs assessment and (to a lesser extent) training design are formal processes that should examine and account for both sets of variables, it is valuable to consider the effects of interpersonal perception and evaluation on decisions made during these steps. We propose that, in general, interpersonal judgments will affect pretraining variables that in turn affect employee motivation, attitudes, and propensity for learning.

Decisions made during the needs assessment and design steps influence the quality of training. When correctly implemented, a needs assessment determines if there is a performance problem, whether training is the best solution to that problem, who should be trained, and what specific tasks or knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) should be trained. During training design, critical decisions are made regarding how tasks or KSAs should be trained, who should train, and how the learning environment can be optimized. Ideally, these decisions are made by matching available training techniques to training needs, given available instructional resources. Decisions are guided by knowledge of intended outcomes (Kraiger, Ford, & Salas, 1993), learning principles (Ford & Kraiger, 1995), and perceptions of learners' baseline knowledge, abilities, or learning styles (Hayer & Allinson, 1997).

An important, untested assumption of the needs assessment step is that participants (analysts, job experts, supervisors, and incumbents) are accurate and unbiased reporters of job-related phenomena (Ford & Kraiger, 1995). An important assumption of the training design process is that

designers hold accurate, unbiased perceptions of learner motivation and capability. To the extent that interpersonal perception and evaluation factors distort either set of judgments, participant decisions about training and training content may result in less than optimal learning and transfer.

Motivational and Attitudinal Variables

Proponents of training effectiveness models advocate that concurrent with the formal training development, there are equally important informal processes by which future trainees interact with their environment and form attitudes and perceptions about training or themselves. These attitudes and perceptions have a direct impact on their receptivity to training and potential for learning. Among the most potent variables are trainee self-efficacy and motivation to learn (Mathieu & Martineau, 1997). Thus, an important pretraining objective should be to conduct assessment and design activities in such a way that these individual attributes are maximized. From the perspective of this chapter, an important consideration is how interpersonal evaluation processes may interact with formal organizational efforts to undermine or enhance pretraining states.

Trainee Self-Efficacy. Trainee self-efficacy is defined as the belief in one's capacity to organize and execute actions necessary to attain specific types of performance (e.g., succeed in training; Baldwin & Magjuka, 1997). Trainee self-efficacy is related to decisions to enroll in training (Hill, Smith, & Mann, 1987), effort and persistence in training (Quiñones, 1995; Travillian, Baker, & Cannon-Bowers, 1992), performance in training (Gist, Schwoerer, & Rosen, 1989; Gist, Bavetta, & Stevens, 1990; Tannenbaum et al., 1991), and trainee reactions to training (Gist et al., 1989; Tannenbaum et al., 1991). In general, trainee self-efficacy is enhanced through self-determination, goal setting, successful performance, positive feedback, and perceptions of confidence held by others. Trainee self-efficacy is diminished when these conditions are not met (e.g., unsuccessful performance or lack of positive feedback); further, self-efficacy can be diminished through inaccurate, negative feedback from others. The influence of perceptions and feedback by others on trainee self-efficacy suggests that it is useful to consider how consistent errors or biases in the judgments of others may inadvertently affect trainees' perceptions of self-efficacy.

Trainee Motivation to Learn. Training motivation refers to the direction, effort, intensity, and persistence that trainees apply to learning-oriented activities before, during, and after training (Salas &

Cannon-Bowers, 2000). Motivation to learn and attend training affects learning during training, as well as retention and trainee willingness to apply the newly acquired KSAs back on-the-job (e.g., Quiñones, 1995). Trainee motivation to learn is affected primarily by individual characteristics such as cognitive ability, self-efficacy, anxiety, and conscientiousness but is also influenced by goal setting and self-determination, as well as individual perceptions of situational variables such as feedback from others (Mathieu & Martineau, 1997).

Interpersonal Influences on Trainee Motivation and Attitudes

Perceptual and attitudinal biases related to interpersonal perception and evaluation factors may affect trainee self-efficacy or motivation to learn. For example, both self-efficacy and motivation develops from positive feedback. However, will supervisors offer the same accurate, useful feedback to all of their subordinates?

