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**MERIT SYSTEMS PROTECTION BOARD (MSPB) RELEASES NEW REPORT:
“MAKING THE RIGHT CONNECTIONS:
TARGETING THE BEST COMPETENCIES FOR TRAINING”**

In a newly released report, “Making the Right Connections: Targeting the Best Competencies for Training,” the MSPB recognizes that some abilities needed for Federal jobs may be inherently more difficult to learn than others. Research on mental abilities distinguishes among those that can be developed through training, those that are unresponsive to training, and those that are moderately responsive. This dimension is known as “trainability.” The purpose of this report is to contrast employee perceptions of the trainability of job-relevant abilities with research findings about the actual trainability of these abilities.

The MSPB’s goal is to help agencies use training resources to more effectively enhance individual and organizational performance by highlighting abilities for which training may be less beneficial than other organizational improvement strategies. These findings should increase the efficient and management of the workforce by reducing the number of futile and repeated trainings and by encouraging employees to pursue training in areas they might not have believed would be effective. The findings should also increase the effectiveness of employee selection by encouraging agencies to target critical abilities that are less responsive to training, ensuring that persons with those abilities are hired into the workforce. Finally, the findings may educate agencies, supervisors, and employees about effective training strategies and perhaps reduce the perceived unfairness sometimes associated with access to training opportunities.

As MSPB Chairman Susan Tsui Grundmann observes, “Employees who are better informed about the realities of what training can and cannot do for them will make better decisions about what training to request and how to benefit from it.” When agency leaders, supervisors and human resource professionals are also well informed about which abilities are

more responsive to training, they can work to increase the number of training opportunities that are likely to increase the abilities and effectiveness of their agency's workforce.

The U.S. Merit System Protection Board (MSPB) is an independent, quasi-judicial agency that protects Federal merit systems and the rights of individuals within those systems. The MSPB also conducts studies of the civil service and other merit systems in the Executive Branch. To request a printed copy of OPE reports, email STUDIES@mspb.gov; call (202) 653-6772, ext 1350; or write to the U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board, Office of Policy and Evaluation, 1615 M Street NW, Washington, DC 20419.