Trends in Learning Report 2016

Based on research from The Open University's
Institute of Educational Technology

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Trends in Learning Report 2016

The digital revolution is transforming how we live, work and interact. And it is changing the way we learn.

Rapidly advancing technology is influencing how people engage with and experience education, and how learning can be delivered to maximum effect. New opportunities for learning and development (L&D) are continually emerging: opportunities to make learning more effective, more efficient, and more responsive to the changing needs of people and organisations.

The Open University's (OU) Institute of Educational Technology (IET) is at the forefront of identifying and developing new ways to enhance learning through technology. Each year, we analyse the latest innovations in teaching, learning and assessment that are shaping the education landscape and explore the implications for workplace L&D.

This year's report looks at seven key learning trends: incidental learning, adaptive teaching, MOOCs, accreditation badges, analytics, e-books and mobile learning.

Harvesting incidental **learning**

We live in an age of rich information. With unprecedented amounts of knowledge available to us at the touch of a button, we are provided with unlimited opportunities to learn just by going about our everyday lives.

This is what's known as 'incidental' learning: learning without needing to be taught, in ways that are instinctive, unplanned, immersive and, at times, unintentional.

Incidental learning happens as we go about our daily lives, interacting with others, carrying out activities and using technology. It goes on throughout our lives, in many forms: play, exploration and discovery in childhood; teamwork, collaboration and problem-solving in adult life; immersion in another culture when learning a foreign language; and so on.

These are all examples of how we learn incidentally, and build a rich bank of knowledge over our lifetimes.

What does it mean for workplace L&D?

Incidental learning happens every day in the workplace, in a myriad of ways: induction processes for new staff; cross-functional teams working together; junior employees shadowing senior colleagues; and more. In such scenarios, workers investigate challenges, solve problems, and identify resources to help them do their jobs. They learn by being immersed in the workplace experience.

Incidental learning tends not to be valued by employers, as it's not structured, tutor-led or certified. But what if organisations could reap the vast potential of incidental learning, and use it to their advantage?

Some organisations already do this. They collect and share the incidental learning of their employees, promote valuable initiatives, and disseminate good ideas hatched outside the workplace.

And this is something we anticipate seeing more of in the future. Businesses will increasingly become aware of how staff learn incidentally and the potential value it holds. They'll recognise the important role it plays in building management capability, through knowledge-sharing, networking and negotiating activities. And they'll increasingly seek to capture and share this knowledge, in order to improve organisational productivity, performance and growth.

The challenge for businesses, of course, lies in how to use technology to harness incidental learning.

Technology has long been an enabler of incidental learning. Game designers embed incidental learning opportunities in computer games, by providing landscapes to be navigated, concealed rules to be inferred, and characters' motives to be interpreted. And these same principles can be applied to the gamification of workplace learning, which

seeks to implement aspects of gaming – such as competition, challenge and reward – to increase staff participation and engagement.

Meanwhile, online science applications, such as the iSpot citizen science platform, encourage people to share content and comment on topics such as wildlife. These technologies can be used to capture and share critical incidents in the workplace, across a variety of sectors, such as construction, health and transport, to enable staff to collaboratively identify solutions and learn from example.

And there's now a host of workplace applications designed to drive the sort of experiences that prompt incidental learning. These include internal social media platform Yammer, cloud-based collaboration tool Slack, and crowdsourced innovation management software IdeaScale.

These technologies – and a host of similar offerings – can be used by organisations to foster a culture where staff are encouraged to interact, explore and discover, share knowledge globally, and work together to solve challenges in new ways. For example, engineers can share learning on product development. Sales teams can collaborate on product launches. And line managers can exchange people-management experiences.

What's more, all employees can be given a platform to log their own incidental learning journeys as part of their professional development. Everyone can be encouraged to share the learning, experiences and insights they gain outside the workplace. In this way, the collective knowledge and expertise of your staff can be pooled to create an organisational 'learning bank', crowd-authored by the workforce itself. And importantly, this knowledge can be retained even after staff leave.