Research on leader-member exchange theory (LMX) indicates that relationships between a supervisor and his or her subordinates are heterogeneous (Dansereau, Graen, & Haga, 1975). Supervisors develop a relationship with one subordinate and perhaps a different relationship with another one (Farmer & Aguinis, 1999). These relationships develop very early because supervisors quickly categorize subordinates (Liden, Wayne, & Stilwell, 1993). This categorization often leads to labeling a subordinate as a member of the in-group or out-group, with in-group members evaluated more positively than out-group members (Turner, 1985). To the extent that supervisors rely on cognitive heuristics such as categorization to evaluate their subordinates' career progress, they risk making erroneous assessments.

The fundamental attribution error refers to the tendency to believe that subordinates' behaviors are caused by their enduring personal characteristics, dispositions, or attitudes and are not a result of unstable situational factors (Aronson, Wilson, & Akert, 1997; Baron & Byrne, 1997; Fiske & Taylor, 1991). The context in which behaviors and events occur is not as salient to observers as the dynamic behavior of others. Thus, supervisors underestimate the role external circumstances play in subordinates' actions and automatically attribute dynamic behavior to the type of person they are; this leads to the overestimation of dispositional causes (Fiske & Taylor, 1991). A related error, the self-serving bias, refers to individuals' propensity to take credit for success and to deny responsibility for failure (Baron & Byrne, 1997; Fiske & Taylor, 1991). Subordinates and

supervisors each attribute their successes to dispositional causes (e.g., ability), but associate failures with external forces (e.g., bad luck). Finally, the false-consensus effect refers to the tendency of supervisors to overestimate the number of subordinates who hold the same beliefs as they do or who see things in the same way (Fiske & Taylor, 1991). Instead of using consensus information (e.g., evaluations and judgments of subordinates) when making judgments, supervisors assume that subordinates would react as they would.

Because training needs assessment is often done as a response to perceived performance problems, the focus of the analysis is to isolate root causes. Unfortunately, the prior discussion suggests that the source most likely to be consulted, the supervisor, may be prone to overevaluate the likelihood that a problem exists, believe that it is attributable to internal (i.e., employee) deficits in skills and abilities, and feel that there is agreement within the work group as to the extent of the problem. Collectively, these attribution errors may cause analysts to overstate the nature of severity or prevalence of the performance deficit.

Not as obvious is the predicted indirect effects of these errors on the motivation and attitudes of future trainees. An employee and supervisor observing the same performance problem are likely to reach different conclusions as to its root cause. By both the fundamental attribution error and the self-serving bias, supervisors are likely to attribute performance problems to skill deficits in subordinates (e.g., "He should be more accurate in his financial forecasts"), whereas employees are more likely to attribute the same problem to situational factors (e.g., "Why can't they buy me a better forecasting program"). If the employee is assigned to training, depending on the interpretation of that decision, there is a risk of needlessly undermining his or her self-efficacy (e.g., "Perhaps I am not as effective as I thought") and/or motivation for training (e.g., "What good will this do me given the real problem;" Quiñones, 1995). Although research results are inconsistent, there is at least some evidence suggesting that the decision to mandate training may have a negative impact on trainee motivation (see Baldwin & Magjuka, 1997). Negative interpretations may be more pronounced for individuals holding a performance orientation (i.e., perceiving training as an opportunity to demonstrate personal capability) compared to those holding a mastery orientation (i.e., perceiving training as an opportunity for learning new skills; Dweck, 1986). Assignment to training for individuals holding a mastery orientation may be interpreted as a lack of confidence in them by management (Farr & Middlebrooks, 1990). Thus, generalizations by supervisors regarding inadequate performance or the

need for training in subordinates based on faulty attributions may lower overall trainee motivation.

Failure to account for cognitive heuristics during needs assessment and design phases may result in faulty decisions about the need for training or undermine trainee self-efficacy and motivation to learn. The obvious prescription for avoiding these errors is to collect and reconcile data from multiple sources; however, this is often not realistic given time or budget constraints. Therefore, it is advisable that training analysts and course designers at least be aware of the possible deleterious effects of these attribution errors, challenge statements of causality by supervisors or incumbents (e.g., ask for supporting documentation), or anticipate and correct for the impact of these evaluations on employee attitudes.

