

Elevating Learning in the World of Hybrid Work

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INTRODUCTION

WeLearn is a learning solutions and workforce development company focused on changing the way in which organizations use learning to achieve their best outcome.

We partner with organizations to:

- Bring their most inspired learning ideas to life.
- Craft engaging learning experiences that are beautiful, relevant, engaging, and impactful.
- Rethink their workforce development strategies and to find and identify new sources of talent (both internal and external) for the roles they need to fill.
- Enable reskilling and upskilling their current employees to build greater talent mobility and to ensure they have an engaged committed pool of talent.
- To ensure learning is deployed as a strategic benefit to their employees and drives to organizational outcomes.

We enable organizations and their employees to grow and reach goals together learn more at www.WeLearnLS.com

Elevating eLearning - Our Manifesto

The Basics: eLearning Should be Engaging, Meaningful, and Mobile

By now, we can all agree that *eLearning, as we knew it, is dead*. A new day in learning is here. We've extinguished the "*click next*" experience, and we are ready to promise that at their core, all of our learning products will be engaging, meaningful, and mobile. These three tenants should be like the Bill of Learning Rights—every learner is entitled to them.

The Bill of Learning Rights

We find these truths self-evident, that all learners are entitled to learning that is:

Engaging
Accessible
Mobile
Meaningful

If learning is not engaging, learners won't remember it, much less adopt it. If learning isn't mobile, it will feel, at best, inconvenient. And, if learning isn't meaningful to your learner, then why does it even exist?

But we don't want to stop there.



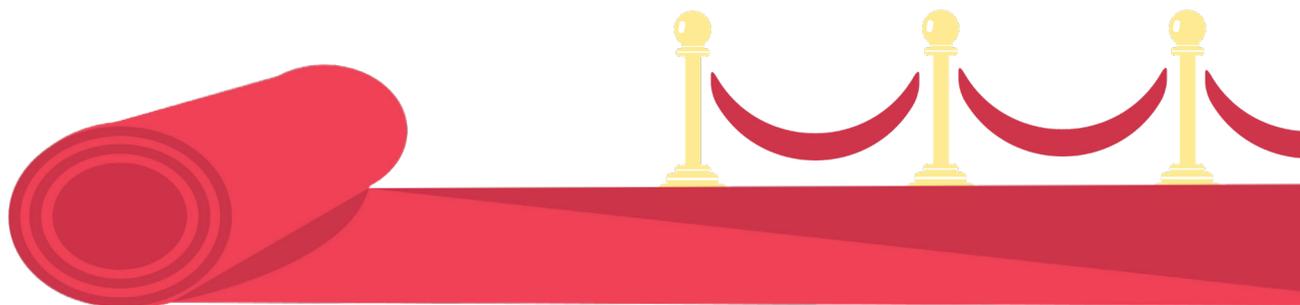
WeLearn Elevates eLearning

Our learner is always the VIP when we design learning experiences. We want our learner to feel not just respected, but special. So, as we create each activity, we visualize our learner and what we want them to see, hear, and feel as they move through the experience. We ask ourselves, **“what would make this learning more personal?”** and **“what would make this learning joyful?”**

We’ve found that learning is personal when it’s immersive. With immersive learning, our learner feels like an active participant where they aren’t just reading and answering questions but doing something with the learning immediately. This might mean leading the learner through a scenario where they make choices and receive immediate feedback. It might also mean dropping the learners into a virtual world that simulates reality, where they interact with the environment, tools, and even other people.

We’ve also found that learning is joyful when it’s beautiful, surprising, and fun. We use custom art—often drawn by hand—to visually engage the learner. We look for opportunities to add surprise and delight to the learner’s journey. That might mean planting an “Easter egg” within an image or creating a printable keepsake with tips on how to accomplish a real-world task.

While we know that learning doesn’t usually exist to entertain, we also know that there’s no reason learning can’t be entertaining!



What's Next?

Today's learning stands on the edge of a renaissance. With the "age of great uncertainty" has come a wealth of learning opportunities. Virtual and augmented reality are allowing us to elevate our immersive learning experiences in ways that felt impossible just five years ago. Learning, social media, and web design have merged in ways where it's sometimes hard to tell where one ends, and another begins. Every day is a new day to elevate the learning paradigm.

For Your Consideration:



Building Better Humans Through Learning

From the beginning WeLearn Learning Services has been rooted in two things. The first is our mission to build better humans through learning and the second is the desire of those of us who make up the WeLearn team (Hey WeLearners!) to get up every day and do the work with people we love working with which we are fortunate to be able to do.

But what does it mean to build better humans through learning?

Recently, a colleague shared an amazing Ted Talk by [@TimLeberecht](#) called [“4 ways to build a human company in the age of machines.”](#) If you have not had a chance to check out the video – you definitely should – because in it, Ted shares four principles for building a human company, which we think are also keys to building better humans through learning.

Keep reading to learn more!





Do the Unnecessary

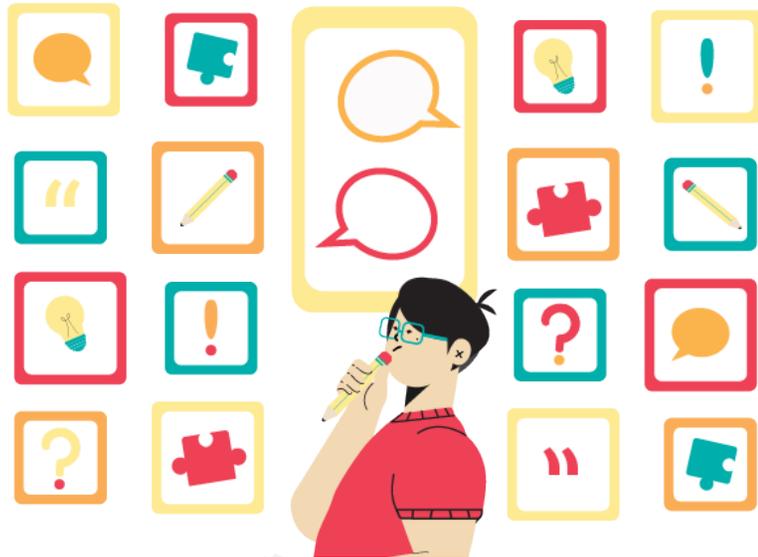
Think about the last course you developed or the last time you were selecting a partner to work with you on a learning experience, how did the experience make you feel? Did it evoke joy? Did it inspire you? If not – it is likely that you just did what was required – you created a sound course or learning experience – but you did not push the boundaries – you did not do the unnecessary.

At WeLearn we are **visual story tellers**, we know that we could do a fair job using standard icons, vector graphics, and stock images, but we know the impact that custom art, elevated visuals and graphics can have on both how learners experience the course and how they perceive the value of the course. So do the unnecessary and break out of the stock art jail you are in – make your learning experience beautiful. Make them moving and evocative. Keep the orange balloons!

Create Intimacy

How many LinkedIn followers do you have? How many of them do you know? How many learners do you serve? How many of them do you personally know? The point is you may not know all of your LinkedIn connections – and certainly are unlikely to ever know all the learners you serve – but that does not mean you can cast intimacy aside when it comes to developing learning content. Instead lean into creating intimacy – provide opportunities for learners to share their experiences (good and bad) with each other, to explore their challenges, and even laugh a little. For your upcoming virtual training, consider the case of Danone (from the video) who had employees wear costumes and wigs during a company offsite – why – because the wigs erased hierarchy – and created intimacy. Imagine how much more enjoyable your next zoom session would be if everyone showed up with a wig, big sunglasses, or their favorite funny hat. Think about the richness of discussion it might create when participants' barriers are lowered.