TIP

- Take a moment to consider the collective expertise within your workforce, and the value to the business of capturing it

- Faced with organisational issues such as siloed working and poor internal communication, it's worth exploring how incidental learning could help encourage a culture of sharing and collaboration

- Not only does incidental learning help address such challenges; it also helps drive productivity, performance and growth by capitalising on the collective knowledge of the workforce

- This can accelerate and enhance the professional development of your employees, resulting in high-performing, motivated and peer-supported teams, which is especially beneficial when it comes to aligning L&D strategy with company objectives

The power of adaptive teaching

Have you ever switched off during a training course, because your knowledge was more advanced than what was being taught? Or studied towards a qualification and struggled to grasp an aspect that the course skimmed over, as if it was common knowledge?

Everybody learns differently. We all have our own knowledge levels, and our own learning potential, strategies, experiences and preferences. Our attitudes to learning also vary, as we experience a range of emotional states when being taught. This is why we respond best to learning that is personalised to our individual requirements.

Adaptive teaching attempts to accommodate these differences, by adjusting learning content to address each individual's drives and challenges. It does this in a number of ways, such as adjusting to the pace at which students want to learn, taking existing knowledge into account, using gamification to make learning fun, and providing interactive support.

For example, if a person finds the content too easy, not much learning will actually take place. If they find it too hard, then they're more likely to give up. Adaptive teaching finds the 'sweet spot' between the two – which is unique to each individual – as this is where real learning happens.

And it does this by using learning analytics. Adaptive teaching is a data-driven, non-linear, computer-based approach to instruction. Adaptive programmes analyse data collected from learning activities and employ algorithms to modify content, in real-time, based on the results. This allows learners to progress at a speed they're comfortable with, and choose the sequence in which they prefer to learn.

The software also provides just-in-time feedback to learners, correcting errors and offering hints. And if a learner is stuck on a particular problem, the programme realises this, and offers additional input. This high-level of personalised support can have a significant positive impact on learning experiences and outcomes.

In a classroom environment, teachers aren't able to provide this sort of intensive, personal support to students. The immediate feedback that comes with adaptive teaching makes for a richer learning experience, and improves the effectiveness of training.

What does it mean for workplace L&D?

Adaptive technology is advancing at a rapid rate, with products being developed for the workplace, as well as homes and classrooms. And it offers powerful benefits for L&D. Insights gained by analysing data captured during training can help L&D departments evolve their learning offerings and maximise their impact.

Adaptive technology can also incorporate learners' interests into standard learning content. Training can be contextualised for specific industries, and shaped

> ## We all learn in different ways. Yet most teaching – in classrooms and online – assumes that we all take in information in the same way, at the same speed.

Mike Sharples,
Professor of Educational Technology, IET

TIP

- Adaptive teaching could be hugely beneficial if you're considering high-level apprenticeship programmes as part of your L&D strategy, particularly to help develop valuable STEM skills

- It would provide a faster, more effective way of fostering the cross-disciplinary skills needed to grasp converging technologies such as biotechnology, nanotechnology and data-driven technology

- As the convergence of technology accelerates, the need to upskill workforces with differing abilities and specialities increases

- In this context, virtual training scenarios, which adapt to provide a personalised learning experience and mentoring-style feedback, could help deliver a skilled, high-performance workforce

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to meet a business's particular needs. For instance, it is being deployed in the aerospace industry and in military situations to deliver simulation training. There are also simulators that help surgeons improve dexterity, and engineers progress innovation.

It's also being used for more everyday workplace L&D purposes. Adaptive courses can help professionals to experience project management, managers to work on stakeholder engagement or understand management accounting, and scientists to develop their communication skills. They help people to develop their competences in these areas through virtual practice and real-time feedback.

What's more, adaptive platforms are increasingly being used in blended learning environments, as they create powerful feedback loops and enable greater personalisation. Issues encountered at work can be explored in the classroom or online, and the knowledge gained can then be taken back into the workplace.

Adopting an adaptive teaching approach also helps promote a strong organisational learning culture. Employees are able to track their own learning, and develop valuable self-monitoring skills through evaluating their learning analytics. This leads to increased engagement in their own professional development and helps to sustain the motivation needed for developing skills over time.

But what may be most exciting about adaptive teaching technology is its potential to develop workforce skills without taking business risks or putting too much pressure on resources.

