

The Transfer-First Training Design Loop

1. What Performance Need Are We Addressing?

Five Common Performance needs:

1. Known Performance Scar

- A recurring error or inefficient response observed in training or the field.
- Example: Officers stop evaluating after shooting.

2. New Equipment

- Equipment changes require new perception-action relationships.
- Example: New Taser, optic, holster, body camera.

3. New Law or Policy

- Legal, policy, or procedural updates requiring behavior change.
- Example: Updated pursuit policy, Supreme Court decision.

4. New Capability

- Teaching something genuinely new.
- Example: High risk vehicle stop procedure changes, Drone operations, Breaching, Active violence/threat response.

5. Capability Enhancement

- Refining an existing skill or improving transfer.
- Example: Better communication, improved handcuffing, better searching, improved prediction during vehicle stops.

2. Where Are the Learners Starting At?

Existing Knowledge

- What do they already know?

Existing Beliefs

- What do they believe?
- Correctly or incorrectly.

Existing Automaticity

- What behaviors are already wired?
- Replacing automaticity is very different from creating it.

Existing Transfer

- Where are they already successful?
- Don't rebuild what already works, build from it.

Existing Motivation

- Why should they care?
- WIFM, what's in it for them?

Existing Confidence

- Is their confidence proportional to their skills and abilities?
- You can have new learners with high confidence that is beyond their capabilities.
- You could also have a highly competent person who is returning after an OIS or extended time away who has low confidence.

3. What Resources & Constraints Do We Have?

- How much time do we have? Can we utilize spacing?
- How many instructors? Can we utilize interleaving?
- How experienced are the instructors/role players?
- What equipment, lesson plans, safety plans, facilities do we have?
- Can we leverage 'Group Facilitation' to make far better use of training time?
- What expectations are on us as the trainers? Are those expectations realistic?

4. What Experiences Will Produce Transfer?

What experiences will move them toward the criterion environment?

- A. What part of 'The Transfer-First Learning Loop' needs improving?

**Perception → Attentional Regulation → Sense-Making → Prediction →
Decision → Action Error & Success Detection → Adaptation**

- B. Which Performance Domain?

- i. Rapid Sense-Making (less than 2 seconds)
- ii. Extended Sense-Making (more than 2 seconds)
- iii. Execution Domain

- C. How far 'upstream' can we design to address multiple performance increasers in one set of experiences?

How many of the '6 Dials for Improving Transfer' can we manipulate in the training?

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| i. Learner Motivation | iv. Emotional Engagement |
| ii. Early Context and Relevance | v. Guided Exploration |
| iii. Random & Variable Practice | vi. Reduced Bandwidth Feedback |

5. How Can We Prepare the Learners?

Ahead of time &/or in the training

Can we prime ahead of time?

The goal is to have the learners show up with 'useful knowledge activated'

Can we prime them at points in the training to increase:

- Motivation
- Knowledge
- Attention
- Expectations
- Performance mindset
- Regulation
- Motor readiness

Example: “What are you going to struggle with in this training session?”

6. What am I noticing, and What Should I Adjust?

Observe - Confirm - Adjust - Repeat

What experiences will move them toward the criterion environment?

Not what drills, not what lesson plan, what experiences do they need to have?

Observe

Objective behaviors

Confirm

Curious questions

Adjust

Instructor dials:

- Challenge
- Confidence
- Attention
- Autonomy
- Contextual Pressure
- Cognitive Load
- Motor Demand

Then loop back to observation like a mini-loop inside the loop

How are we giving feedback?

Do we need to speak to the learner, or can we just provide an environment/situation/drill that helps them to improve?

If we do need to speak to them to give feedback, are we making sure to ‘Pull’ with well formulated questions?

7. What Did the Learner Discover?

After each repetition or drill, do we challenge the learners to reflect at a minimum using the 4 AAR questions?

At the end of the training are we having other reflection's like:

- Biggest learning?
- Biggest improvement?
- Biggest surprise?
- What will change next time?
(key question as the point of reflection is to shape attention and intention for the next time)

8. How Will We Strengthen Retention & Transfer?

What knowledge, skill, decision, mindset can we boost?

Examples:

- Follow-up email
- Roll-call question
- Short discussion
- Video
- Retrieval practice
- Brief drill
- Supervisor conversation
- Partner discussion

9. What Did I Learn as the Designer & Instructor?

This is not an evaluation of the learners.

Questions like:

- Did the experience create the intended learning?
- What surprised me?
- What assumptions did I make?
- What new scars did I discover?
- What necessary experiences do they need next?
- What would I change when delivering this lesson again?

10. What Will the Next Session Look Like?

Step #9 should naturally lead back to the beginning of this Transfer-First Training Loop

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TRAINING
ON PURPOSE, BY DESIGN