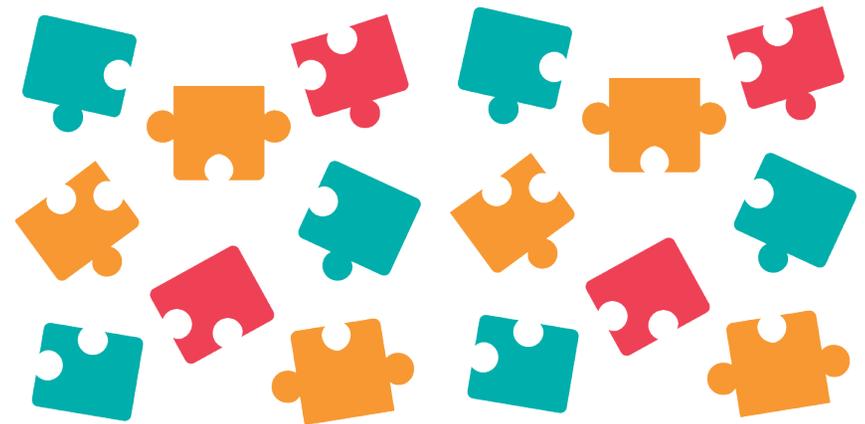


Be Ugly

We realize that talking about being ugly in the same blog where we talk about creating beautiful art to tell stories may be counter intuitive, but we are not talking about visual beauty or being vulgar. Being Ugly involves leaning in, and sometimes, being ok with exposing the things in your organization that do not work. You must use your training program to dissect an organizational failure or the loss of a deal or opportunity. Do not shy away from the ugly or uncomfortable bits. Embrace them and provide a safe place in which they can be discussed and for new ideas to emerge on how to move the organization. We often talk about training as the “safe place,” but maybe sometimes learning needs to be able to create the “ugly room” to create the safe place for discussions to happen.

Remain Incomplete

Of all of the times principles, we think our favorite is – remain incomplete – stay unfinished – remain curious – and encourage your learners to do the same. This is how you build learning agility. Be honest with your learners, tell them that the programs and courses they are taking are not going to make them experts, but rather are planting the seeds of curiosity and growth for development and advancement. Remain incomplete and be open to what is new and novel and how it might apply to the next learning experience you create or course you build. The tools we have today were not even a glimmer in the eye ten years ago and imagine what we might have tomorrow. Remain incomplete and be a student of your profession, of your craft, and of your industry – and infuse the work you do with that sense of curiosity and wonder for your learners to discover and enjoy.



For Your Consideration:

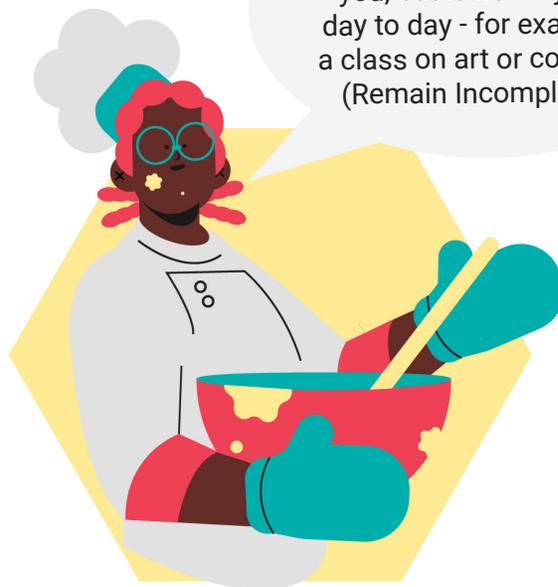
Find an opportunity to insert surprise and delight into a learning experience you are developing
(Do the Unnecessary)



Build out your box of funny wigs (really just cause a box of funny wigs would rock)



Take a class in a topic that interests you, but is not in your day to day - for example a class on art or cooking
(Remain Incomplete)

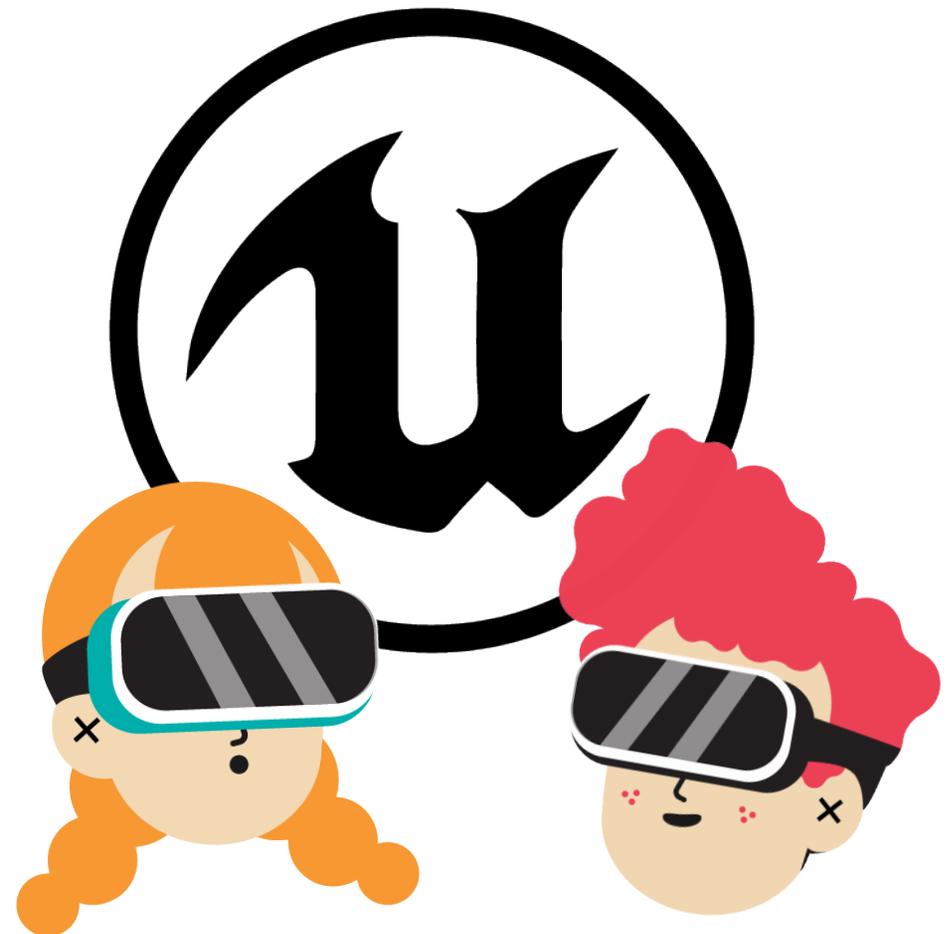


The Unreal Engine's Place in Virtual Learning

No matter how interesting online images, videos, and infographics are, they often require the learner to remain separated from the content by a computer screen. But what if learners could dive right into a 3-D scenario? The Unreal Engine and virtual reality makes this possible. This post will help you understand what exactly Unreal is, why you should consider it for eLearning, and how virtual reality in general can improve learner engagement and empathy.

What is the Unreal Engine?

Epic Games developed the Unreal Engine over 21 years ago to enable first-person video games. Fast forward to 2021, and Unreal is being used by instructional designers and content developers alike to transform the world of eLearning. **What is Unreal?** The Unreal Engine is a gaming engine created by Epic Games in 1998. It was first introduced in the first-person shooter game called Unreal. Written in C++, a general-purpose programming language, the Unreal Engine is highly portable and supports a variety of platforms. Unreal can be used [for free](#) in the development of VR games, and realistic simulations. **What is VR?** Virtual reality (or VR) refers to a three-dimensional, computer-generated environment that can be explored and interacted with by the user. The user essentially becomes part of the virtual world, as they are fully immersed within a scene and able to move objects and navigate freely.



The Power of VR in eLearning

Safe Training In Challenging Scenarios:

One of the main appeals of VR is its ability to present learners with a difficult situation through a realistic simulation. These kinds of scenarios could be anything from safety training to public speaking practice.

Increase In Empathy:

VR creates experiences, which in turn can create empathy in the learner. Chris Milk, co-founder and CEO of Within (Virtual Reality) gave a TEDx presentation in 2015 where he referred to VR as the "Ultimate Empathy Machine." This makes VR a great option for diversity and inclusion training, as well as other workplace behavior training.



But how exactly does VR increase empathy? Here are a few ways:

By enabling the learner to directly experience different perspectives.

By allowing the learner to immerse themselves in realistic situations that are outside of their comfort zone.

By encouraging the learner to reassess their privileges and position in a greater organization or institution

While VR doesn't automatically create empathy, research has shown that engines which enable the learner to move and act independently are highly effective in changing the learner's perspective and getting them more involved in the topic.