With the right technology available, employers could develop workforces at scale (and across multiple sites) no matter what the individual's starting point is. Through real-time analysis and feedback, adaptive teaching can cater for individual learning needs – and it's this personalised approach that would really stretch employees to develop skills in new areas.

Embracing **MOOCs**

> **Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs). These have already become mainstream. With millions of people learning through MOOCs, we're now seeing these types of courses develop into hybrid and blended learning offerings.**
>
> Mike Sharples,
> Professor of Educational Technology, IET

Since bursting onto the educational scene, Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) have caused a great deal of excitement, not least because they've opened up free learning to millions of people.

MOOCs are online courses available to anyone with an internet connection, free of charge. They're designed to deliver learning in a way that is structured, scalable, open and social. Participants can work through courses at their own pace, comment on content, and interact with each other online as they learn.

According to MOOC curator Class Central, 4,850 courses were available as of February 2016, and the number is rising.[1] The figures for 2015 showed that more than 35 million students had signed up for at least one course, up from an estimated 16-18 million the previous year. US online course provider Coursera accounted for nearly half of these students, with edX and The Open University's FutureLearn ranking second and third for enrolment numbers.[2] Over 3 million users have signed up to FutureLearn since its launch in 2012, and with more subscribing all the time.[3]

What does it mean for workplace L&D?

The exponential rise of MOOCs has made it impossible for L&D teams to ignore the phenomenon. But do MOOCs have a role to play in workplace L&D? Have they become established as a viable and effective method for developing employees?

MOOCs offer several advantages for workplace L&D. Firstly, they drive the motivation to learn. Given the power to choose when, where and how they train, employees become more engaged with their personal development.

They also have the potential to be a flexible resource in the L&D toolbox. In some instances, MOOCs can count towards a professional qualification, or be used as an academic credit towards a degree. They can be deployed in combination with online tutoring and exams as part of a hybrid learning proposition, or sit alongside classroom learning as part of a blended offering.

And the commercial benefits of MOOCS are clear. At any given time, organisations can have hundreds, or even thousands, of employees undertaking high-quality, interactive training courses from the world's leading universities – at a fraction of the cost of traditional, face-to-face training.

As such, employees can access a vast number of skills that will enable them to add more value to their organisations. And the potential exists for employers to put cohorts of employees on MOOC courses, to learn alongside colleagues worldwide, with additional company mentoring and support.

As a result, employers are beginning to embrace MOOCs in two distinct ways. Some are using MOOC platforms, such as Coursera and edX, to deliver relevant training. Instead of incurring the cost of creating their own training courses, they're encouraging employees to complete relevant – and free – online programmes designed by the best universities. Through MOOC platforms, organisations can promote discussion, collaborative learning, and the sharing of ideas with colleagues and other professionals worldwide.

Other organisations are going a step further. By co-curating their own MOOCs in partnership with universities, they're creating courses that meet their specific needs. These can be own-branded courses available only to the company's employees, or openly-accessible to the wider public. For example, Marks & Spencer worked with the University of Leeds – a member of the FutureLearn network – to create a MOOC aimed at encouraging a culture of innovation. The resulting course – Innovation: the Key to Business Success – has enabled M&S employees and 12,000 other learners to study commercial innovation.

Importantly, MOOCs do more than just deliver training. They can be a giant laboratory for testing new methods of teaching, learning and assessment. The analysis of how thousands of people learn online is influencing course design at universities and in workplaces. And it's providing rich insight for employers, enabling L&D teams to better understand the learning behaviour of their staff.

We therefore expect businesses to increasingly embrace MOOCs. Whilst they won't replace traditional courses and qualifications, MOOCs are a powerful enabler of workplace L&D. They encourage employees to take ownership of their professional development, by taking a self-directed approach to learning. In this way, they can help organisations to create the much sought-after learning culture that drives overall productivity.

✎ TIP

- Curate your own bespoke workplace-learning programme from the huge number of MOOCs and other free online resources available

- These programmes can be used to introduce staff to a world of online, flexible learning that fits around their needs and commitments

- Leading companies such as Waterstones, Marks & Spencer and Irish Distillers are already using MOOCs to ensure staff at multiple sites have access to the same levels of product knowledge and customer-service training

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[1] Class Central, MOOCWatch Feb 2016: More Students, More Price Points, More Models, 28 February 2016
[2] Class Central, By The Numbers: MOOCS in 2015, 21 December 2015
[3] FutureLearn Blog, Welcoming 3 Million People to FutureLearn, 10 February 2016

Accrediting informal **learning**

Whether it's a survival badge at Scouts or Guides, a sports medal at school, or your driving licence: we all know how rewarding it can be to gain official recognition for our skills and achievements.

