FOR L&D LEADERS · TRAIN-THE-TRAINER PROGRAM

Training That Transfers.

A program for in-house trainers who want what they teach to show up in how people work, not only on the feedback form.

FOR

In-house trainers, HR and people development teams, and anyone who designs or delivers training inside an organization

FORMAT

Two modules of a half day to a full day each, with clinics and 1:1 design feedback in between

COHORT

Up to 8 participants with one trainer, up to 16 with two

DESIGNED AND LED BY

Bernhard Kerres
Bernhard Kerres & Friends GmbH, Vienna

© 2026 BERNHARD KERRES & FRIENDS GMBH

01 · THE GAP

Most training works in the room. Then it fades.

The feedback forms are full of fours and fives. Six weeks later, little has changed on the job. That is not the failure of individual trainers. It is the most researched problem in the field.

Training researchers have a name for it: the transfer problem, first framed by Baldwin and Ford in 1988. The evidence since then points in two directions at once.

0.62

Effect of training on individual behavior on the job.

ARTHUR ET AL., 2003 · COHEN'S D

.13

Link between an organization's training and its performance, across 159 studies.

KIM, CHANG & BELL, 2025 · CORRELATION

Training works for the individual. A meta-analysis of organizational training finds medium to large effects at every level of the Kirkpatrick model: reaction, learning, behavior and results.

Much of that effect is lost on the way to the organization. Across 159 studies, the relationship between an organization's training and its performance is positive but small. The two figures are measured differently and at different levels, so they are not a simple ratio. The direction, however, is clear: what is learned in the room does not reliably reach the organization.

The gap is a design problem.

The same research shows that the size of the effect varies with how training is provided and when results are measured. A second meta-analysis of 335 leadership training samples (Lacerenza et al., 2017) shows which design choices make the difference. In-house trainers control most of them.

Training That Transfers gives them the method, the language and the practice to design for transfer: from the first line of the invitation to the measurement months after the room.

© 2026 BERNHARD KERRES & FRIENDS GMBH

02 · AT A GLANCE

Two modules. Real designs. Feedback in between.

Participants do not leave with a certificate. They leave with one of their own trainings, redesigned from the result backward.

01

Who it is for

In-house trainers, HR and people development professionals, and managers who design or deliver training. New or experienced: everyone works on a training they own.

02

Format

Two modules of a half day to a full day each, spaced several weeks apart. In between: one-hour clinics, in a group or 1:1, and written feedback on every participant's design.

03

Cohort

Up to 8 participants with one trainer. Up to 16 with two.

04

What participants bring

One training they deliver or plan to deliver, described on a single page. And their best trick or tool from the training room.

05

What they take away

A redesigned training, a workbook and design canvas for every future program, and a shared language to explain design decisions to internal clients.

> *We do not judge the program by its feedback form. We judge it by the next training each participant designs.*

ABOUT BERNHARD KERRES

From artistic director of the Vienna Konzerthaus to a Silicon Valley startup to leadership development. Bernhard is an ICF PCC executive coach, founder of RolePlays.ai, and teaches at London Business School. His firm designs leadership and training programs for organizations.

© 2026 BERNHARD KERRES & FRIENDS GMBH

03 · THE PROGRAM

Experience first. Then the name for it.

MODULE 1

Begin at the end.

Participants feel the difference between content-first and results-first design before anyone explains it. The opening exercise is short, physical and memorable. We will not spoil it here.

From there, seven design principles in two parts. Three are thought backward from the result. Four build the training that delivers it.

STRATEGIC CHAIN · BACKWARD

01 Results
02 Behavior
03 Application

PRACTICE LOOP · FORWARD

04 Content 05 Demonstration
06 Practice 07 Reflection

In pairs, participants turn each other's training upside down, starting from one sentence: *"In six months, I want to hear from ___ that ___."* They then trace the Nine-Step Arc of the training they have just experienced, from invitation to follow-up, and run a pre-mortem on their own: six months on, the training has failed. Why? The steps after the room are almost always the weakest. The module closes with a peer exchange of the best tricks and tools in the room.

