A jargon-busting guide for everyone interested in lifting the performance of their teams

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

“People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.” - Maya Angelou

This is why people are talking about experiential learning. Simply put, design learning with experience not knowledge in mind. Look to build motivating memories that challenge the information overload (see H).

Learn more about flipped classroom here:

BLENDED LEARNING

Has become a general term combining learning channels & approaches to deliver a desired performance outcome. It was all the rage a decade ago, and it certainly has value. However, we believe you must start with a person’s real work challenge and design the learning experiences around this. The solution may well be a blend, but start with the person & their problem, not a mandatory blended approach.

GROWTH MINDSET

A term coined by Carol Dweck in her research, to describe people “who believe their talents can be developed through hard work, good strategies, and input from others”. She found they achieve more than people with a fixed mindset because they “worry less about looking smart and put more energy into learning”. Likewise, companies with a growth mindset have more empowered, committed employees.

These findings are echoed in our own study of the characteristics of growth driving organisations:

JUST ENOUGH, JUST FOR ME, JUST IN TIME

Effective workplace learning programmes are centred on the learner’s needs and reflect how people want to learn and boost their performance in a changing world.

Learning experiences and resources should be bite-sized and accessible, not too much, not too little. JUST ENOUGH. Learning is tailored to the work people actually do so it can be applied. JUST FOR ME. And learning interventions are made available at the moment of need. JUST IN TIME.

Learning expert Martin Borrett explains the concept:

KNOWLEDGE

Explicit knowledge is typically codified and can be gleaned from documents or other resources, whereas tacit knowledge is typically in your head and based on an accumulation of prior experiences. Tacit knowledge is often harder to codify for the benefit of others.

LEARNABILITY

Learnability is the disposition & ability of a person to be a great learner & develop themselves. Employers like Google and Ernst & Young now look for this when recruiting to indicate a person’s level of curiosity and adaptability. Forward-thinking organisations believe the smartest and most successful people will be those who are constant & deliberate learners.

Learnability can be developed in many ways such as developing awareness of one’s learning strengths & limitations, mentoring others, participating in on-line conferences or exposing one’s self to desirably difficult situations.

CONTINUOUS LEARNING

This buzzword works for individuals and organisations alike. Its meaning is pretty obvious (keeping-on-learning), but the trick is making it a company-wide mindset. Some tips: Create platforms to share and build collective knowledge, curate knowledge sources and experiences from inside and beyond the workplace, and teach people how to learn.

The death of ILT has been greatly exaggerated, or rather, greatly misunderstood. The person at the front of the room, the facilitator, is there to create a learning experience that emotionally connects with what matters to participants. They expertly choreograph a social event in which new perspectives & insights, un-reachable in the digital world, can be created, explored, developed & remembered in a safe & fun environment.

Happiness

Neuroscience continues to teach us ever more about the workings of our brains. The chemical dopamine is important for mood & feelings of wellbeing, and is associated with heightened engagement & attention. We’re also learning that it produces long lasting changes in the brain, so positive experiences that engage our emotions & attention may help our brains to encode long lasting memories and learning.

WATCH FOR MORE TIPS ON DEVELOPING LEARNABILITY:

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MANAGER-LED LEARNING
For any capability-building initiative to shift the needle on performance, the role of the Manager is vital. Managers are the linchpins of the organisation, translating strategy into action, directly responsible for employee development, success & happiness.
Successful work-based learning practices include role-modelling, rewarding & mentoring work done using resources from new capability programmes, encouraging & facilitating, reflection & social learning (see §5) to develop more agile thinking habits.

NEXT GENERATION
Technological advances are fuelling fast-changing experiences of work. Employee expectations are changing. People want better experiences & accelerated career growth.
To enable this, there is growing demand for more flexible context-driven and social learning (see §1 and §5) more strongly linked to the real work people do. This creates impact and growth, for individuals & the company. With less routine & more unknowns, manager-led learning is becoming disproportionally more important.
The next generation seek continuous feedback to build differentiating softer skills, such as decision making and judgement that will help them shine.

