



## NEW TRENDS IN LEARNING

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### **Abstract**

*In 2015, there were many exciting advances in learning and development. A few of the biggest training trends were mobile, social learning, and gamification.*

*These things will definitely continue to evolve in 2016. But we see a bigger movement surrounding and encompassing them: **strategy and execution**. This is going to be a year about:*

- *Connecting training to **shared, big-picture business goals**;*
- ***Collaborating** with other internal teams to achieve outcomes;*
- ***Better measurement** of results; and*
- ***Pursuing the most effective solutions**, not just training for the sake of training.*

*By focusing on strategy and execution, teams will build a stronger foundation for training and, in turn, more effectively use things like mobile, social learning, and gamification to improve performance. Work smarter, not harder, right?*



### **Introduction**

A few weeks ago I was asked, “What does learning mean to you?” A rush of thoughts came to mind as I tried to formulate an answer to the question. The problem is, it’s not an easy question to answer.

My first thought was to school. After all, school, be it elementary school or college, is where I did most of my learning, right? I thought about the teachers I loved and the teachers I didn’t love so much. I thought about college professors and lab instructors and, again, there were those that inspired and those who regurgitated text books.

My second thought was to my career. After all, second to school, my career is where I did a great deal of learning, right? I thought about the opportunities to learn new technologies and work with people across the entire IT industry to make magic happen with technology. I continue to be exposed to amazing people and technologies every day — all of which offer a unique learning opportunity.

But, can I find what learning means to me from the institutions where I did a lot of learning? It occurred to me. It wasn’t at school or in my career where I did most of my best learning. It was life. For me, the real meaning of learning lay not in a school classroom or office cubicle but, rather, in the life I am living.

And, what about my 10 year old. She’s in grade 5. She has a lot to learn and is in the process of learning a lot at school right now. What does learning mean to her?

When asked what learning means to her, she responded with a very predictable, “I don’t know, Daddy.” So, because I hate an answer like that, it was time for a walk through the park and some quality daddy/daughter time. I asked again and again, in different ways, what learning meant to her.

As we skipped rocks over the mighty waters of Wascana Lake, our discussion got pretty deep at times. Then she said something that opened my mind just a bit more... She said, “Learning is, kind of, trying something new. It’s, like, when you’re not good at something but you believe, um, sort of, that you can be good at it if you try it.”



So how does this impact what learning really is?

Learning is, for me, an opportunity to use, today, what I am good at to broaden my horizons and become better than I was yesterday. To be creative. To deliver and execute a plan and work towards my goals. To play guitar. To write poetry and short stories. To ask my daughter a question and then shut up and listen to the wonder that she will spill. To encourage creativity. To never tell someone they can't do something. Learning is discovery.

Learning is creatively using our talent, our skills and experiences, our desires, and that which interests us to move beyond who we are today. It is confidently moving beyond the familiar and the 'safe' into the unknown. Learning is overcoming fear and perceived obstacles or barriers to discover what we're capable of accomplishing when we don't fear failure or judgment from others. Learning is discovering what motivates us to produce.

Learning is life... Life is learning.

The fact is that given the challenges we face, education doesn't need to be reformed — it needs to be transformed. The key to this transformation is not to standardize education, but to personalize it, to build achievement on discovering the individual talents of each child, to put students in an environment where they want to learn and where they can naturally discover their true passions.

Ken Robinson, *The Element: How Finding Your Passion Changes Everything* Learning is a focus on what inspires and motivates us, individually, to think and act outside the box and move beyond the familiar and into the unknown... to approach and face fear instead of avoid it.

### **Training Trends for the year Ahead**

#### **Alignment with Business Goals**

It's not enough to teach knowledge, skills, or behaviors just for the sake of it. Training must connect to big-picture, company-wide objectives. Team members and leaders have to ask, "What do we need to be able to do so we achieve our business goals?" and "How will we measure and show the impact of training on performance?" Starting with the end in mind helps ensure the best possible solution is implemented.