INTERPERSONAL PERCEPTION AND EVALUATION INFLUENCES ON TRAINING PROCESSES

From the perspective of training effectiveness models, there are three general sets of factors concurrent with training that influence training success: organizational support for training; the abilities, attitudes, and motivations of participants during training; and the training itself (Tannenbaum et al., 1991). Organizational support includes direct support for participants (e.g., offloading work responsibilities) and policies and practices related to the value placed on training (e.g., linking employee development to manager appraisals). Although interpersonal perception and evaluation processes may affect organizational support, the impact is likely only minimal and indirect. The primary factors related to training participants are ability factors (e.g., general intelligence) and nonability factors, such as trainee motivation, self-efficacy, and expectations for training (Tannenbaum et al., 1991). Because interpersonal perception and evaluation factors affecting employee attitudes and motivation were discussed in the prior section, we limit our discussion here to the impact of interpersonal factors on training processes. Similar to the prior discussion, we propose that, in general, these variables will affect training-related variables that in turn will affect employee motivation, attitudes, and learning.

Research stemming back to the late 1950s has consistently supported the impact of instructor-related variables on trainee learning (Campbell, 1971). Instructors can influence trainee learning primarily through the perceptions of their credibility, similarity and status in the minds of trainees; the quality

of their instruction; and the nature of their interactions with the trainees. The impact of interpersonal perception and judgment factors on instructor variables is considered in the following section.

Learner Perceptions of Instructors

In traditional instructor-led settings, trainee motivation to learn and receptivity to training content is a function of identification with and respect for the instructor. For example, behavioral modeling studies indicate that learning is enhanced when the model (demonstrating correct behaviors) is perceived as high status, competent, and demographically similar to the trainees (Decker & Nathan, 1985). Social categorization processes may influence trainee perceptions of the credibility of trainers and the relevance of training materials. For example, Aguinis et al. (1996) found that graduate students who identified with their faculty supervisors were more likely to report that (a) they had a higher quality relationship with their professors, and (b) their professors had higher levels of credibility. Trainees are likely to form immediate impressions of instructors that include an in-group or out-group designation. Because there are likely differences in prior knowledge of content area between the instructor and trainees, many instructors receive immediate out-group designation by trainees. This designation may be further engrained if the instructor differs from most trainees in age, race, or gender, or when the instructor comes from outside the organization or has not held the same job as trainees. Initial perceptions and judgments may need to be overcome for the training to be successful. For example, one of the authors has conducted numerous training sessions for organizations that provide job readiness training to welfare-to-work populations. The training begins with an open-ended discussion of trainees' on-the-job problems and goals for training. Because most trainees were social workers and persons of color, the (implicit) purpose for the discussion was to give the trainees an opportunity to judge whether a white trainer from academia could understand their needs well enough to present useful job-related information.

Interactions Between Instructors and Learners

Ideally, the learning environment is a dynamic one in which instructional style and content vary as a function of interactions between learners and the instructor. For example, if the trainer perceives that material is too

difficult, he or she might slow down the rate of presentation, or allow learners additional time to ask questions or practice concepts. In general, the perceptions of learners by instructors serve as primary input into the dynamic relationship of the two. Prior to, or near the beginning of, a training program, the instructor explicitly or implicitly evaluates the readiness and proficiency of either the class as a whole or learners as individuals. As the program unfolds, better instructors monitor learner achievement, seek feedback, and adjust instructional styles accordingly. It is valuable then to consider the impact of interpersonal perception and evaluation processes on instructors' perceptions of learners during training.

Initial Perceptions. On the basis of either pretraining assessment or personal judgment, an instructor may evaluate trainees on a number of dimensions that in turn, affect what and how material is presented. Key evaluation variables include: general ability levels of trainees, skill deficits (related to training content), and perceptions of learning styles or preferences. Different learning environments (e.g., perceptually oriented vs. behaviorally oriented) may be enacted depending on instructor perceptions of trainees (Kolb & Lewis, 1986). To the extent that this information is collected informally through instructor perceptions, the instructor risks committing judgment errors that may undermine training effectiveness.