Many people have gained a formal academic or professional qualification of some sort during their lives. But informal skills acquisition doesn't usually attract proper recognition. This is why 'badges' to accredit this kind of learning are gaining in popularity.

Traditionally seen as indicators of quality, badges are generally used to demonstrate a person's affiliation with a scheme, association or professional body. In education, however, they can be used to reward learners for achieving a certain level of knowledge, acquiring a new skill, demonstrating a level of competency, or displaying a desired standard of behaviour.

The rise in web-connectivity has dramatically increased access to learning platforms, networks and apps. People are more comfortable with learning online across a range of mobile devices, which has created an opportunity to design digital badges to accredit completion of informal courses. Learner demand is one aspect driving this trend, as badges provide demonstrable credit in return for effort.

Accrediting informal learning drives user engagement and motivation, as recognition and reward is gained through sharing the success with others online. Learners can broadcast achievements to colleagues and friends across social media platforms, such as LinkedIn. It's this aspect that is driving increased participation.

What we're seeing is a trend towards self-directed learning, because of the value badging adds to the skills people have attained. Being able to provide verification of skill development is a huge draw and we expect to see badged learning increase in popularity.

Badge schemes in mainstream online environments are gathering momentum, and include initiatives like Mozilla OpenBadges and Moodle, a virtual learning environment that can display the OpenBadges on its users' profiles. Like gaming applications, informal learning websites use badges to drive engagement, by unlocking privileges as rewards for progress and attainment. These privileges include the ability to edit as well as the authority to act as a moderator.

What does it mean for workplace L&D?

Badged learning has a useful role to play in achieving important objectives like fostering a learning culture, encouraging self-directed learning and improving employees' digital skills and L&D teams are increasingly acknowledging their benefit in the workplace.

Badges can form an integral part of individuals' continuing professional development (CPD) programmes. They allow staff to earn verification as they acquire new skills and improve their competency levels. And they enable learners to display an icon on their online professional profiles, and list on their CVs the courses they've completed and certificates they've gained.

Badge schemes can also provide a way of recognising achievement within MOOCs, and so drive engagement with this form of learning. Furthermore, they can indicate an employee's expertise in a particular role or topic, within or outside of their job, which can help other employees to find colleagues that can help them. And they can also signal a person's skills profile to colleagues and employers, or communicate his or her status within a community or workforce.

We expect to see an increase in employer recognition of badges as a useful L&D tool – and for good reason. According to research, conducted by HR consultancy Penna, 79 per cent of employers surveyed have no assessment processes or tools in place to identify high potential employees for future development. In addition, 71 per cent of employees surveyed said they were more likely to stay with an organisation that recognised their potential and took an interest in developing their skills.[4]

As well as a tool for identifying workforce skills, organisations can also use badge schemes to create frameworks for recognising staff achievements. This has the potential to benefit a range of business areas, for example, target-driven environments such as sales teams and call-centres. Such initiatives would also have a positive impact on employee engagement, motivation to learn and course competition.

✎ TIP

- Consider adopting the use of digital badges to drive workforce skills progression in your organisation, as a tool to motivate and engage staff in lifelong learning

- Badges can be aligned to meet specific standards in workplace L&D and can be linked to business outcomes, such as encouraging staff to develop digital skills

- This in turn can assist with talent management as learning pathways can be created in line with succession opportunities, helping employers prepare for roles of the future that may not exist yet

- Digital badges can also generate some healthy competition among staff, in turn driving engagement, as well as play a role in identifying talent

The way we learn and teach is developing at breakneck speed, and keeping ahead of the curve is vital. The trends and innovations predicted in [Innovating Pedagogy 2015] are fascinating in terms of the impact they will have on global education, as well as on other sectors such as business and technology.