The Unreal Engine and Accessible eLearning

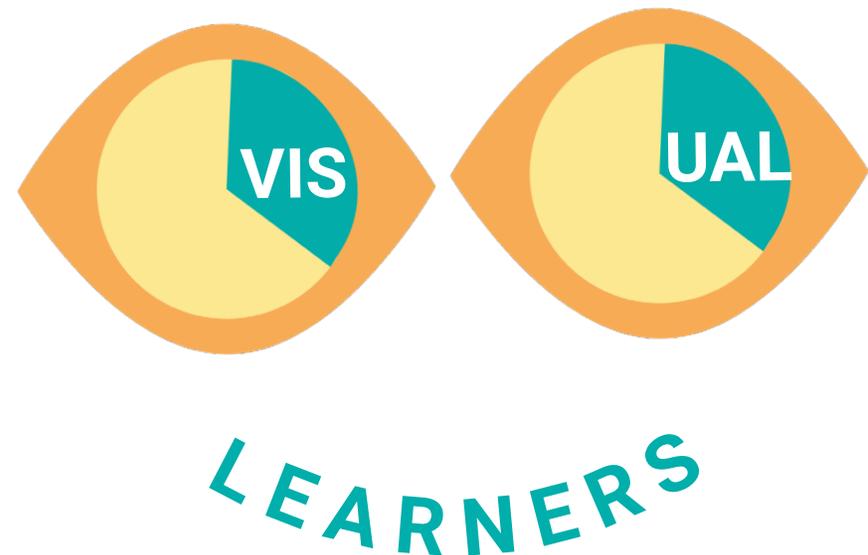
Virtual reality is becoming increasingly important for eLearning and training purposes, as it allows the user to gain real-world experience remotely. But what makes Unreal so exciting for content developers? Easy To Use: While many VR technologies require users to purchase additional custom codes or scripts, the Unreal Engine offers a built-in, ready-to-use VR system.

This turnkey accessibility allows learners and content developers to access blueprints and templates without spending extra money.

Blueprints is a visual scripting system that uses a node-based interface to create elements from within the Unreal Editor. In addition to being easy to use, it is also easy to understand. Unreal's end-user license agreements are also included in the package. High-Quality Visuals: Another major reason that the Unreal Engine is suited for eLearning is its high-quality visuals.

Approximately

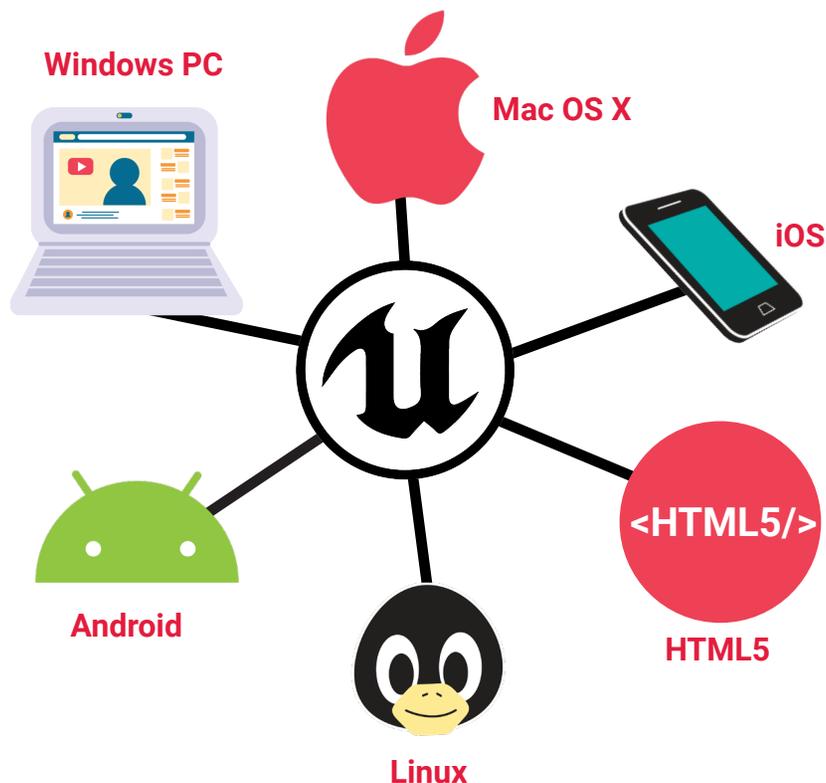
65% of the population are



So doesn't it make sense to invest in a system that offers learners top-notch 3D visuals?

For eLearning simulations and training, the learner's experience should be a priority. By incorporating the Unreal Engine into your instructional strategy, you can capture the learner's attention and reinforce course content through memorable visuals. Cross-platform: Learners need options when it comes to accessing and engaging with course content.

Unreal fits into the daily lives of learners and supports projects on multiple platforms including:



The Unreal Engine can also be used with head-mounted devices (HMDs) and game consoles. Unreal also offers [performance support, which is crucial for boosting information retention and increasing learner engagement.](#) This support can be accessed through [tutorial videos, guided learning strategies, and other online resources.](#)

Virtual Reality For A Better Learning Experience

While Unreal might not be for everyone, virtual reality is a promising advancement in eLearning and offers users immersive, realistic learning experiences.

For Your Consideration:

Have you ever experienced virtual reality? Ask yourself, what were some of its benefits and drawbacks?

What opportunities exist in your organization to experiment with AR/VR Learning?



Top 5 Performance Support Strategies: Which One Is For You?

WeLearn's previous post on [performance support](#) *made it clear that it's a crucial component of any successful learning strategy*. By incorporating support in our training programs, we can improve learner performance and help learners when they need it most.

But what types of performance support are there, and which one is right for you?

This post will guide you through five different kinds of performance support, highlight why they work, and help you find the support that matches your personal and professional goals.



Making Performance Support Simple

Performance support isn't about teaching learners everything about a topic; it's about giving them concise, clear information they need to perform their best.

1. Quick Reference Guides: Maybe you've tried sticking post-it notes to your computer, reminding you of tasks or tips for getting a certain project done. As you've probably experienced, those notes can soon become messy and disorganized, making your job more difficult than it has to be.



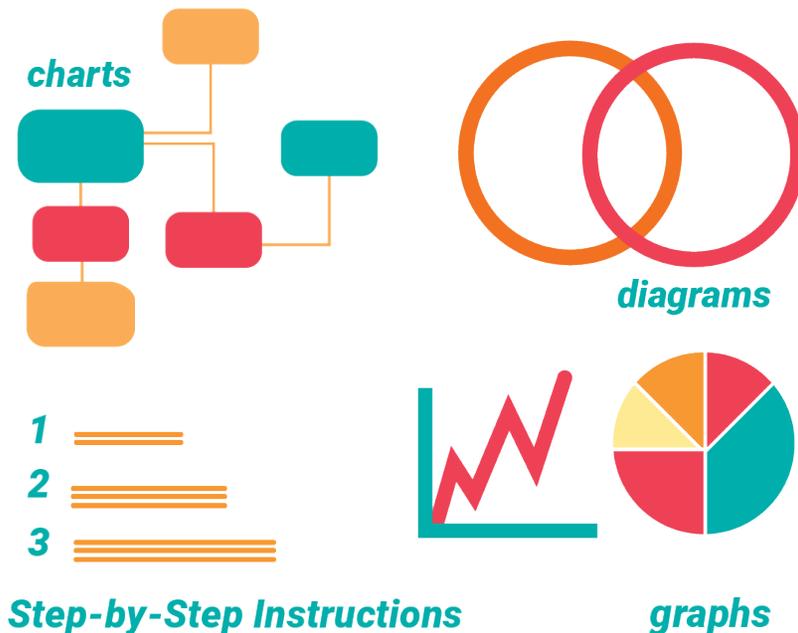
A Quick Reference Guide (QRG) helps learners reference content quickly and efficiently and saves them unnecessary hassle.

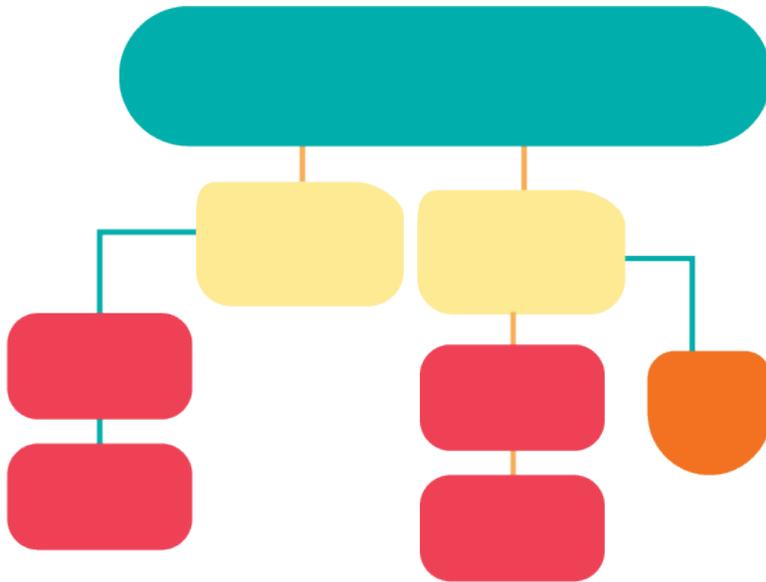
For example, think about all of the codes and numbers that most organizations have in their system. A QRG would provide a compiled and condensed list of the codes so learners wouldn't have to spend time searching the database on their own.

