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**Beyond Training:  
An Evaluation of Transfer from the Tertiary Setting to the  
Corporate Environment**

**A thesis presented in partial fulfilment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
in Psychology  
at Massey University**

**Catherine Anne Collinson**

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## Abstract

This evaluation research investigated the extent to which work-related knowledge, skills, abilities and attitudes transferred from a post-graduate level, university-based training course back into the workplace. Respondents were rehabilitation case managers employed by a large public sector organisation concerned with all levels of rehabilitation provision and associated financial compensation. The longitudinal, multiple cohort study was designed to investigate not only the extent to which participants learned new work-related skills and attitudes on the course but also the organisational factors which facilitated or impeded the transfer and maintenance of new behaviours within the workplace. Participants in the study included: (1) four cohorts of case managers; (2) their workplace supervisors, and, (3) a group of case managers not enrolled in the training programme who comprised a randomly selected no-training control group. Cohort 1 was used as the pilot study group. Five surveys, linked to the different stages of the training programme, were administered to the trainees. There were significant problems associated with collecting reliable control group and supervisory data. These problems are discussed in terms of the various organisational barriers to effective learning which existed within the respondents' workplace. The main results showed that trainee characteristics were not associated with transfer; there were differences between the cohorts in their perceptions of their levels of occupational self-efficacy; over time the trainees increased their understanding of the course modules; during training the modules were perceived as relevant to their work but this was not sustained over time. The course content was sometimes transferred to the workplace through self-reported behavioural changes affecting clients, colleagues, stakeholders and caseload management. However, the trainees were somewhat dissatisfied with the level of support they received from their managers in transferring their training in rehabilitation into the workplace. According to the trainees organisational support for the training was not strong and management practices impeded the implementation of new ideas and did not provide on-going support or encouragement. These findings are interpreted using the perspectives on organisational learning provided by theorists such as Argyris and his colleagues and Dixon (1994, 1999). The discussion contextualises the research and provides reflections on the design and the process of the evaluation research and offers possible reasons for the lack of clear outcomes.

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“There is a tide in the affairs of men,  
Which taken at the flood leads on to fortune  
Omitted, all the voyage of their life  
Is bound in shallows and in miseries  
On such a full sea are we now afloat  
And we must take the current  
When it serves  
Or lose our ventures”  
(Shakespeare)

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my grandfather  
A. H. Hart  
All Black, 1924

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