Peter Horrocks, The Open University Vice-Chancellor, commenting on IET research featured in this report

The science of learning **analytics**
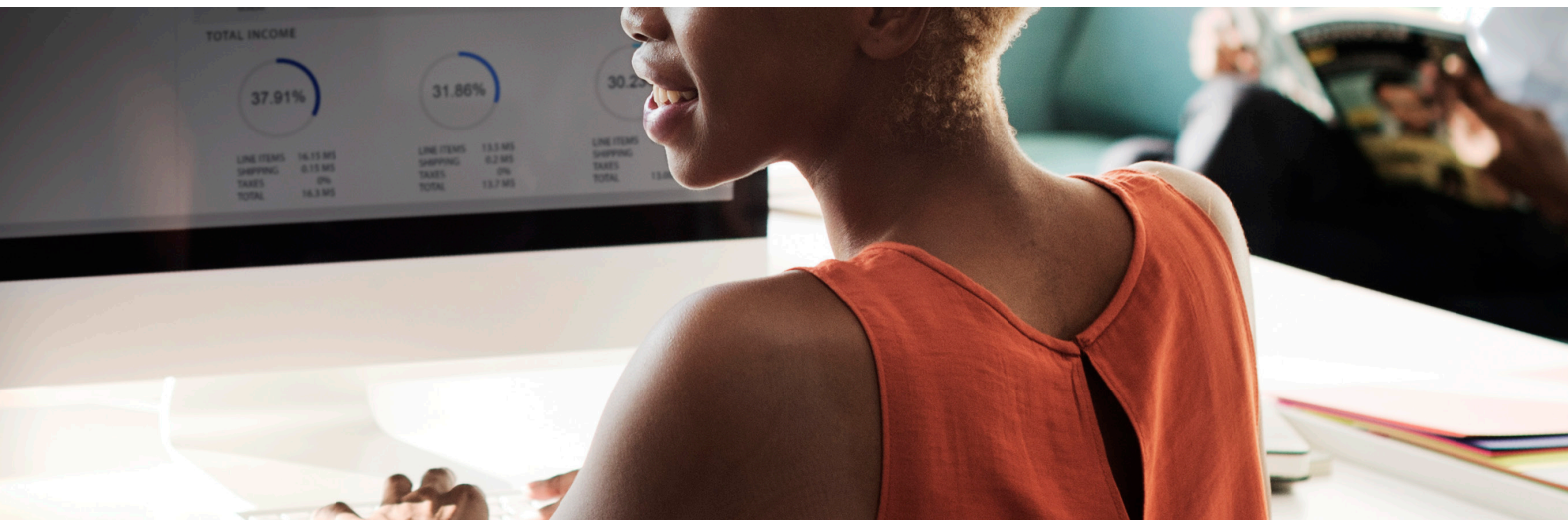
In an era of rich data, there is an opportunity to understand exactly how people learn, by capturing the vast amounts of information that come with online learning. And this is where the field of learning analytics opens up huge opportunity to understand how, when and where people learn.

Until now, education has relied on people to monitor students' progress and outcomes, and to deliver feedback and support. But online learning takes our ability to do this to a new level, by enabling deep, data-driven analysis of learning activities and environments.

The science of learning analytics allows education and training providers to respond to how individuals learn, and identify where they're thriving, and when they're struggling. They do this by monitoring a learning dashboard, which provides a visualisation of the data gathered.

However, the challenge is to develop insightful analytics that effectively reveal student progress. Key to this process is to start with questions, not data. Having clearly defined learning outcomes and objectives, as well as benchmarks of success, ensures data collection and analysis is meaningful. Here at the OU, for example, we gather a range of analytics: from data on how students are progressing,

to what's happening on online communities. Algorithms predict future studying behaviour based on a student's historic activity. This provides an indication of students' commitment and potential success, which we can combine with conventional insight from student and tutor feedback. It also allows us to set up interventions to support 'at-risk' students.

There's also an opportunity to pass analytic information back to students, to show them how they are performing in relation to peers, and where they need to focus their efforts to ensure success. This information not only encourages people to become self-directed learners, it can even help with motivation by stimulating the competitive aspects of our human nature.

What does it mean for workplace L&D?