2. Infographics:

Studies have shown that when learners process information visually, they have a higher chance of remembering it in the long run. Infographics provide a visual representation of facts, content, and statistics to improve the learning process.

Some common examples are:





Great Content Developers Get Mobile

3. Process Maps: Process maps, similarly to a flowchart, help learners visualize how a specific task fits into an organization's bigger picture. Without gaining perspective on a topic, it can be difficult for learners to understand why specific steps are important. Process maps often include the inputs and outputs of a specific process, take on a top-down format, and include common, identifiable symbols like arrows.

4. Mobile Apps:

Smartphone users worldwide are expected to reach 3.8 billion in 2021. This means that the majority of us have a smartphone, and are using it frequently in our daily lives. Mobile apps are useful for employees who are on the go and might not have immediate access to a laptop, allowing them to access information anytime, anywhere.

A great example of a mobile-app used to assist learners is The Kineo E-Learning Top Tips app, created by Kineo Ltd. This app offers learners a short burst of information on a variety of topics, including business, instructional design, and content development.

Make sure the app you choose also features automatic updates and reminders, which help learners stay on track and organized.



Overcoming Information Overload With Performance Support

At the beginning of a course, learners might feel overwhelmed with the amount of information presented to them. That's why it's important to make course content and internal communications systems stand out from surrounding digital noise.

5. Checklists: Checklists help ensure that each step of a certain process is completed correctly, and help add structure to a potentially complex project. This kind of performance support is highly effective when learners have to accomplish a more complicated task or when learners need to perform the same tasks in a specific order.



Measure your performance support:

Oftentimes organizations put performance support systems in place without considering how they'll measure their effectiveness. A great performance support system can soon become inefficient if it isn't being assessed. That's why it's important to organize your professional goals and learning objectives before choosing a performance support strategy.

Before implementing a performance support system, consider these key questions:

What kind of impact do I want the performance support tool to have for my organization?

How do I plan on measuring how learners are using the performance support tools provided?

What kind of work do I want learners to do and what kinds of tools would be most useful for them? Is the work memory-based? Creative? Group-work?

Performance Support For A Better Learning Experience

Every learner is different, and here at WeLearn, that motivates us to provide the best performance support possible.

For Your Consideration:

What kinds of performance support would you like to see in your next learning course?

Has your organization taken the steps to implement the kind of support you need?



Performance Support: What It Is and Why It Matters

No matter how effective a training course might be, nobody leaves an expert. Research shows that ***after one day, employees forget more than 70 percent of what was taught in training.***

Luckily, an effective performance support system can improve memory retention and help difficult concepts stick even after formal training takes place.

But what exactly is performance support and why does it matter to content developers and organizations. This post will help you understand the meaning performance support, its relationship to training, and when learners need it most.

What Does Performance Support Mean?

What Is Performance Support?: Performance support is a service that ***helps learners refine their skills and apply their new knowledge*** as they are working. By offering on-the-job assistance, performance support makes it easier for learners to:

Retain or refresh the information they learned during training

Gain access to additional information necessary for completing a task or job

Improve their troubleshooting skills



Difference Between Training and Performance

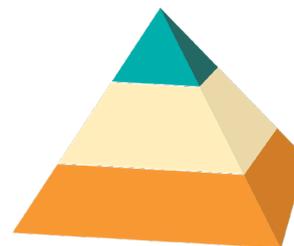
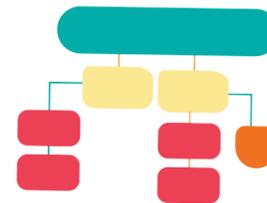
Support: A content developer often creates a training course to provide planned out instruction, often with specific objectives, activities, and group work. Training usually helps learners master a specific skill and can take place in person or online.

Performance support, on the other hand, is there to help learners once the training is over. It helps learners get work done and accomplish tasks on time:

In performance support, there are no learning objectives. Rather, there are performance goals.

In 2013, The eLearning Guild published a useful article [*"At the Moment of Need: The Case for Performance Support"*](#), which outlines five key moments when learners need performance support most, including:

1. When learning about a topic for the first time
2. When seeking new knowledge
3. When trying to remember instructions or adapt their current instructional strategy to a new situation.
4. When attempting to problem solve
5. When their work or organization has changed its internal structure



Performance Support In Our Daily Lives

Everyday Examples of Performance Support: A successful performance support strategy draws inspiration from the learning services we use every day. For example, think about the moments in our everyday lives when we need to learn something quickly and efficiently. You might need to find out how to dice a pineapple or fix a key on your laptop. To find these answers, you'll most likely consult the internet using a mobile phone or another electronic device. To make learning more accessible, information is usually presented to learners in a small bit of text or video, for example:

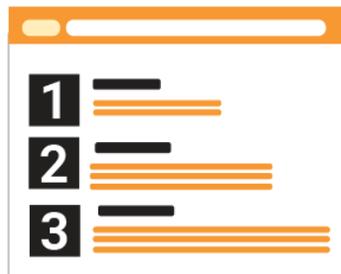


Instructional Videos:

How-To videos on Youtube or other platforms are usually a simple and straightforward demonstration of how to do a task or project, and are often less than five minutes.

Step-By-Step Tutorials:

Websites like Wikihow provide short, concise, Step-By-Step instructional guides complete with relevant visuals.



Performance Support and Workflow:

Performance support is crucial for any business looking to maintain a steady workflow for their employees. Think about how annoying it is when you need to interrupt a project to ask for help or go online and find an effective instructional strategy:

A recent study conducted at the University of California, Irvine suggested that most **people take 23 minutes and 15 seconds to recover from an interruption.** This means that employees and learners are spending precious time seeking out support, and perhaps even more time regaining focus and getting back to the task at hand.

Jonathan Spira writes in his book *Overload! How Too Much Information Is Hazardous to Your Organization* that: In the United States alone at least **28-billion hours of productive time is lost each year because employees are overwhelmed with training information.** This statistic highlights that learners aren't receiving the performance support they need, as a result, organizations are suffering. With performance support, these issues can be resolved.

Why Performance Support Is Important

Importance of Performance Support:

Oftentimes performance support is informal and allows the learner to learn and work simultaneously. Some of its important benefits include:

Helping learners perform tasks without having to seek outside help

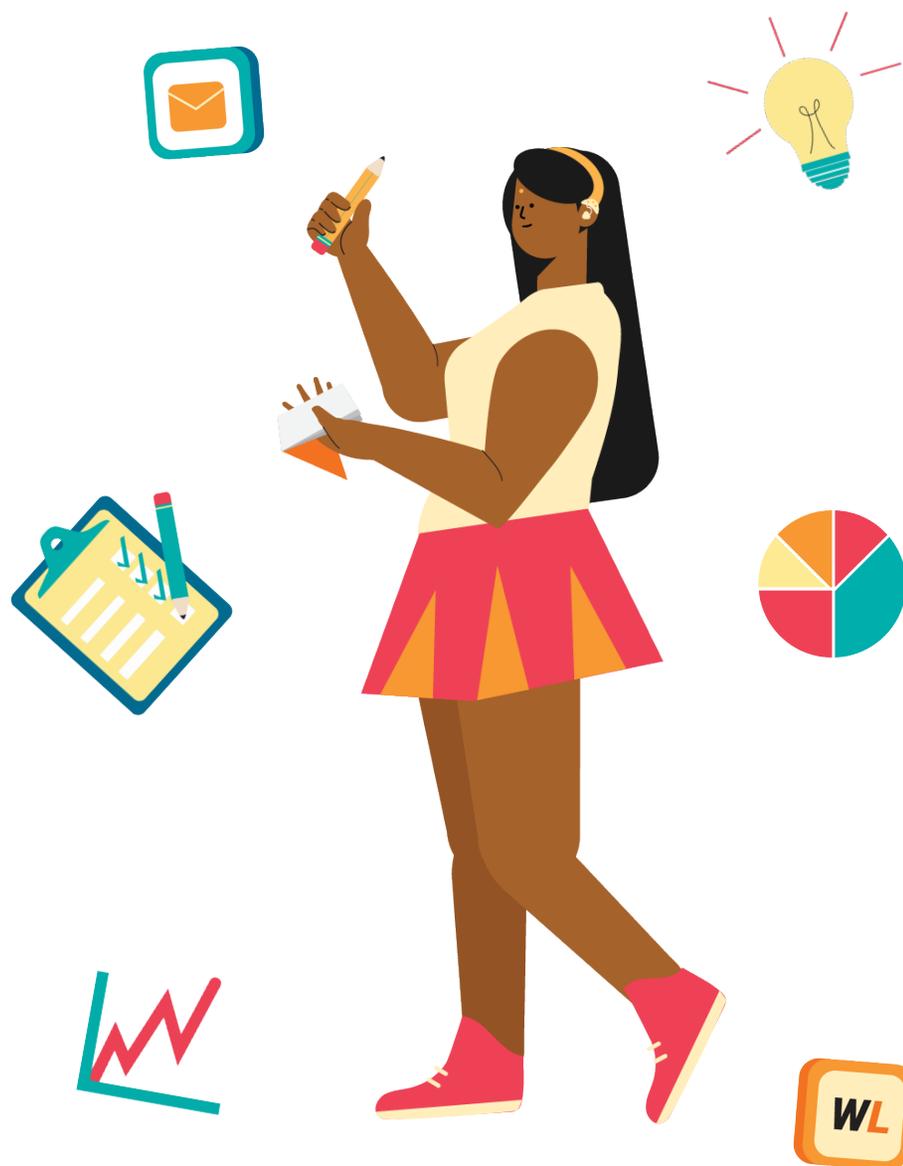
Helping new employees complete their tasks quickly when formal training may not be available

Providing a great way for learners to explore and understand new system updates and work processes

Performance Support Tools (PSTs) ultimately create a safer and more efficient workplace. It prevents safety hazards that result from inadequate training, improves employee motivation, and allows learners to seek instruction at their own pace.

Great Content Developers Care About Performance Support

Performance support isn't just about receiving on-the-job assistance; it is about [helping employees and learners produce their best work and feel confident in their abilities](#). Here at WeLearn, we understand the importance of performance support and incorporate it into our instructional strategies.



For Your Consideration:

Have you ever saved time by receiving great performance support? If so, what methods and mediums were used?



How Content Developers Can Combat Boredom

Your eyes are drooping. Your mind is in a fog. You just want to sleep. Learning's greatest enemy is slowly creeping in; **boredom**.

Maybe you hate math. Or perhaps financial jargon puts you to sleep. Regardless of your likes or dislikes, English philosopher G.K. Chesterton reminds us that *"there are no boring subjects, only disinterested minds."*

Rather than blaming a course's subject matter for being boring, there are proactive ways to make content more interesting instead.

This article will explore the negative effects of boredom, how to combat it, and suggest ways to *make course content actively engaging* regardless of the topic.



The Dangers of Boredom: What Content Creators Should Know

What is Boredom? Before we can begin to fight boredom, we need to understand what it is. We all know the feeling of being bored, but **how do we put it into words?**

The Unengaged Mind, published in 2012 by a group of behavioral psychologists defines boredom as the inability to stay engaged, broken down into three main categories:

Failure to engage with internal and external stimuli

Obsession with the idea of being bored

Blaming our boredom on outside sources

Boredom and Physical Pain: Boredom is more than just a dull feeling. Studies show that it can have negative health consequences as well.

In a 2012 Australian study, researchers looked at 315 workers who complained of back pain. Findings showed that *those who felt “bored” or “stuck” in a negative work environment were more likely to have back pain six months later.* Now that we know what boredom looks like, it’s time to beat it through passionate, engaging course design.



Passionate Course Creators Are Successful Course Creators

Get Passionate: Fighting boredom all begins with the proper mindset. Learners take cues from their instructors, so if they detect a lack of passion, interest, or confidence about a topic, they will end up feeling disinterested as well.

If learners sense that their course creator is excited, confident, and interested in the subject at hand, they will be inspired to feel the same way. This concept is defined as **“social curiosity.”**

Social Curiosity: Have you ever seen a group of people staring at something in awe, and joined them just to see what all the excitement was about? This is an example of social curiosity.

Social curiosity is defined as wanting to know what other people are thinking and doing by observing them or engaging with them.

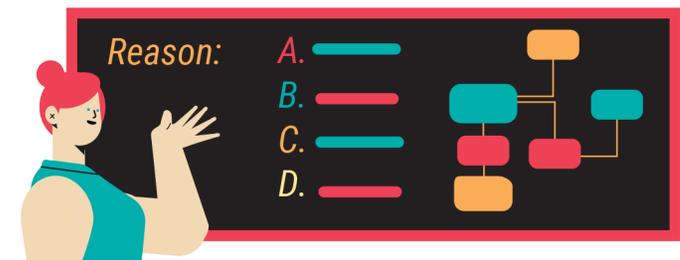
In other words, if others show interest in something in front of us, it inspires us to show interest as well. Now let's apply this concept to an eLearning situation.

To spark curiosity in a course, try:

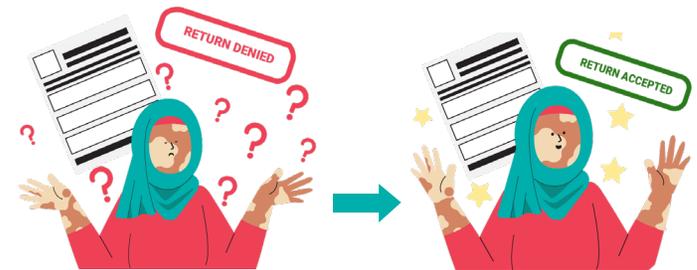


“WeLearn gave us a new approach to help our organization reskill and upskill our current talent. Thanks WeLearn!”

**Including short testimonials
from past learners**



**Having learners share why they
are interested in the course**



**Showing a few examples of how the topic is relevant to daily life.
For example, if the topic is filing taxes, share a story of how
someone can go from stressed to confident by taking this course.**

Beating boredom begins with the course creator. Read on to find out how to incorporate more boredom-busters into any instructional strategy.

Learning Engagement: Find The Right Angle!

Find an angle: Reporters aren't the only ones who need to find an angle to tell an engaging story. Content creators need to find an **angle** too.

An **"angle"** can be defined as how you approach and present a subject. So what angle should you use to get people interested in your course's topic? Let's say your course is about diversity in the workplace. Instead of jumping into complicated terms, maybe begin by sharing studies [showing that diversity helps businesses improve employee performance.](#)

This will grab your audience's attention and help learners see both the personal and professional relevance of the topic.

Focus on Visuals:

Who doesn't have a hard time looking at graphs for an hour? Break up spreadsheets and data with more playful visuals, such as an interactive timeline or flashcards. You can even try **easter eggs!**

In cinema, **easter eggs are little clues or images that the director hides in the scene, which contribute to the film's greater meaning.**

You can hide relevant and interesting images in your eLearning course as well. At the end of the course, ask your learners if they found all of the hidden images!

This will not only [add some fun to your eLearning course](#) but also encourage learners to look closely at the content before them.

Course Content That Beats Boredom Before It Starts

Boredom is never a good feeling. It can leave learners apathetic, unfulfilled, and even a little depressed. Luckily, with a few personalized touches and a dose of passion, content developers have the power to beat boredom before it even starts.

For Your Consideration:

When was the last time you felt bored during a course?



What do you think the course creator could have done to make the lesson more interesting?