BETWEEN THE MODULES

The design leaves the room.

Each participant designs a short training of their own and submits it. One-hour clinics, in a group or 1:1, work through the first drafts. Every participant receives written feedback before Module 2.

MODULE 2

Training Clinic.

Each participant delivers a 15-minute mini-training to half of the group and receives structured feedback. One block stays deliberately open, built around what we observed in Module 1 and in the designs. The module closes with a shared reflection on what the cohort learned from each other.

© 2026 BERNHARD KERRES & FRIENDS GMBH

03 · THE FULL-DAY FORMAT

More time where transfer is decided.

The half-day format builds the method. Full days add depth in the two places most programs stay thin: practice and measurement.

01

Measurement design

Participants define the observable behaviors a training should produce and the indicators that show whether they occur. They learn to measure what happens weeks after the room, not only how the day felt, using Kirkpatrick read in reverse and Thalheimer's Learning-Transfer Evaluation Model.

02

AI-supported practice

Participants practice demanding conversations with an AI counterpart that varies the case and gives structured feedback, then design how to build that kind of rehearsal into their own trainings.

03

More cycles through the Practice Loop

More rounds of demonstration, practice and reflection on participants' own material, so that the principles become habit rather than knowledge.

Two tools, built by practitioners.

Both tools come from our own practice. They are part of the full-day format and can stay with the organization after the program.

RolePlays.ai

PRACTICE

An AI platform for rehearsing professional conversations. Participants meet a realistic counterpart, try different approaches, and receive structured feedback. Trainers learn to use it as the practice layer between sessions, where practice usually stops.

With Nella

MEASUREMENT

A privacy-first tool for measuring training effectiveness. It tracks defined target behaviors and observable indicators after the training, so that trainers and L&D see whether behavior changed, not only whether the day was rated well.

© 2026 BERNHARD KERRES & FRIENDS GMBH

04 · BUILT THE WAY IT TEACHES

The program is its own demonstration.

Every design choice in this program is one we teach. Participants do not only hear the principles. They sit inside them, and then take them apart.

WHAT WE DO	WHAT PARTICIPANTS EXPERIENCE	EVIDENCE
Two modules, weeks apart	Time to apply between sessions, then return with real material	Spaced programs showed about twice the transfer of single-block programs (Lacerenza et al., 2017)
Clinics and 1:1 feedback	Feedback on their own designs before they deliver them	Programs with feedback showed markedly stronger transfer than those without (Lacerenza et al., 2017)
Information, demonstration and practice together	Short input, facilitators modeling the principles live, practice on their own trainings	The strongest transfer of any delivery mode (Lacerenza et al., 2017)
Design backward from results	Every design starts with a six-month result sentence	Plan from Level 4 down (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2016)
Experience before concept	An exercise first, the theory after	Experiential learning cycle (Kolb, 1984)
Structured reflection after every block	Specific questions, never “How was it?”	Kolb, 1984; Schön, 1983
Pre-mortem	Imagine the training has failed, then find out why	Prospective hindsight (Klein, 2007)
Measure behavior, not satisfaction	Target behaviors defined up front and tracked afterward	Learning-Transfer Evaluation Model (Thalheimer, 2018)
Transfer continues after the room	Assignment, clinics, and a second module to show the result	Transfer as a repeated cycle of intention, attempt and feedback (Blume et al., 2019)

© 2026 BERNHARD KERRES & FRIENDS GMBH

05 · RESEARCH FOUNDATION

What the research shows.

The most useful evidence for design comes from Lacerenza and colleagues (2017): 335 independent samples, 26,573 trainees, an overall effect of δ = 0.76 for leadership training. More revealing than the average is how transfer to the job varies with the way training is delivered.