As a social process, stereotyping is pervasive enough (see Dovidio & Fiske, this volume), that it is likely instructors may often use stereotypes or general impressions of training groups to guide initial impressions of trainees' aggregate ability or skill levels. This may be particularly true if the trainer is brought in from outside the organization. Given the cognitive demands of starting a training class while getting to know a large number of trainees, instructors may rely on simple social categories or stereotypes to form baseline impressions of trainee attributes (e.g., a graduate instructor may observe that an incoming class reminds her, demographically, of a previous class that was particularly strong academically). Through representativeness bias, instructors may judge how likely it is that a person belongs to a certain group on the basis of whether his or her characteristics are similar to the characteristics associated with the category (Aguinis & Adams, 1998; Fiske & Taylor, 1991). That is, the more an individual resembles the average or typical member of a category, the more likely it is that the instructor will believe that he or she belongs to that category. Thus, a management trainee who dresses too casually for training may remind the instructor of other trainees who have washed out of similar programs. Unfortunately, this heuristic can lead to incorrect assumptions because there

are always exceptions to a category; thus this heuristic leads supervisors to overlook relevant information like base rates (Baron & Byrne, 1997). Fortunately, accurate categorization allows instructors to make good decisions with minimal information about how to introduce material. However, stereotyping may also result in inaccurate or unfair decisions about the group as a whole (see Dovidio & Fiske, this volume).

When trainers have access to formal information about trainees (e.g., data from a needs assessment or pretest), other interpersonal biases or errors may occur. The personal validation phenomenon refers to the tendency to believe that vague descriptions, which could apply to or be true of anyone or any group, are unique to the individual or group to which they are being attributed (Latkin, Littman, Sundberg, & Hagan, 1993). Thus, general statements made within the organization ("Workers today are lazy") may be taken as indicative of a specific training group. Unfortunately, using this heuristic leads to a failure to search for disconfirming evidence and failure to see that the description is generic enough to apply to others than those whom to whom they are attributed.

As instructors form rapid impressions of trainee attributes, committing the fundamental attribution error may lead them to attribute the trainees' presence in training to dispositional (e.g., ability deficits) rather than situational (e.g., escalating job demands) characteristics. To the extent that instructors hold implicit personality theories (Schneider, 1973) about the interrelationship of these traits and other characteristics related to learning styles, the instructors may adopt inappropriate or inefficient instructional tactics. For example, an instructor may believe that workers with difficulties mastering certain basic tasks are also those most likely to benefit from hands-on training.

The consequences of erroneous judgments of trainees' abilities, skills, or learning preferences can be severe. In traditional classroom settings, behavioral confirmation (or "self-fulfilling prophecies") have been well-documented; given incorrect initial impressions of student aptitude by instructors, instructors may act in such a way that they elicit (for better or worse) the characteristics that confirm their preconceived biases (Eden & Ravid, 1982; Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968).

Thus, we are suggesting that given the cognitive demands of beginning a new training program and incomplete data on trainees, trainers may rely on stereotypes or commit attribution errors or judgment biases that lead them to misperceive learners' capabilities and preferences for learning. As a result, the trainer may either "dumb-down" material, or present information too rapidly or too superficially for trainees in

attendance. Not only will these conditions undermine trainee learning but also will affect trainee motivation, which will further hamper in-class learning.

To avoid these consequences, trainers must realize the importance of collecting as much information as objectively as possible. For example, inventories can be administered during pretraining to assess trainee learning styles (e.g., Hayer & Allinson, 1997). As training starts, instructors should be aware of the potential for errors and biases introduced from the use of stereotypes and cognitive heuristics, and they should make the effort to see learners as individuals rather than as a homogeneous group of trainees.

Midtraining Perceptions. During the course of training, instructors may explicitly or implicitly seek feedback on trainee mastery of the content, or trainees' comfort with the style or rate of training. This may be done formally through quizzes, tests, or training reaction forms, or informally through perceptions of trainee learning or interest. The more the instructor relies on informal data collection, the more likely he or she is to make judgment errors that in turn will affect the quality of training.