#### **More Cross-Department Collaboration**

Everything—from L&D and HR to marketing and sales—is connected. A problem in one area can have a ripple effect on other areas of the business. A gap in product or service training can result in negative customer experiences. That drags down brand perception, which in turn can hurt sales and employee morale.

Working together means a shared vision for both short-term and long-term goals. It opens the door to greater transparency and makes sharing data and correlating training to results easier.

#### **Improved Analytics**

More and more companies will call for reporting that goes beyond training completion rates and satisfaction surveys. Focus will shift to measuring changes in behaviors and KPIs such as revenue per employee and analyzing how those results correlate to training initiatives.

#### **Problem Solving**

New training courses or technology isn't always the answer to making people more productive or successful. Organizations will dig deeper to understand the root cause of performance gaps and find the right solution—which may or may not include training.

The companies that are going to take 2016 by the reins are the ones who smash silos, establish shared goals, fight for the *right* solution (not just any solution), and relentlessly measure performance and business results.

Students will be learning outside, armed with different devices, listening to a teacher of choice. Skills will not be assessed on paper but based on their performance in the field. What on earth are we talking about? Welcome to the future of education. As technology is rapidly changing the world around us, many people worry that technology will replace human intelligence. Some educators worry that there will be no students to teach anymore in the near future as technology might take over a lot of tasks and abilities that we have been teaching our students for decades. The thing is: Education will never disappear. It will just take up different forms. Here we list 9 things that will shape the future of education during the next 20 years.



1. **Diverse time and place:** Students will have more opportunities to learn at different times in different places. eLearning tools facilitate opportunities for remote, self-paced learning. Classrooms will be flipped, which means the theoretical part is learned outside the classroom, whereas the practical part shall be taught face to face, interactively.
2. **Personalized learning:** Students will learn with study tools that adapt to the capabilities of a student. This means above average students shall be challenged with harder tasks and questions when a certain level is achieved. Students who experience difficulties with a subject will get the opportunity to practice more until they reach the required level. Students will be positively reinforced during their individual learning processes. This can result in to positive learning experiences and will diminish the amount of students losing confidence about their academic abilities. Furthermore, teachers will be able to see clearly which students need help in which areas.
3. **Free choice:** Though every subject that is taught aims for the same destination, the road leading towards that destination can vary per student. Similarly to the personalized learning experience, students will be able to modify their learning process with tools they feel are necessary for them. Students will learn with different devices, different programs and techniques based on their own preference. Blended learning, flipped classrooms and BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) form important terminology within this change.
4. **Project based:** As careers are adapting to the future freelance economy, students of today will adapt to project based learning and working. This means they have to learn how to apply their skills in shorter terms to a variety of situations. Students should already get acquainted with project based learning in high school. This is when organizational, collaborative, and time management skills can be taught as basics that every student can use in their further academic careers.
5. **Field experience:** Because technology can facilitate more efficiency in certain domains, curricula will make room for skills that solely require human knowledge and face-to-face interaction. Thus, experience in ‘the field’ will be emphasized within courses. Schools will provide more opportunities for students to obtain real-world skills that are representative to their jobs. This means curricula will create more room for students to fulfill internships, mentoring projects and collaboration projects (e.g.).
6. **Data interpretation:** Though mathematics is considered one of three literacies, it is without a doubt that the manual part of this literacy will become irrelevant in the near future. Computers will soon take care of every statistical analysis, and describe and analyse data and predict future trends. Therefore, the human interpretation of these data will become a much more important part of the future curricula. Applying the theoretical knowledge to numbers, and using human reasoning to infer logic and trends from these data will become a fundamental new aspect of this literacy.
7. **Exams will change completely:** As courseware platforms will assess students capabilities at each step, measuring their competencies through Q&A might become irrelevant, or might not suffice. Many argue that exams are now designed in such a way, that students cram their materials, and forget the next day. Educators worry that exams might not validly measure what students should be capable of when they enter their first job. As the factual knowledge of a student can be measured during their learning process, the application of their knowledge is best tested when they work on projects in the field.
8. **Student ownership:** Students will become more and more involved in forming their curricula. Maintaining a curriculum that is contemporary, up-to-date and useful is only realistic when professionals as well as ‘youngsters’ are involved. Critical input from students on the content and durability of their courses is a must for an all-embracing study program.
9. **Mentoring will become more important:** In 20 years, students will incorporate so much independence in to their learning process, that mentoring will become fundamental to student success. Teachers will form a central point in the jungle of information that our students will be paving their way through. Though the future of education seems remote, the teacher and educational institution are vital to academic performance.

