

Empowering Older Workers to Learn: Benefits of a Cognitive-Behavioural Intervention

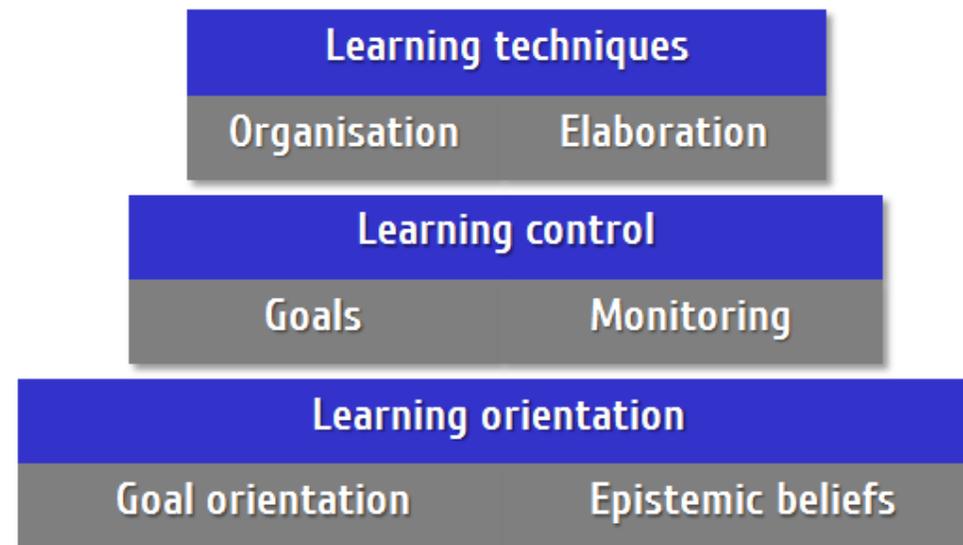
Christian Stamov-Roßnagel
Jacobs University Bremen
Germany

The learning landscape



Starting points

- More informal learning = higher self-regulated learning demands (see Sitzmann & Ely, 2011)
- Cognitive & meta-cognitive pre-training interventions improve learning
(Mesmer-Magnus & Visweshvaran, 2010).
- Few data on older workers, despite negative age-learning performance correlation
(see Ng & Feldman, 2008).



Learning is ...

... useless ("my boss doesn't care anyway"; "I'm doing a good job anyway";

"my colleagues don't learn either")

... dangerous ("what will the others think if me old hat attends a training")

... frustrating ("the young people are such quick learners, I always lag behind")



Research question

- Epistemic beliefs and memory self-efficacy mediate learning performance

(Schulz & Stamov Roßnagel, 2010; Stamov Roßnagel et al., 2009)



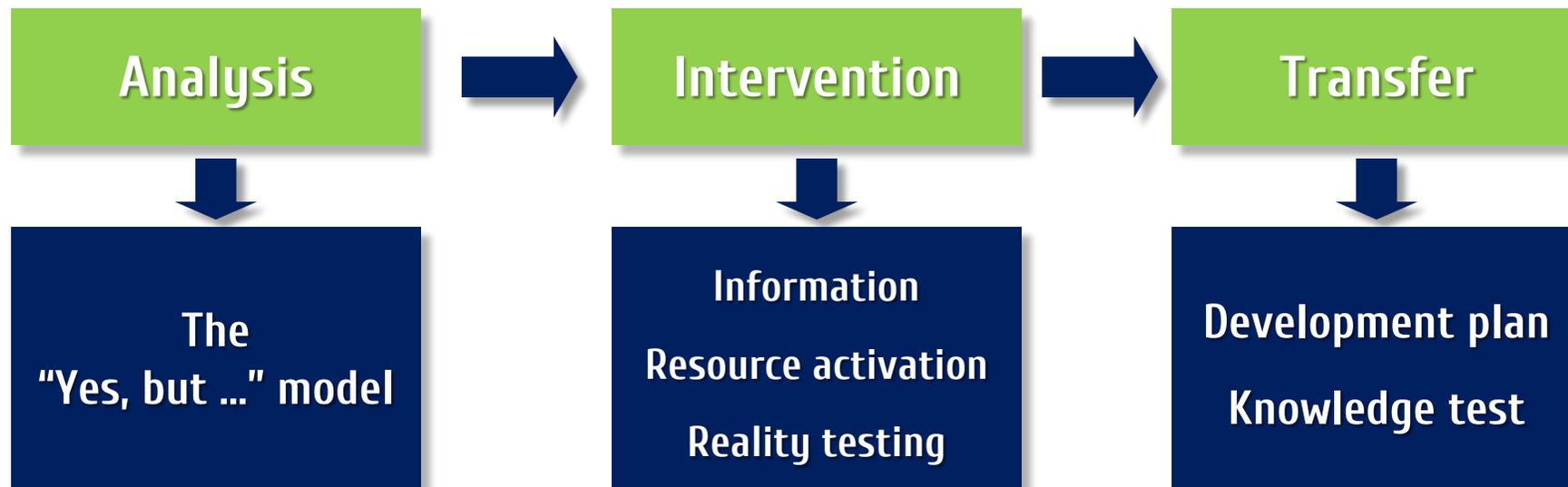
- ➔ Will motivational intervention increase learning performance?
- ➔ Will motivational intervention increase sense of empowerment and meaningfulness?