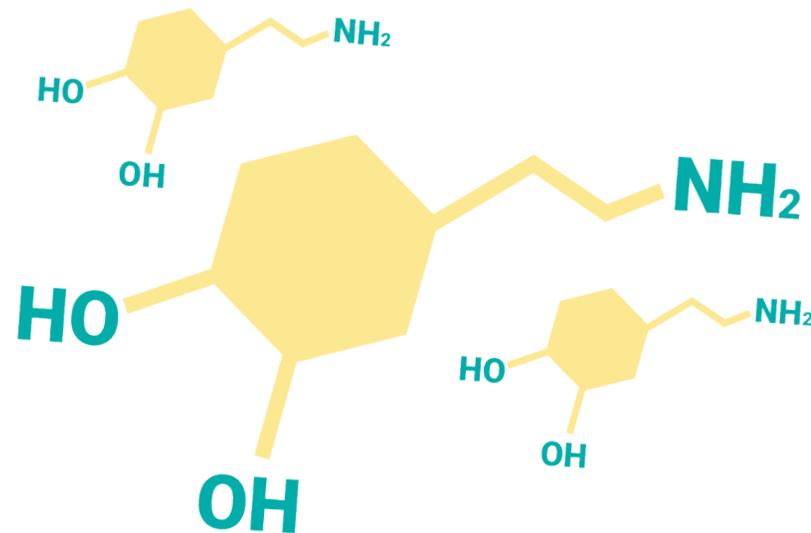


The Power of Fun in Learning Engagement

When asked about his learning preferences, Winston Churchill famously answered, *"Personally, I'm always ready to learn, although I do not always like being taught."*

Even today, Churchill's answer reflects how a lot of us view learning and development. The idea of starting an eLearning course probably doesn't make you smile (cue the dulcet tones of Charlie Brown's teacher). This is because the majority of course creators don't fully realize the physical, professional, and educational importance of [fun](#).

This article will help you understand the benefits of fun, [explore what fun might mean](#) for different audiences, and suggest a few ways that content developers can make their instructional strategies fun for everyone.



The Science Behind Learning Engagement and Fun

Benefits of Fun: Learning doesn't happen overnight. It requires repetition, motivation, and dedication.

But how can we expect learners to stay motivated if course content is boring? If a learning experience is fun, it will help learners stay curious and want to participate.

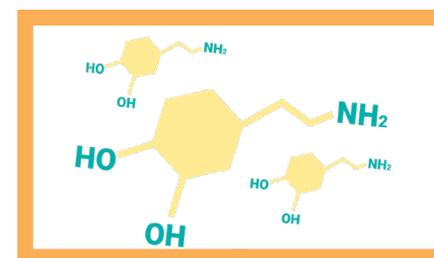
Here are some scientific examples of how fun can help learners retain information, boost endorphins, and take risks:

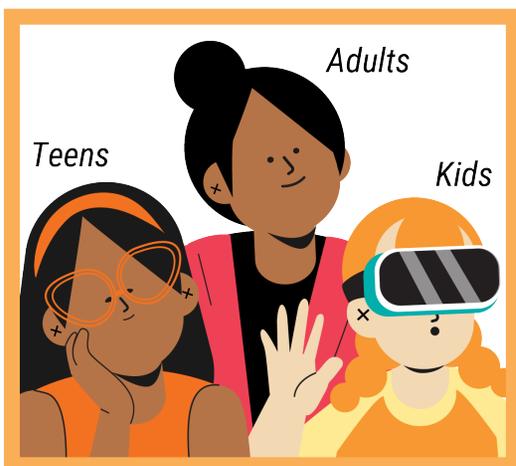
Fun Increases Retention: R.L. Garner published a study in 2006, titled *Humor in Pedagogy: How Ha-Ha Can Lead to Aha!* The study found that students retained information more easily when the lecturer added appropriate and topic-related jokes into their course.

Fun Boosts Dopamine: Neurologist and educator Judy Willis has spent her life examining how fun experiences increase levels of dopamine, and in turn, promote learning. Increased dopamine improves attention spans, memory storage, comprehension, and high-level thinking.

Fun Inspires Us: In a study titled *Does fun promote learning?* The relationship between fun in the workplace and informal learning, Michael Tews found employees are more likely to go outside of their comfort zones and challenge themselves if their work environment is fun.

While fun is an important part of learning engagement, course creators should know their boundaries and consider the preferences and personalities of their audience.





The Connection Between Humor and Learning Engagement

Education over Entertainment: Be wary of making your course too fun-centered, as it might distract learners from the main message of the lesson. Learners don't necessarily want a stand-up comedian instructing their course. What they want is a course that uses humor and fun to enhance the learning process, not overtake it.

To ensure the fun elements of your course are appropriate and clear, **make your content personalized and get to know your audience beforehand**. This means taking into consideration the audience's age, interests, and personal goals.

Before including a joke or fun element in your course, make sure it is:

Age-appropriate: If you have an older audience, try to stay away from the latest pop-culture references and avoid slang. Look to more classic cultural icons that span across generations.

Not sarcastic: In an eLearning course, humor should not be confusing or incredibly nuanced. Avoid dry humor and sarcasm as it might be lost on some learners.

Inclusive: Make sure that your jokes never denigrate or disrespect your audience. **Stay inclusive when creating an eLearning course** and avoid topics that might be uncomfortable or insulting for some learners.

Now that you know what to look out for when creating a humorous, fun eLearning course, here are some design suggestions for making content refreshing and joyful.



Tools For Content Developers and Learners

Video and Animation: Learners want to be visually stimulated. Rather than seeing videos as a laborious chore, try looking at them as opportunities to inject fun, charisma, and branding into eLearning courses.

Cartoon-style animations bring humor and levity to even the driest of topics. In an article published in *Teaching of Psychology*, psychology professors Mark Shatz and Frank LoSchiavo discovered that students logged into their course more often when they inserted the following things into their course:

Self-deprecating jokes:

By letting learners know that even the instructor isn't perfect, it will help them learn from their mistakes instead of being ashamed of them.

Topic-related cartoons:

Cartoons bring out the inner-child in all of us. By showing learners simple, colorful visuals they won't be as intimidated by complex topics.

Top 10 lists:

Lists are a great way to relay information to learners. They are easy to read, succinct, and visually appealing.

At the end of each cartoon, try including a quick quiz to gauge how much the learner retained. Offer them the opportunity to choose where they go next through interactive decision-based layouts.

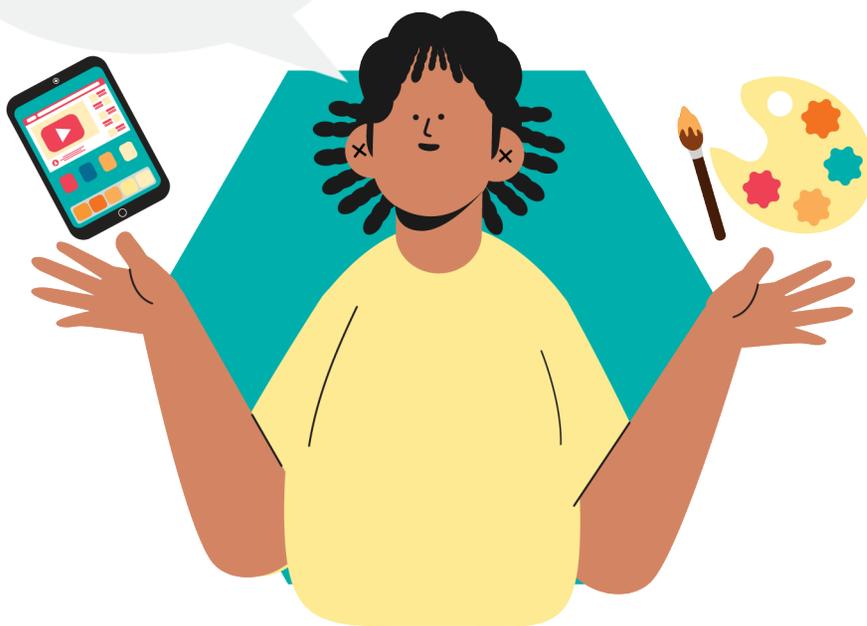


Course Design That's Fun and Memorable

At WeLearn, we know fun isn't about aimless thrill-seeking. For fun to be educationally and professionally beneficial, it needs to be relevant, appropriate, and simple.

For Your Consideration

Has your company or organization prioritized fun in their workforce development efforts?



What does fun look like for you, and how would you like to see it incorporated into an eLearning course?

