

# Analyzing The Effectiveness Of A Training Program

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## Introduction

Training creates value only when it improves the knowledge, skills, decisions, or work practices that an organization actually needs. Attendance, presentation quality, and participant satisfaction are not sufficient evidence of effectiveness. The original ERP training experience illustrates this distinction. Employees were expected to become competent users and later support colleagues, yet the course relied on technical jargon, moved too quickly, provided little opportunity for questions, and did not require meaningful practice. The failure became visible only when participants returned to work and could not use the new platform. An effective evaluation should have identified the problem before operational performance was affected. This analysis treats the course as a failed learning system and examines [needs assessment](#), instructional design, learner support, practice, transfer, and evaluation. It then proposes a redesigned ERP program in which evidence is collected before, during, immediately after, and several weeks after training.

## Reconstructing the Intended Performance

The first task is to define what participants were supposed to do differently. “Understand the ERP system” is too vague for design or evaluation. The intended performers were employees selected as ERP users and possible peer trainers. Their tasks may have included logging in securely, navigating role-specific dashboards, entering and validating records, completing transactions, producing reports, correcting common errors, escalating technical problems, and explaining standard procedures to colleagues. Each task requires observable performance criteria. For example, a trainee might be expected to complete a test transaction accurately within a specified time, identify an invalid entry, and follow the correct recovery procedure without instructor assistance. Once outcomes are stated this way, the organization can align content, practice, assessment, and workplace support. The original course appears to have emphasized information delivery without first translating implementation goals into job behaviors.

## Failure Point One: No Adequate Training-Needs

## Analysis

A training-needs analysis distinguishes a skill deficit from other causes of poor performance. At the organizational level, planners should clarify why the ERP system is being introduced, which processes will change, and what implementation risks matter most. At the task level, they should map workflows and the knowledge required at each step. At the person level, they should assess employees' prior computer experience, job roles, language needs, confidence, and access to equipment. The original participants varied in technical familiarity, yet the course assumed a shared vocabulary and pace. A short pre-course survey, diagnostic task, and interview with supervisors could have revealed this variation. Participants could then receive preliminary digital-skills support or be grouped by role. Training cannot compensate for an unstable system, unclear procedures, inadequate permissions, or absent management support; these conditions must be identified separately.

## Failure Point Two: Cognitive Overload and Technical Jargon

ERP platforms integrate multiple processes, so novice users must learn new concepts while also navigating unfamiliar screens. Dense terminology and rapid demonstrations overload working memory. The problem is not that technical language should be eliminated; users eventually need accurate vocabulary. It should be introduced in context, defined plainly, and connected to a familiar work task. Instruction can be segmented into short modules, each centered on one workflow. A trainer might first demonstrate a complete process, then explain its components, provide a guided example, and finally ask participants to perform it independently. Screenshots, annotated job aids, and consistent labels reduce unnecessary mental effort. Trainers should pause at predictable decision points and check understanding through questions or performance rather than asking only whether anyone is confused.

## Failure Point Three: Passive Attendance Instead of Deliberate Practice

The moment when participants failed at their workstations showed that listening had been mistaken for learning. ERP competence is procedural. It develops through hands-on practice that resembles the real task, includes feedback, and gradually removes assistance. Demonstrations and audiovisual material are useful, but they cannot replace performance. Each participant needs access to a safe training environment populated with realistic data. Early exercises can provide step-by-step prompts; later scenarios should require diagnosis and independent choice. Practice should include ordinary transactions as well as common exceptions, because employees often fail when the system behaves differently from the demonstration. Errors should be treated as information rather than

embarrassment. Immediate, specific feedback helps trainees understand whether the error involved knowledge, attention, navigation, or misunderstanding of the business rule.

## Failure Point Four: The Train-the-Trainer Goal Was Unsupported

The course expected participants not only to use the platform but also to train other employees. These are different competencies. A competent user may not know how to explain a process, diagnose another person's mistake, pace a demonstration, or respond to resistance. A train-the-trainer program should first certify operational competence and then add facilitation skills. Participants can practice brief demonstrations, use standardized guides, answer common questions, and receive feedback on clarity. They also need boundaries: peer trainers should know which problems they can solve and which require the ERP support team. Without this second layer, the organization risks multiplying misunderstandings as partially trained employees teach others. The original program treated peer instruction as an automatic result of system exposure instead of a separate performance outcome.