Method

- 57 production workers (M_{age} 51.4yrs, 39-63 years, 78% male); 28 workers assigned to intervention group
- Completed questionnaires on
 - Epistemic beliefs (e.g., "Training and development is of little use as it rarely applies to my everyday work")
 - Learning-related self-efficacy (e.g., "I feel capable of acquiring new knowledge for my job")
 - Psychological empowerment (e.g., "The work I do is very important to me")

Method

- Four 2-hour workshops aimed at changing individual learning models:
 - Participants explored their personal learning resources
 - were given information on age-related changes in learning
 - practised strategies to identify job resources
 - revised learning model in cognitive restructuring exercises



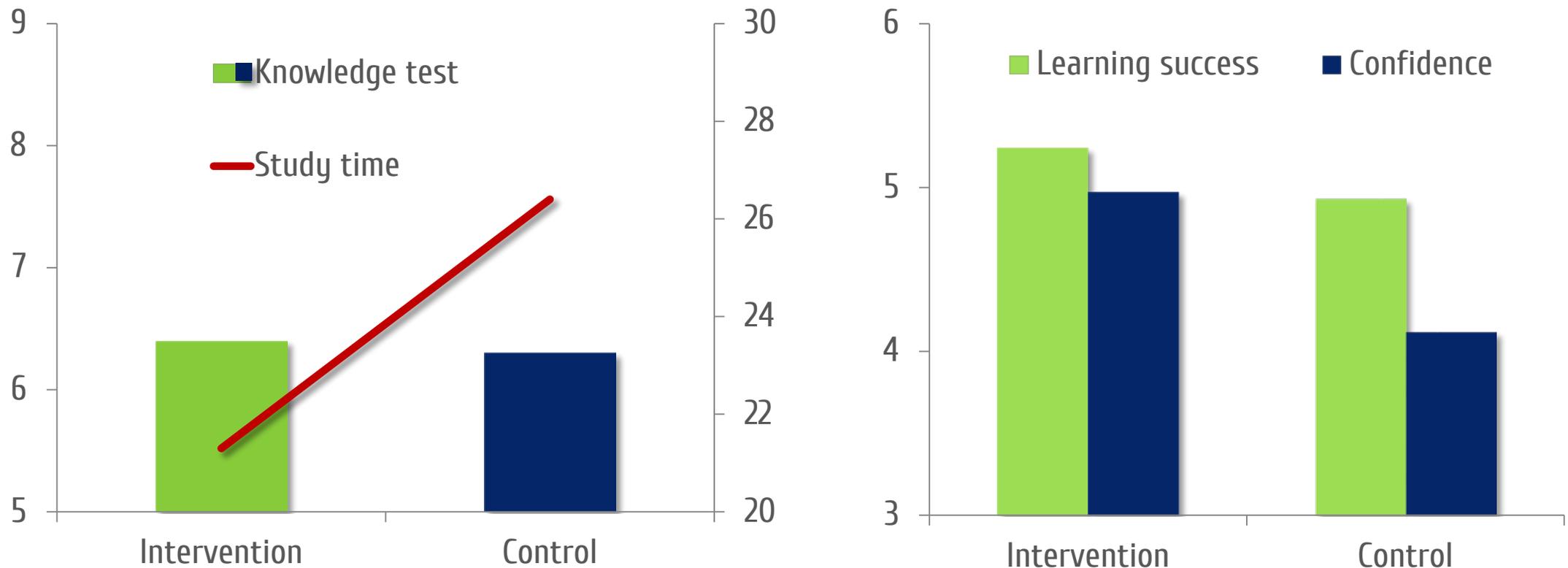
Method

- 3 months later, all 57 workers participated in evaluation
- 4-page expository text from company's training materials
- 9-question multiple-choice knowledge test
- Rated after each question confidence in giving correct answer (0-100%)
- Rated learning success in general
- Re-rated epistemic beliefs, learning-related self-efficacy, and empowerment