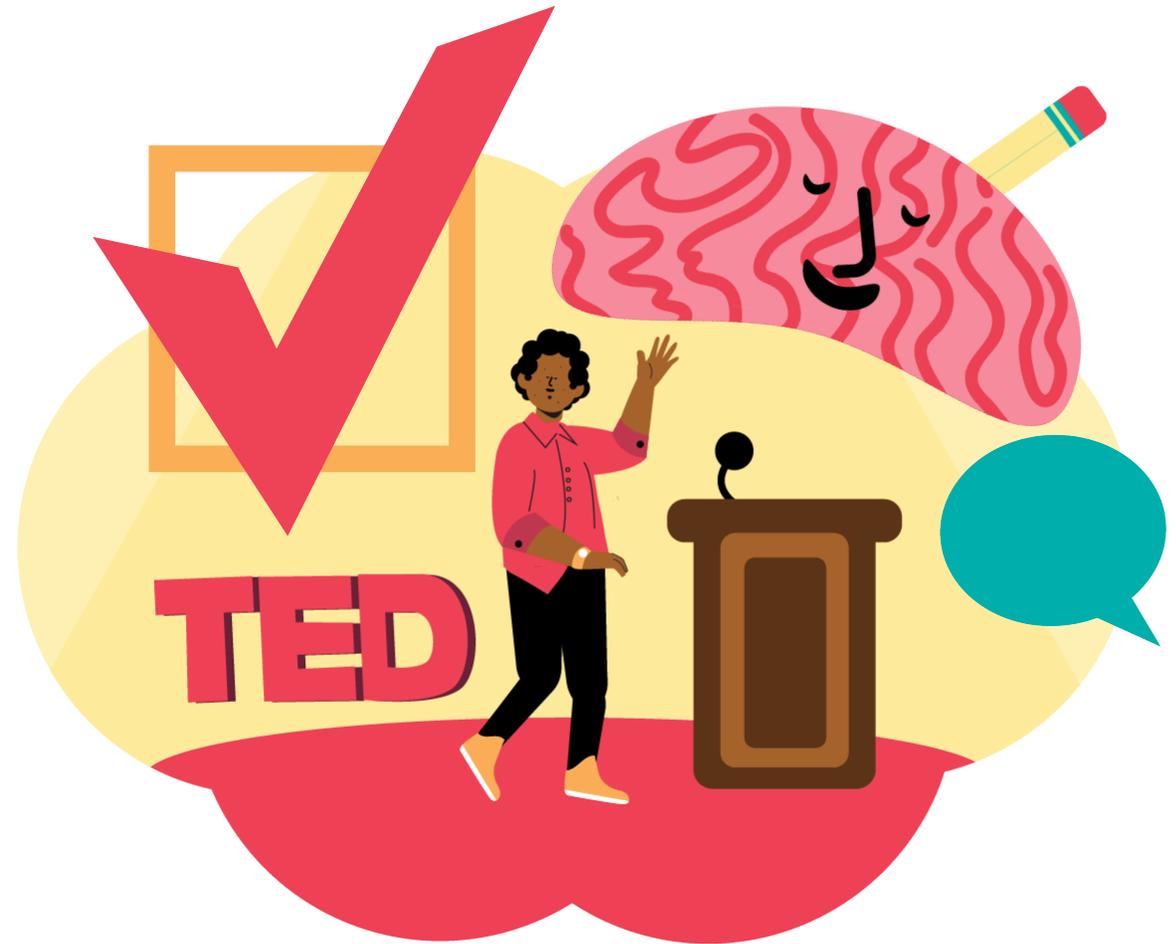


Top 3 Ways to Boost Learning Engagement

As a content developer or learning leader, it can be disheartening to see that your learners aren't interested in the course you have assigned them.

Despite the hours you have put into creating or selecting the right eLearning experience, your efforts still aren't yielding the results you want. Luckily, you don't have to work harder to create better content. You just have to work a little smarter. Engaged learners are motivated, inspired, and willing to exert effort when completing a course.

This article will explore the top three ways to motivate and engage learners and help you incorporate new methods into your content development efforts.



Making Content Engaging When Concepts Are Difficult

#1. Make learning objectives clear:

While we often think that engaging learners means giving them complete freedom over their schedule and course structure. This, however, is far from the truth. Learners tend to perform better when they know what is expected of them and are provided with guidance. Otherwise, they could end up becoming overwhelmed by difficult concepts and important tasks. Here are some ways you can create a structure for your learners:

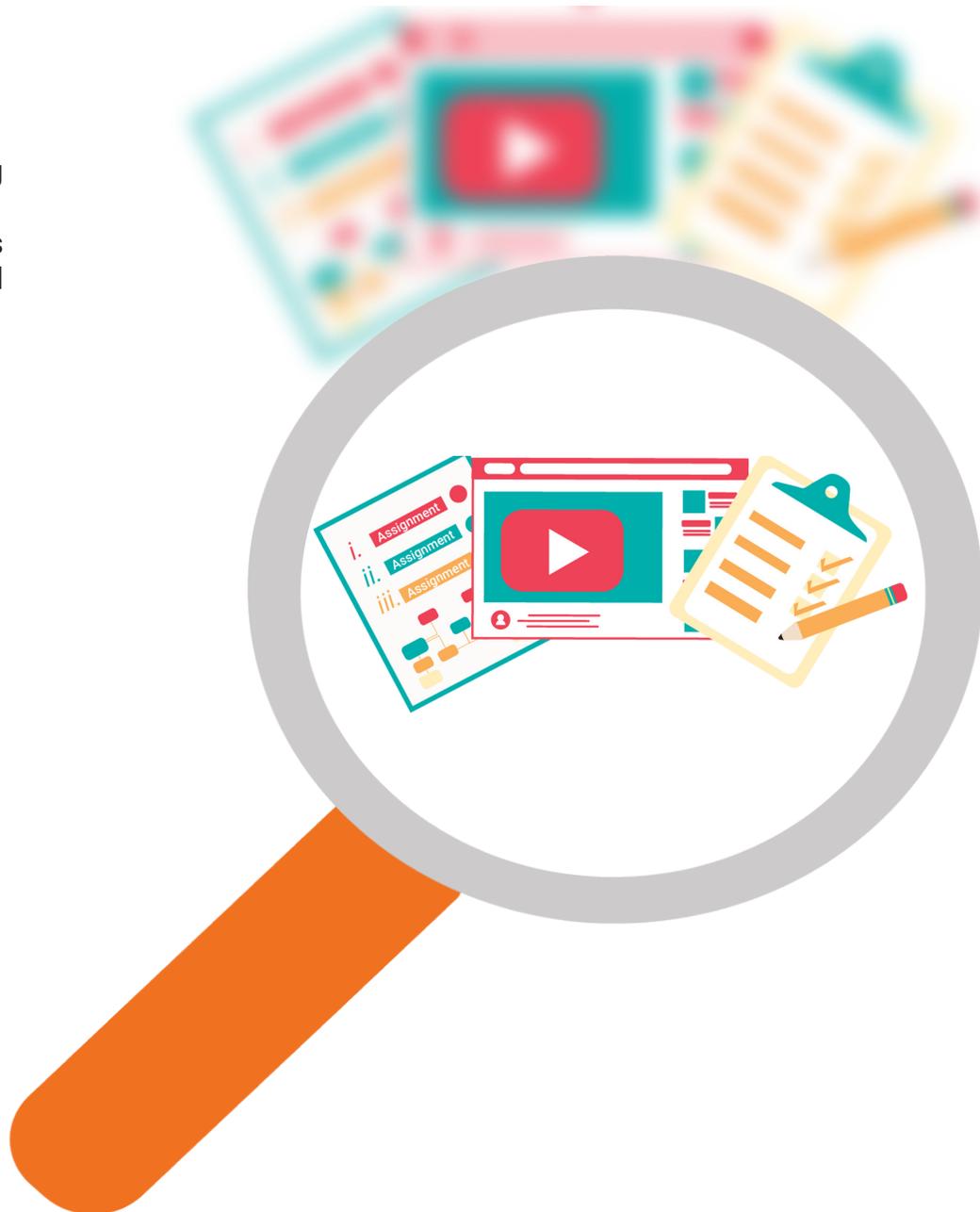
At the beginning of the course, outline three clear learning goals. While *the learner's personal goals are important*, it's also critical to provide more general objectives that apply to everyone. When writing the goals, keep the tone approachable and confident.