### Top E-Learning Trends for 2016 You Need to Know

There's no guarantee for what the future holds. However, by taking a closer look at current technology trends we can get a glimpse at what is to come in the eLearning Industry. Gamification, automation, and responsiveness are just some of the hot topics that we'll all be talking about over the course of the next year, and beyond. Staying up to date can **keep your**



**eLearning course relevant and relatable for modern learners** and improve your corporate online training strategy. Here are the top 6 eLearning trends of 2016 that you may want to keep an eye out for in the near future.

1. **Serious Games: Gamification in learning** has become increasingly popular in recent years. However, all signs point to the fact that it will become an integral part of online training in 2016. Organizations are starting to see the value of **developing a successful gamification strategy**, especially if reluctant or unmotivated corporate learners are involved. Serious games often involve badges, points, or leaderboards that provide that boost engagement and drive learners to do their best. They can also involve various levels that learners must complete, with each level focusing on a key lesson or topic. Even if you don't have prior game design experience, you still have the opportunity to develop winning serious games, thanks to advanced authoring tools that include **eLearning templates**, themes, and asset libraries.
2. **Automated Course Authoring:** Automation is a relatively new concept in the world of eLearning. Though many **eLearning** have offered eLearning templates, themes, and other online assets for some time, this year it's being taken to a new level. What does this mean for eLearning professionals? A drastic reduction in eLearning course cost and **development time**. A variety of tools are now integrating codes that automate the process. For example, you can now **create eLearning assessment** and games with minimal effort, or automatically detect learners' preferences in order to customize every aspect of their eLearning experience.
3. **Wearable Tech Training: Google Glass, Oculus Rift, and the Apple Watch** are just three of the **wearable gadgets** taking the world by storm. Wearable tech devices give learners the opportunity to interact with the subject matter in a more dynamic way. They also make eLearning more accessible and engaging for your audience, even those who don't usually have the time to receive formal training. In the near future, learners may have the chance to walk in virtual training environments and **immerse themselves in meaningful eLearning games**. Augmented reality has the power to drastically change the eLearning industry and completely transform the nature of online training. There are even 3D simulation and scenario tools that can make the eLearning design process easier and more cost efficient. With the advancements in modern technology, it appears that Virtual Reality (VR) training may be just around the corner.
4. **Big Data: Big data** is a big deal, especially in the realm of eLearning in 2016. It gives developers the ability to improve the eLearning courses, custom tailor every eLearning activity, and gain valuable insights into learning behaviors and preferences. By using analytics tools, which are built into a variety of **Learning Management Systems**, you have the power to fine tune your eLearning strategy and ensure that every aspect of your eLearning course is in-line with your goals and objectives. There are plenty of other feedback tools you can utilize, such as surveys, **focus groups**, and eLearning assessments. However, big data analytics give you concrete stats and numbers that delve into every element of your eLearning experience. Before choosing your next Learning Management System, make certain that it offers the reporting features you need and focuses on key areas of your eLearning course design and audience research.
5. **Responsive Learning Management Systems: Responsive design courses** are accessible on all platforms and devices. In essence, the Learning Management System or authoring tool automatically adjust the eLearning course elements, from text blocks to images, based on screen size and resolution. This ensures that every member of your audience gets the same eLearning experience and benefits from your eLearning course. When you are looking for the ideal responsive Learning Management System opt for one that has a built-in previewer and customization tool. These features allow you to get a glimpse of your eLearning course on different mobile device screens, then manually **adjust certain elements to improve the aesthetics and eLearning course navigation**.
6. **Cloud-Based Systems:** Everything is better on the Cloud, which is probably why so many Learning Management System and authoring tools are now switching to cloud-based platforms. **Cloud based corporate training has been steadily growing in popularity**, but it's expected to surge in 2016. This is primarily due to the fact that many organizations are beginning to see that the pros far outweigh the cons. Data security has been a major issue in the past. However, advanced encryption measures are improving the safety of sensitive data on the Cloud. Companies who take a cloud-based approach have the opportunity to **reduce online training costs** and make it more accessible for their employees. They can also scale their online training initiatives with ease and update the content in a matter of minutes to include new product specs and features.



