

Learning Transfer and Reflection



Hello, and welcome to our video - Learning Transfer and Reflection, and what you need to know to make it work for you. So, firstly let's think about why reflection is so important in learning transfer. You may have heard me say before that you can't remind your way into change. People often try and send reminders out after a training program reminding people of content, reminding people of what they've learnt, reminding them of what they've committed to doing, but that won't create change. What actually creates change is when people take time to reflect on how the learning is working for them. Reflection is of the utmost importance in the transfer of learning. In fact, reflection is at the heart of the Kolb Adult Learning Principles and you'll remember the Adult Learning Cycle which is experience, observation, reflection and then change (To read more, look at <http://www.nwlink.com/~donclark/hrd/styles/kolb.html>). So when someone is back in the work place, they'll actually be doing an action or a new process that they've tried to put into place, they'll observe themselves, how they're doing it and what's happening, and then they'll reflect, 'what's working; what's not working; what do they need to change' and then they'll actually put changes in place. That's how adults learn.

So what is it that makes reflection so difficult? I think one of the main challenges with reflection is that it sounds so intangible and I think people get it confused with daydreaming. Reflection sounds very soft, and it sounds as if it's not actually going to add that much value. In today's world where we're very outcome focused, it just doesn't sound as if it's going to help. Actually, reflection is very valuable. I encourage you not to think of it as something that will really help people transfer learning.

What can you do to make sure your reflection is effective? I've broken effective reflection down into three areas. This is to make sure the reflection is Structured, Specific and Accountable. Let's think about what we mean by structured reflection. For me, this actually means setting aside time for reflection, whether that's time by yourself, or time discussing it with a coach or manager, making sure that you structure the way that you reflect. It may be that you choose to reflect at the end of every day, or the end of every week or that you put an appointment time in your diary. Just make sure you put some structure around the process for the time you're going to put aside to reflect, and to reflect on your learning transfer.

Within structured reflections, you'd want to ask yourself specific questions. It can be as easy as 'what's gone well with that transfer process, and what do I need to do differently now?' Or it could be more in depth asking yourself what the top

three things are that you're learning through the learning process, and the top three things that you need to do differently. Get into the habit of asking yourself some specific questions, and structuring the reflection that way. You can make it even more specific by using your Action Plan. Your Action Plan will guide you on the specific things that you are reflecting on. They are the items that you wanted to put in place post learning, and they are what you captured at the end of the learning process.

So, Structure relates to your time and the questions that you ask, and Specific is the Action Plan that you're focusing on.

Finally, we need to make sure that the reflection is accountable. I guess by that obviously, the reflection isn't being held accountable; it's you that's being held accountable. You need to find a way that no matter what the outcome from your reflection is, someone holds you accountable for putting that into place. In all honesty, it is hard to hold yourself accountable, but it's not impossible. You can always use a buddy, or a manager, or a coach, just someone to make sure that you'll be held accountable for putting into place what you commit to as you come out of your reflection phase. For our learning transfer process Turning Learning into Action we use effective reflection by making it structured, by having three 30 minute telephone sessions, we make it specific by using the Action Plans set at the end of the training program, and we hold the person accountable; because they are actually working with a coach. Now you can do that internally with managers, or an internally trained team or you can set up a process to help yourself with reflection.

I hope you have found this video useful, in terms of how you can think about reflection to support transfer of learning within your business. Do stop by the website www.leverlearning.com to have a conversation with us or to find out more. Look forward to hearing from you, and good luck in your learning transfer.