If we consider the valuable insight that can be gained from learning analytics, then it's clear to see how it could play a crucial role in business performance. According to the 2015-16 Towards Maturity Benchmark Study, 70 per cent of L&D teams are failing to improve business productivity and only 30 per cent are proactive in understanding how their learners learn.[5] Learning analytics provide an opportunity to not only better understand how

staff learn, but also increase learning performance outcomes by supporting learner needs. Gaining the right mix of workforce skills is vital to improving productivity, as the more capable staff are at meeting business needs, the better a company will perform.

As well as supporting learners, organisations can use learning analytics to continually update course design. Insight from learner data can be used to improve a course. As the new version is rolled out, more learner information is generated. This can be fed back into the development of the course, in order to make more enhancements – and so the cycle goes on.

This creates an organisational form of double-loop learning. In effect, the first loop is the approach to learning, while the second is the use of analytics to reflect on and enhance teaching and learning effectiveness.

And there are other benefits to adopting learning analytics in the workplace. L&D departments can create learning dashboards to help them identify:

- Which skills employees are learning
- Where individuals are succeeding, where they're struggling, and how and when to intervene
- Indicators of success, barriers to positive outcomes and causes of drop-out rates
- Learning behaviours, engagement and commitment among the workforce, based on how often employees log in, what they access, and how long for.

Importantly, employees' learning records can be tied to their performance assessments and goals, and to the reward and recognition they receive. And ultimately, the outputs from learning analytics can be used to demonstrate the success of the training that L&D departments make available.

However, implementing learning analytics can be a significant challenge. While a few global players are known to be doing it well – Nestlé, Coca-Cola, Unilever and PwC, for example – many L&D functions lack the analytical skills required.

TIP

- When looking to implement learning analytics in your organisation, start small: focus on one area, and get that right first

- Learn from elsewhere: other functions of the business are likely to be already using data analytics – finance, for example

- Ask the experts: involve education specialists in the design of your learning analytics platform, to make sure it generates insight that can be used to improve learning content and delivery

- Create a virtuous circle: ensure that the insight gleaned from your analytics continually feeds into your course design

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E-books as learning **platforms**

Love or loathe them, there's no denying that e-books have certain advantages: cost-efficiency, mobility, flexibility and convenience to name a few. And there's no doubting that they've taken off. Millions of titles are now available across a range of platforms and devices, from novels, study texts and encyclopaedias to adventure game formats.

In the world of learning, advancing technology has seen digital literature emerge as an innovative new educational tool. And its future in this respect looks bright: the next generation of e-books promises some exciting teaching and learning applications.

As e-books evolve, they're creating new ways for people to connect and interact while they learn – for example, via massively shared, adaptive and dynamic titles. Similar to MOOCs, these e-books provide a more social form of study, enabling groups of students to work together to read and annotate the same online texts at the same time.

Advancing technologies have opened up new capabilities to edit, update and publish content. Teachers can now write alternative versions of learning materials; embed and update graphics and simulations using live data; add summarisations of texts; and use tools (like timers and calculators) to support structured learning and formative assessment.

Other educational uses for e-books could include crowd-authoring, where text books are produced by students, for students; and embedded tutoring, where teachers explain and discuss difficult passages within the software, while students are online.

What does it mean for workplace L&D?

Some of these innovations will no doubt have potent applications in the workplace. E-books could allow employees around the world to interact as they access the same training courses simultaneously. And they could provide a platform for them to contextualise standard learning content for their own industries and organisations.

This has the potential to encourage a more self-sufficient attitude to learning among staff, where training becomes more employee-led. It's a development that can only help foster a stronger learning culture within organisations.

E-books can also be used to capture workplace knowledge and experience. We learn by making connections – that is acquiring knowledge, having new experiences and connecting the two. Shared e-books, with content co-created by employees, can help this learning process by capturing moments of incidental learning and opening up discussion among colleagues.

As e-books can be rapidly produced, edited and published, they create an opportunity for employers to digitise company documents. Organisations can use e-books to swiftly provide updates on company products and policies. And employees can be encouraged to work collaboratively to shape staff induction handbooks or process guides, which in turn could increase staff engagement and ownership.