### **Competency-Based Program Development**

Imagine the possibilities if we were able to graph every economic opportunity by the skills needed to achieve those opportunities, the company's profiles that can offer those opportunities, and the professional profiles of every individual in the global workforce who can meet those needs. This is the goal of the LinkedIn Economic Graph Challenge. As more and more great training organizations have access to larger amounts of data that link competencies with job performance, organizations are spending more time putting together curated sets of courses and learning aids that allow the learner to develop the skills they need to improve their impact. Leveraging crowd sourcing of competency data and matching that data with shorter, more focused learning, encompasses a few of the trends we see emerging in the training market. We need to look for ways to develop training roadmaps that organize and curate content into competency-based programs for specific jobs, roles and skill levels.

### **Learning in the Cloud**

As enterprise and workplace systems evolve, so too are the technologies and tools that deliver training content and track learning activities. The traditional LMS has quickly evolved to cloud-based, SaaS (software-as-a-service) platforms that can be turned on and off with relative ease. Tools such as Workday, Namely, HR Cloud, and Cvent are providing a fast and flexible approach to managing small and large enterprise training organizations, single training events, as well as monitoring online, on-demand training programs. The introduction of workplace apps that allow us to deliver training content pre- and post-learning experience, or to better manage and track the effectiveness and efficiency of online training, will change how we use devices for training. Mobile apps are not just about how we access content, but in the future will be more about how we monitor learning and skill progression. In addition to speed and flexibility, these new environments are making measurement and data collection much easier. With the ability to target development at the skill level, testing becomes easier and the data the learning team collects becomes a better proxy of learning impact.

### **Emergence of Video as the Dominant Approach to Mobile Learning**

Mobile learning is not a new idea. Since the introduction of the mobile device, learning leaders have viewed mobile devices as another way to get training content in the hands of the learner at the point of application. Video has emerged as the dominant approach to deliver training content over a mobile device. We have not seen a widespread acceptance and adoption of structured courseware on a mobile device, especially the Smartphone. A learner's ability to access a video that demonstrates how a job or task should be done is proving to be one of the most effective methods for ensuring consistency in job tasks, as well as an efficient way to get information to the learner when they need it.

### **Renewed Emphasis on Instructor Quality**

Regardless the type of training, great training organizations are increasingly demanding that instructors have real-world experiences and share the stories necessary to give the training relevancy and reflect the values the company intends to portray. Virtual delivery has made it easier to attract subject matter experts (SMEs) to the delivery platform, but it's adding complexity to how we develop their delivery skills. Facilitators have become generalists in many content segments as they are priced and sourced as a commodity skill set. The challenge is in up skilling instructors – or properly preparing instructors to be quality communicators and SMEs – and developing the skill sets where they enhance the training experience. Expect to see more focus on instructor development and credentialing for virtual and classroom delivery.

### **Conclusion**

Success in the 21st century requires knowing how to learn. Students today will likely have several careers in their lifetime. They must develop strong critical thinking and interpersonal communication skills in order to be successful in an increasingly fluid, interconnected, and complex world. Technology allows for 24/7 access to information, constant social interaction, and easily created and shared digital content. In this setting, educators can leverage technology to create an engaging and personalized environment to meet the emerging educational needs of this generation. No longer does learning have to be one-size-fits-all or confined to the classroom. The opportunities afforded by technology should be used to re-imagine 21st-century education, focusing on preparing students to be learners for life.

What we learn with  
pleasure  
we never forget.