At the beginning of a course, there may be several types of errors or biases committed by instructors that result in misperceptions of trainee performance. These largely parallel those probable at the onset of training with two exceptions. First, instructors' judgments of current performance in training may be influenced by judgments or knowledge of past behavior. Thus, to the extent that trainees struggle (or do exceptionally well) at the beginning of training, instructors' evaluations of their performance levels in the middle or at the end of training may be inaccurate. Further, by demonstrating an anchoring and adjustment bias, trainers may start with an initial reference point or anchor for their judgments (based on pre- or initial training states) and adjust their estimate or decision away from the anchor (Aronson et al., 1997). Unfortunately, this judgment is strongly tied to the initial anchor and often it is not adequately adjusted away from this value.

Second, judgments of high or low achievement during training by trainees may hold negative repercussions for both trainees and trainers. Trainers who anticipate giving negative feedback to trainees at the end of training may distort evaluations because of anxiety over anticipated exchanges. Also, trainee evaluations may be consciously or unconsciously affected by a social motive to present a positive image to self or others in the organization. Instructors may be more likely to commit self-serving

biases, in which they take credit for any improvements in trainee performance but blame trainee traits for lack of progress. Because classroom training is largely a dyadic experience, instructors may also be guilty of self-centered bias and take more credit for outcomes that were produced in conjunction with others than they deserve (Fiske & Taylor, 1991). Unlike the self-serving bias, it does not matter if the outcomes are a success or a failure. That is, trainers will claim responsibility for joint outcomes regardless of their favorableness. The consequence for learners is that they may not get proper reinforcement for their own effort and accomplishment.

Again, we suggest that trainers make attribution errors or judgment biases that lead them to misperceive and under-represent learner accomplishment. As a result, the trainer may fail to make midcourse adjustments that correct for learning deficits and may fail to adequately prepare learners to transfer newly acquired skills. That is, if the judgment of the instructor is that learning is slow but is the result of unintelligent or unmotivated trainees, then he or she would respond differently than if the perception was that learning was on-track or that lack of learning was attributable to the difficulty of the material. Similarly, the subliminal message that the material is simply too hard for trainees may undermine their motivation to transfer. As in the case of initial training perceptions, the remedy is for instructors to be as aware as possible of potential biases and to anchor perceptions on objective data as much as possible.

INTERPERSONAL PERCEPTION AND EVALUATION INFLUENCES ON POST-TRAINING PROCESSES

The training effectiveness literature suggests that successful transfer is primarily a function of three sets of factors: initial learning during training, trainee motivation or readiness to transfer, and direct organizational or interpersonal support for transfer (Tracey, Tannenbaum, & Kavanagh, 1995). In general, the greater the learning during initial training, the greater the potential for successful transfer (Noe, 1986). The effects of interpersonal perception and evaluation factors on learning during training were addressed in the prior section. Consistent with previous sections, we again propose that, in general, processes of interpersonal perception and judgment may affect post-training support variables that in turn affect employee motivation to transfer.

Motivation to Transfer

Beyond direct support from managers and peers, training effectiveness models posit that transfer of training is also facilitated by broad organizational support. Organizational support may be conceptualized primarily in terms of organizational transfer climate, defined by Rouillier and Goldstein (1993) as situations or consequences that inhibit or help trainees apply trained skills back on the job. Generally, these include situational cues (prompting application at appropriate times) and linking consequences (including feedback) to performance. Research on transfer climate suggests that climate matters at least in part because of its effects on trainee characteristics: Facilitating climates increase trainee focus, motivation, and intentions to transfer (Tracey et al., 1995; Rouillier & Goldstein, 1993). Thus, it is valuable to understand the influence of interpersonal perception and judgment processes on employee motivation to transfer.

Given some learning during training, trainees' transfer of that learning back to the job is largely a function of two mutually influencing factors: readiness or motivation to transfer (i.e., is there willingness to try to apply what was learned) and organizational and managerial support for transfer (i.e., will efforts to transfer be reinforced or maintained). Trainee readiness to transfer refers to the willingness to try to apply newly learned skills and knowledge to the job; it is based on the value trainees attach to training, their expectancies that transfer will be successful, and their perceptions of the training climate (Noe, 1986).