Results

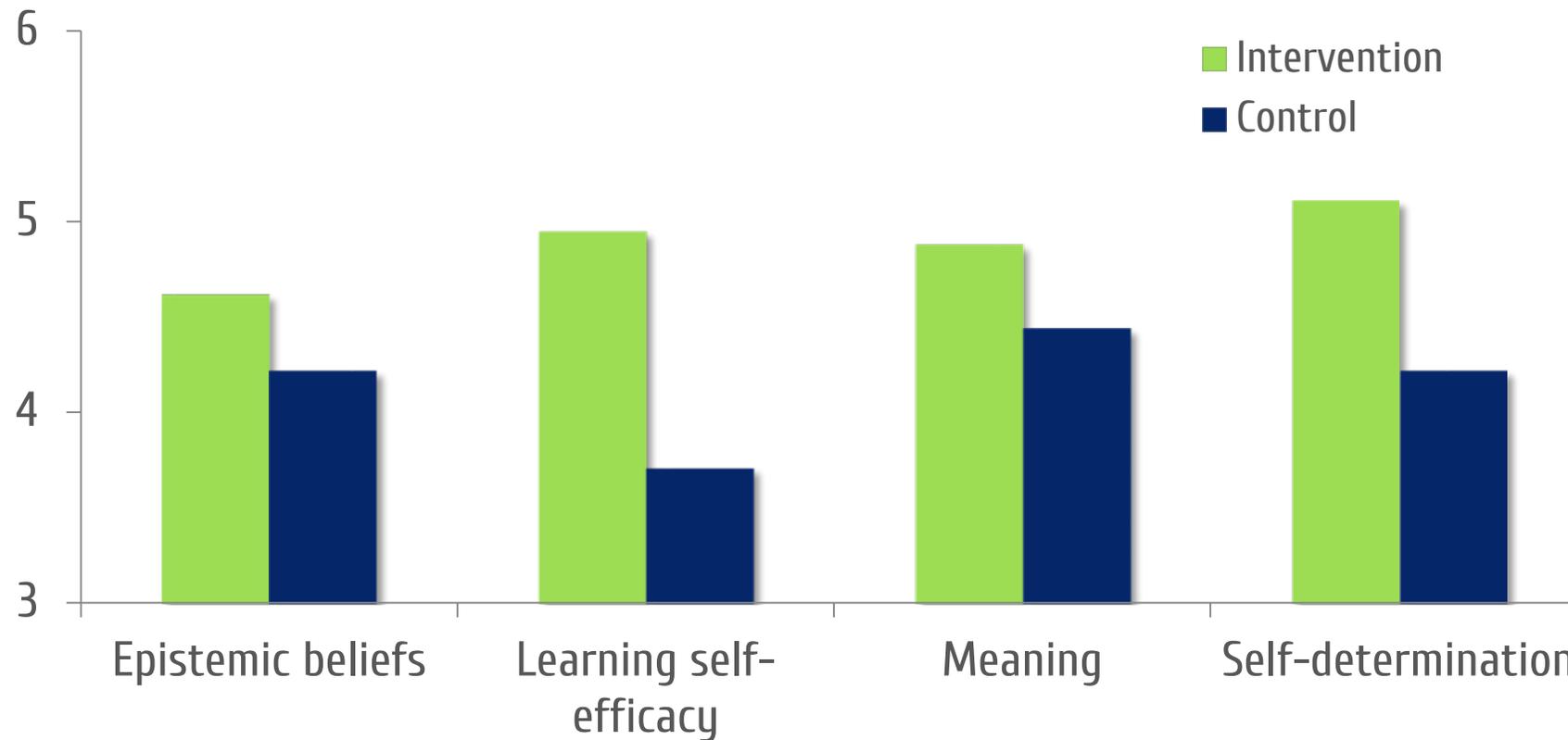
Learning time down by 20%

Confidence in learning significantly up



Results

More favourable epistemic beliefs, higher self-efficacy and sense of empowerment in intervention group



In sum



- Intervention has sizeable, more than short-lived effect
- Moderate verbalisation and self-reflexion demands; suitable beyond knowledge work
- Framework for other behavioural trainings (e.g., health promotion)



- Specific and unspecific training effects hard to disentangle
- Research into affective processes needed ("a look at the dark side")
- Not a "quick and dirty" intervention ...

Thank you very much!

Christian Stamov Roßnagel
c.stamovrossnagel@jacobs-university.de