## Evaluation as a Chain of Evidence

Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick's four-level model provides a useful organizing framework when it is not treated as a simple hierarchy. Reaction asks whether participants found the training relevant and usable. Learning asks whether knowledge and skill changed. Behavior asks whether employees apply the capability at work. Results ask whether the program contributes to organizational outcomes such as fewer errors, faster processing, better reporting, or smoother implementation. Positive reaction does not prove learning, and a successful test does not guarantee workplace transfer. Conversely, weak business results may reflect system downtime or poor process design rather than ineffective learning. Evaluation should therefore connect the levels through a logic model: resources and activities produce learning, learning is supported in the workplace, behavior changes, and operational outcomes follow.

## What to Measure Before and During the Course

Baseline data are necessary to demonstrate change. Before training, participants can complete a knowledge check and several representative tasks in a sandbox. The assessment should record accuracy, time, help requests, and types of error. During each module, low-stakes checks can identify misconceptions while correction is still possible. Trainers can use observation rubrics rather than relying on self-confidence, because novices may overestimate or underestimate ability. Attendance and engagement data are useful for implementation monitoring but are not outcomes. Trainers should also document whether equipment, user accounts, examples, and instructional time were

available as planned. These fidelity measures help distinguish a poor course design from a well-designed program that was not delivered properly.

## End-of-Course Certification

The final assessment should reproduce critical job tasks without simply repeating practice questions. A participant might receive a scenario requiring several connected actions, an error to diagnose, and a short explanation intended for a colleague. Performance standards should be established before the course and based on operational risk. A high-stakes financial or compliance transaction may require perfect accuracy, whereas a low-risk report may permit minor correction. Participants who do not meet the standard need targeted remediation rather than a certificate based on attendance. Assessment data should be reviewed by task, revealing whether one screen, concept, or workflow caused widespread difficulty. That analysis feeds improvement back into the course.

## Testing Transfer at the Workstation

The most important evaluation occurs after participants return to work, but it should not be delayed until failure becomes costly. Supervisors or trained observers can review performance after one week and again after four to eight weeks. Useful indicators include transaction accuracy, processing time, rework, support tickets, correct use of system controls, and adherence to the revised process. Employee interviews can identify obstacles such as missing permissions, workload, or contradictory supervisor instructions. A comparison with baseline or with a phased implementation group strengthens the inference that training contributed to change. The organization should avoid intrusive surveillance and use data for support as well as accountability. Transfer depends on opportunity to perform, manager reinforcement, accessible job aids, and rapid technical assistance (Baldwin & Ford, 1988).

## Business Results and the Limits of ROI Claims

ERP training may contribute to reduced errors, improved data completeness, faster reporting, shorter service cycles, or more consistent monitoring. These outcomes should be selected because they connect to the implementation purpose, not because they are easy to count. Financial return on investment can be estimated when costs and attributable benefits are credible, but exaggerated precision should be avoided. System configuration, process redesign, staffing, and management behavior also influence results. A sensible report presents training costs, changes in performance indicators, alternative explanations, and the confidence of the estimate. It does not claim that every organizational improvement was caused by the course. Meta-analytic evidence shows that organizational training is generally effective, while design and evaluation features influence outcomes (Arthur et al., 2003).

# A Redesigned ERP Learning Path

The revised program should begin with role and skill diagnostics, followed by short prerequisite modules for employees who need them. Core instruction should use plain language, role-specific workflows, guided demonstrations, sandbox practice, feedback, and increasingly complex scenarios. Class size should allow every trainee to perform tasks and ask questions. Participants should receive searchable job aids and access to a support channel. Operational certification should precede a separate peer-trainer module. Managers should schedule protected practice time and reinforce use after launch. Evaluation should combine baseline tasks, module checks, final performance assessment, early workplace observation, follow-up indicators, and participant feedback. This sequence addresses the original causes of failure rather than merely extending the lecture.

## Conclusion

The ineffective ERP course did not fail because training is inherently a waste of time. It failed because the program was not designed around learner differences, observable job tasks, deliberate practice, and transfer. Technical jargon, rushed delivery, limited questions, and the absence of realistic performance assessment allowed attendance to be mistaken for competence. A stronger program begins with needs analysis and creates a chain from organizational purpose to task outcomes, instruction, practice, certification, workplace support, and business results. Evaluation should occur throughout that chain, not only after employees struggle. When evidence is used diagnostically, training becomes an accountable intervention that can be improved rather than a one-time event that organizations repeat without knowing whether it worked.

## References

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