Perceptions of the value of training and expectancies for success are largely affected by encoding the reactions, perceptions, and evaluations of others. Trainees' perceptions of the perceived importance (to the organization) of training, the quality of the training itself, and the value supervisors or other workers place on training affect motivation to transfer. Van Maanen (1978), among others, noted the tendency of veterans to warn newcomers to, "forget everything they learned in training." Other motivational states or dispositional traits may influence trainee readiness to transfer. Trainees with clear expectancies regarding post-training outcomes may be more likely to apply newly trained skills, as may trainees who have well-defined behavioral goals (often called action plans by trainers). Ford, Quiñones, Sego, and Sorra (1992) found that employees high in self-efficacy were more likely to seek out opportunities to apply newly trained skills. Finally, although the notion is untested, it is likely that trainees holding a mastery orientation would be more willing to try to apply new skills to the job and be more likely to persist in new behaviors should they encounter performance difficulties.

How might interpersonal perception and evaluation factors influence employee readiness to transfer? As with pretraining motivation to learn, errant attributions by supervisors (through the fundamental attribution error) when conveyed to the subordinate may undermine expectancies regarding improvements in post-training error. Specifically, if the initial poor performance is attributed to dispositional causes (e.g., "You're not smart enough") rather than to situational ones (e.g., "You haven't been trained on this new equipment"), then trainees may lack self-efficacy returning to the job environment. Further, self-serving biases may cloud supervisors' judgments regarding the role they played in the initial problem; accordingly, trainees may return to the job anticipating that many of the same pretraining obstacles to performance are still in place (Latham & Crandall, 1991).

Support for Transfer

Other research has shown that supervisory support for trainees before or after training may facilitate motivation to transfer (see Baldwin & Magjuka, 1997). Ford et al. (1992) found that supervisors gave some employees more opportunities to perform newly trained skills than they gave to other employees. Baldwin and Magjuka (1991) reported that trainees entering training expecting some kind of supervisory follow-up displayed stronger intentions to transfer what was learned to the job.

Given the important role of the supervisor in conveying expectations and assigning work, it is valuable to reconsider potential leader-member exchange effects. Recall that LMX theory posits that supervisors will establish unique dyadic relationships with each subordinate, in part, because of social categorization of subordinates as in-group and out-group members. Accordingly, it is reasonable that subordinates returning from training may receive differential support, expectations, or job assignments from the same supervisor. An interesting research question, but perplexing practical problem, is whether in-group or out-group designation moderates transfer of training through effects on employee motivation and perceived support.

There have been some research efforts but few institutionalized attempts to measure trainee perceptions of transfer climate. The preceding discussion would suggest that such efforts might have considerable value in that unanticipated differences in employee readiness to transfer may emerge. That is, organizations may assume that employees differ in their capacity to apply trained skills on-the-job but only in relationship to differences in

initial learning. By measuring trainee motivation to transfer and perceptions of perceived organizational and managerial support, organizations may identify other sources of variance in transfer readiness that result from interpersonal evaluation and judgment factors. Supervisors of workers with low readiness can provide additional training or support even if natural interpersonal processes have not "greased the pump" in the past.

SUMMARY

The objective of this chapter was to speculate on how to consider the effects of interpersonal perception and evaluation processes that may influence judgments made by supervisors, trainers, and others during formal and informal aspects of employee training programs. Our analysis was done from the perspective of training effectiveness models that highlight the impact of social influences on training outcomes. According to these models, training success is affected by both organizational and individual factors before, during, and after training. Employee attitudes and motivation, particularly self-efficacy and motivation, mediate relationships between antecedent factors and employee learning. At each stage of training, supervisors, trainers, and other organizational members may make judgments about trainees' capabilities, accomplishments, and readiness to learn or transfer. These judgments may be affected by numerous attribution errors or biases consistent with those reported in the cognitive heuristics literature. As a result, employee attitudes and motivation may be affected, and employee learning may be minimized. To counteract these effects, organizations are encouraged to rely on multiple sources of information and question the veracity of judgments made about trainees.

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