Then of course, there's the lower cost of e-books, compared to textbooks and traditional, paper-based training materials. Using e-books to deliver L&D in the workplace should prove highly cost-effective as, with the right technology in place, they can be regularly updated.

What's more, performance management and assessment can be embedded into e-books. As discussed in the previous section, learning analytics, such as levels of engagement, reading habits and requests for help can be evaluated to provide personal and contextual advice and support to each employee.

TIP

- Massively shared e-books are a great way to foster and encourage teamwork and collaboration in your organisation

- They can be used as a tool to transform group working relationships, create alignment and develop transparency among departments

- If you're looking to change behaviours or cultures, then massively shared e-books provide a platform to develop staff simultaneously

- Training e-books that focus on soft skills, such as critical thinking, relationship building and self-evaluation, can help embed values and guiding principles to establish ways of working

Learning to love **mobile**

Modern life is more mobile, transient and global than ever before. People today, particularly younger generations, are used to having the very latest mobile technology at their fingertips: interacting with their mobile devices as many as 10 times an hour on average.[6]

As a result, they demand access to the same technology at work, and will happily bring in their own devices if it isn't available. This has forged a BYOD (bring-your-own-device) culture in many organisations, where employees are using their devices for various aspects of their work, including while they are travelling.

Consequently, learning needs have changed. According to research conducted by Towards Maturity, 57 per cent of workplace learners like to be able to access learning on the go and only

18 per cent are now learning at their work desks.[7] People not only want the flexibility to fit learning around their fluid and busy lifestyles; they want a personalised learning experience.

People enjoy using their own mobile devices to study, as they act as their own individual learning environment and social network. They enable learners to access information, conduct research, find answers and learn new things. And they enable them to connect and interact with other students during the course of a learning experience.

Encouraging the use of mobile devices while learning can therefore produce significant benefits. However, the challenge for learning providers is not just how to meet this appetite, but how to support the learning process most effectively.

What does it mean for workplace L&D?

Mobile learning (or m-learning) in the workplace, is rising in-line with personal mobile use. It's no longer a question of optimising e-learning content for mobile devices – the priority now for L&D teams is to work out how to integrate and support the use of mobile technology in teaching and learning.

Research suggests that workers now spend more time developing themselves, using their own devices, than accessing training provided by L&D departments. [8] It's encouraging that people are taking ownership of their professional development but it means L&D needs to respond to this trend.

As a result, supporting the continuity of learning, across times, locations and social settings is becoming an increasingly important aspect of workplace learning. L&D teams need to facilitate an agile and adaptive learning environment, to not only ensure that learning outcomes are met but also

because it will help to build an agile and adaptive organisation overall.

What's most exciting about this trend, is the new opportunities it opens up for professional development. Mobile technology can extend the reach and impact of L&D, by reaping the benefits of learning 'on the go'. Employees have moments of need, where they need to answer a question quickly, and turn to their mobile devices to find relevant content and resources they want to engage with. Employers can respond to this by curating micro content to support performance at the point of need.

When you consider people learn up to 70 per cent of their professional skills and knowledge on the job, in a variety of locations, it's clear to see how mobile learning is a key part of any L&D strategy. And, if we look back at the previous six trends in learning, it's clear to see how mobile learning can and should play a part in all of them.

Enabling staff to capture and share incidental learning, within the context of their work, requires

mobile technology. Personalising the online learning experience via adaptive technologies extends to personalising the physical learning experience, enabling people to learn in an environment that best suits their needs.

And giving staff the tools, resources and freedom to study MOOCs, access e-books and add accreditation badges to their professional networks and online profiles creates a wealth of benefits, such as increased engagement, collaboration, skills, and - most importantly - the development of agile and adaptive mind-sets.

It's technology that is making all of this possible. L&D has the capability to transform how learning and performance is delivered and supported, by assessing these trends and incorporating them in to workforce development strategies. And the results will be measurable. Learning analytics will not only enable the L&D function to support the learning process, it will also prove the efficacy of new initiatives – helping to influence business planning and put L&D at the heart of the organisation.

6 Hay Group, One Giant Leap, 2014
7 Towards Maturity, Learning and performance on the move: How do L&D support the mobile workforce?, 2016
8 David James, How can we extend the reach of L&D?, Trainingzone.co.uk, 22 February 2016

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