DELIVERY MODE	TRANSFER (Δ)
Information only (lectures, reading)	**0.45**
Practice only	**0.39**
Information and practice	**0.43**
Demonstration and practice	**0.71**
Information, demonstration and practice	**2.20**

δ is the corrected effect size on transfer to the job. The combined value rests on 45 studies and varies widely between programs: the average is strong, and individual designs differ enormously. That is exactly why design quality matters.

Practice with feedback changes behavior under pressure. In a Stanford study (Shaikh et al., 2024), 40 participants learned conflict resolution either from lecture material or through simulated practice with an AI counterpart and feedback. In a subsequent live conflict with a trained confederate, the practice group used 67 percent fewer competitive strategies and twice as many cooperative ones.

Transfer is a cycle, not an event. The Dynamic Transfer Model (Blume et al., 2019) describes transfer as intention, first attempt, feedback and adjustment, repeated over time. A program that ends with the last slide ends too early.

© 2026 BERNHARD KERRES & FRIENDS GMBH

05 · SOURCES

References.

A NOTE ON THE NUMBERS

d and **δ** express how far trained groups move, in standard deviations. By Cohen's convention, 0.2 is small, 0.5 medium and 0.8 large. **ρ** is a correlation corrected for measurement error, on a scale from –1 to 1. Effect sizes and correlations are different metrics and should not be divided into each other.

Arthur, W., Bennett, W., Edens, P. S., & Bell, S. T. (2003). Effectiveness of training in organizations: A meta-analysis of design and evaluation features. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 88*(2), 234–245.

Baldwin, T. T., & Ford, J. K. (1988). Transfer of training: A review and directions for future research. *Personnel Psychology, 41*(1), 63–105.

Blume, B. D., Ford, J. K., Surface, E. A., & Olenick, J. (2019). A dynamic model of training transfer. *Human Resource Management Review, 29*(2), 270–283.

Kim, J., Chang, H., & Bell, B. S. (2025). Organizational-level training and performance: A meta-analytic investigation. *Journal of Management*.

Kirkpatrick, J. D., & Kirkpatrick, W. K. (2016). *Kirkpatrick's four levels of training evaluation*. ATD Press.

Klein, G. (2007). Performing a project premortem. *Harvard Business Review, 85*(9), 18–19.

Kolb, D. A. (1984). *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development*. Prentice-Hall.

Lacerenza, C. N., Reyes, D. L., Marlow, S. L., Joseph, D. L., & Salas, E. (2017). Leadership training design, delivery, and implementation: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 102*(12), 1686–1718.

Schön, D. A. (1983). *The reflective practitioner: How professionals think in action*. Basic Books.

Shaikh, O., Chai, V., Gelfand, M. J., Yang, D., & Bernstein, M. S. (2024). Rehearsal: Simulating conflict to teach conflict resolution. *Proceedings of the CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems*.

Thalheimer, W. (2018). *The learning-transfer evaluation model: Sending messages to enable learning effectiveness*. Work-Learning Research.

© 2026 BERNHARD KERRES & FRIENDS GMBH

06 · WHAT STAYS

What stays after the program.

01

For participants

One of their own trainings, redesigned from result to reflection. A workbook and design canvas for every program they build next. An if-then commitment and an accountability partner.

02

For the organization

Trainers who open every request from an internal client with the question “What will be measurably different?”, and who can explain their design choices with evidence rather than preference.

03

For the next program

Training designed to be measured beyond the feedback form, and a group of trainers who have sharpened each other’s work and can keep doing so.

THE INVITATION

Let’s talk about your trainers.

Every cohort starts with a conversation: about your trainers, the programs they run, and what should be measurably different a year from now. One conversation is enough to see whether this program fits.

Book a conversation with Bernhard →

Bernhard Kerres

CEO · BERNHARD KERRES & FRIENDS · VIENNA

BERNHARD@BERNHARDKERRES.COM

BOOK.BERNHARDKERRES.COM/MEETINGS

© 2026 BERNHARD KERRES & FRIENDS GMBH