OUTCOMES
If you are serious about creating lasting performance improvement, it’s essential that you start with concrete outcomes. What does success look like? A team being able to explain their own role in a new process? Able to distinguish between good or poor quality work? Being really clear on the outcomes needed for performance shapes the mix of knowledge resources, application opportunities and comprehension checks you’ll need.

QUICK & SPACED LEARNING
Spaced learning or repeated learning is known to strengthen understanding and retention. By providing learners with a mix of learning opportunities at intervals they are less likely to forget what they have learned in the long term.
Qstream is one of many software companies who provide a platform for creating and deploying spaced learning.

REVERSE MENTORING
This concept has really taken off in recent years to encourage learning and cross-generational relationships. Junior colleagues mentor senior colleagues, subverting the traditional mentoring model, to share technical skills, broaden horizons and build trust. To succeed requires planning, structure, and competency-building among both mentors and mentees.
Check out the five key steps for success based on our experience designing multiple reverse mentoring programmes with clients:

SOCIAL LEARNING
A broad term for all the ways we learn through being with others, virtually or conventionally.
Through questions, conversations, activities, reflection and feedback we gain new knowledge, skills & insights we cannot access alone. Nowadays social learning can take place in low-cost, high-speed, interactive ways.
Watch our learning expert Sam Ellis for examples:

VIRTUAL REALITY
Virtual reality provides learners with experiences so immersive they think and feel they could be real, even if they are not actually possible in the real world.
Virtual reality provides the opportunity for people to experience and practice situations that otherwise would not be possible due to time, cost, or risk.
Learn more about the use of VR in real learning programmes:

WORK OUT LOUD
Working out loud involves making your work visible as you develop it and enabling people to engage with and comment on it, providing feedback to improve and further build it. An example of this is the practice of setting up ‘learning circles’ of people with a shared connection to a learning goal to meet regularly & share knowledge, habits & tips.

ZERO-BASED BUDGETING
Businesses are increasingly moving towards this budgeting approach, with the rigour of reviewing every expense and visibility into cost drivers. So it is even more critical to design and develop workplace learning programmes that deliver business impact.
At Brand Learning, we design learning programmes to deliver tangible impact at three levels:
Business impact – sustained improvement in KPIs such as profitable growth, customer attraction & retention, & customer attitudes & behaviours.
Team performance – based on business goals, what improvements in commercial effectiveness & efficiency of people, teams and the organisation are needed.
Drivers of capability – what capability initiatives spanning processes, people, culture and skills development are needed to achieve the desired future performance?

UNLEARNING
To learn or replace an existing skill, you first have to forget or unlearn the current one. Recognising that people may have knowledge, skills or indeed biases is an important factor when designing new learning programs.
See our learning expert Bruce Levi explain more:

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TECHNOLOGY
Both a driver and enabler for how we learn. With so many options & innovations it can be bewildering, whether as a learner or an organisation. Embrace it, pilot it, and always ask, how will the technology reduce the friction to make learning easier & more effective. In the not so distant future machine learning & AI will make some learning redundant as the answers will be just an ‘OK Google’ or ‘Alexa’ away.

SILHOUETTE
Siloed ways of working & behaviours are still a major barrier to delivering exceptional customer experiences.
Learning programmes must encompass the changes to cross-functional ways of working needed to define and deliver value.
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X-FUNCTIONAL
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At Brand Learning, we believe this starts with real-work analysis.
We ensure we understand the relevant enablers and barriers to cross-functional working, to design a learning solution that improves performance.

YAMMER
Social networks for business are orientated around so-called communities with the conversation at the heart, rather than the resources you might access. They can support sharing of ‘know how’ and also collaboration across businesses with lots of people or multiple locations.
There are numerous social network services for business available, Yammer is one example. Some stand alone and others are tightly woven into the core productivity tools within a business.

Workforce.com is a global consultancy specialising in lifting the capabilities of people and organisations to drive growth. We believe sustainable growth requires continuously improving the capabilities to deliver value for customers.
We work with Marketing, Sales, HR, Digital and cross-functional teams in organisations such as HSBC, Shell, Unilever, AstraZeneca and more.
Our work ranges from operational model and process design to learning programmes.

“We searched a long time for the right partner. Brand Learning was the only one who brought the subject matter and training expertise to meet our needs.” AstraZeneca