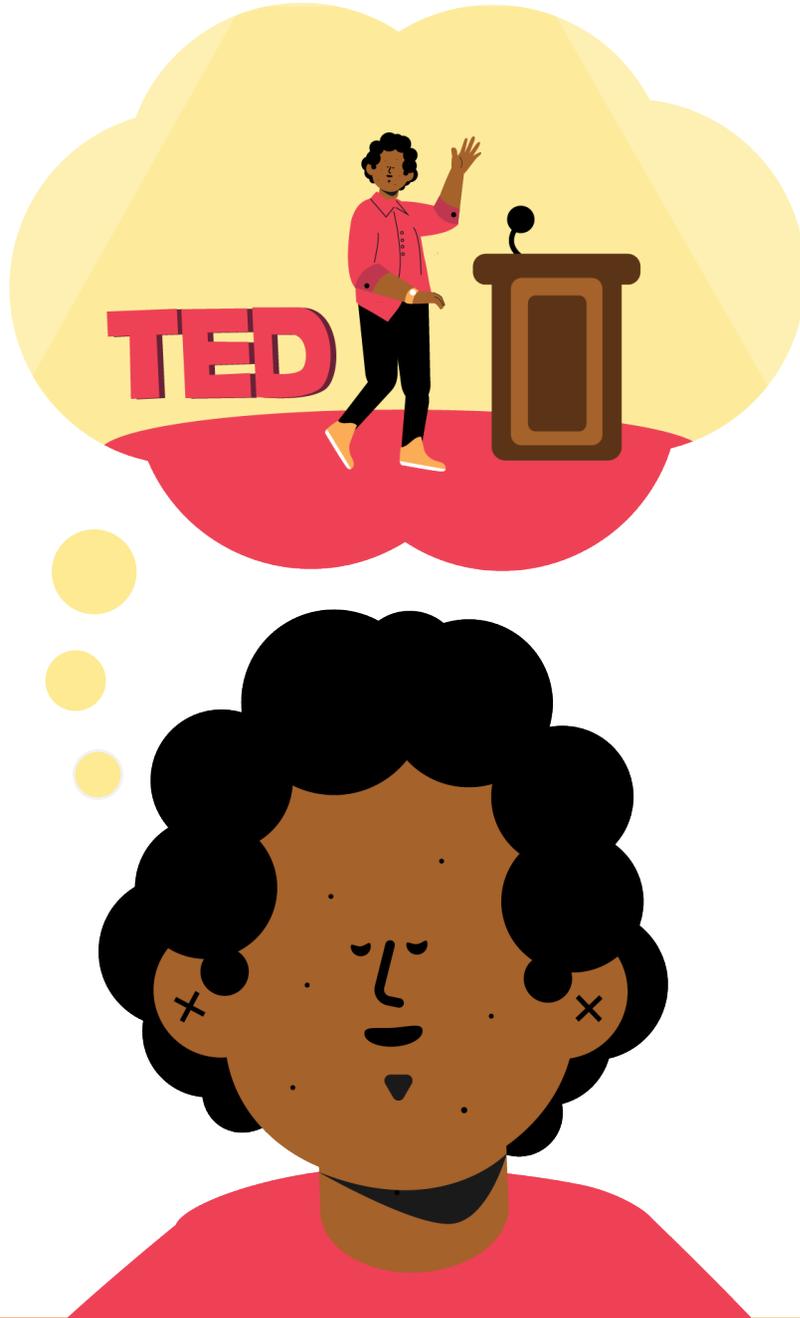
Provide a brief description of the course's layout.

Create a short trailer video of the course – show them what they will learn and how the course works.

Address major projects and assignments right away. This will help your learners mentally prepare for big tasks and will encourage them to apply what they have learned to their future projects.

Structure doesn't have to be boring or intimidating. Providing your learners with a transparent outline will let them know that you value their experience.





Engaging Content Focused on Learner's Needs

2. Understand your learners' needs: Gaining a sense of how your learners' needs relate to their broader professional goals is an important first step in boosting engagement:

Start The Course With A Personal Activity:

After outlining three general learning objectives, ask your learners to come up with a learning objective of their own. Even if the course is in an online format, encourage them to write their objectives down on paper.

Scientific studies show that learners who vividly describe and picture their goals are 1.2-1.4 times more likely to accomplish them. The simple practice of writing goals down on paper will help your learner see that their goals are important and worthy of attention. Your learners don't even need to directly share what they have written with the instructor or their peers.

Staying anonymous encourages them to be honest, vulnerable, and take ownership of their learning. There are, however, other ways to get a sense of your student's goals and boost their engagement at the same time.

Learning Engagement: Communication is Key!

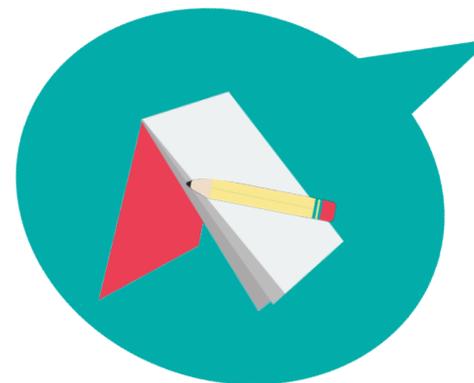
#3 Prioritize communication: Many of the common barriers to learning are a matter of miscommunication. Designing a course with open communication channels in mind is a solid start to keeping learners engaged from beginning to end. The two kinds of conversations you could have are structured and unstructured conversations, each with its benefits:

Structured Conversations:

Studies have shown that people need to see a message at least seven times before it sinks in. Instructor-led conversations are a great way for the instructor to reiterate the course's general learning objectives, repeat core focuses, and remind learners of upcoming assignments.

Unstructured conversations:

Online communication can also involve more casual discussions. This could look like an informal check-in or a free-flowing brainstorming session.



Below are three elements of a successful brainstorm:

- 1. Stay Open:** Being fully open and non-judgemental towards new ideas is one of the golden rules of creative thinking. When brainstorming, everyone's ideas are valuable.
- 2. Think freely:** No matter how crazy an idea may seem while brainstorming, no idea is silly nor impossible. Encouraging creativity and imagination will help learners stay engaged with the topic at hand.
- 3. Think Big:** The more ideas, the better. Try to produce at least 10 new solutions or ideas before the brainstorming session is over. The most effective courses will combine these two kinds of conversations, and provide a balance of structure and fluidity for learners.

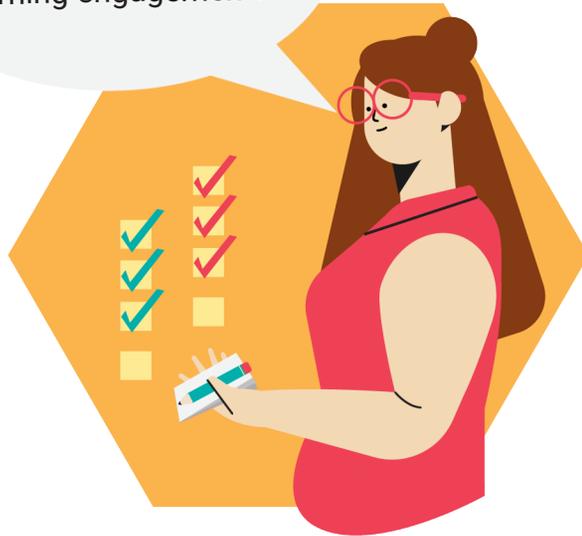
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Paving The Way Towards Better Learning Engagement

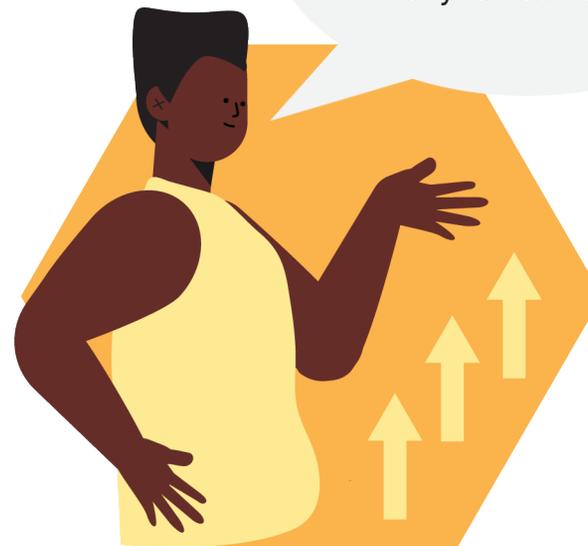
Learners crave engagement and want to feel like their learning has a purpose just as much as anyone else. By being clear, assessing learner's needs, and communicating frequently, you can make a course memorable and interesting for everyone involved.

For Your Consideration:

How has your business or organization tried to boost learning engagement?



What are some opportunities for you to boost the engagement of your learners?



Keep Moving Forward with Content Development

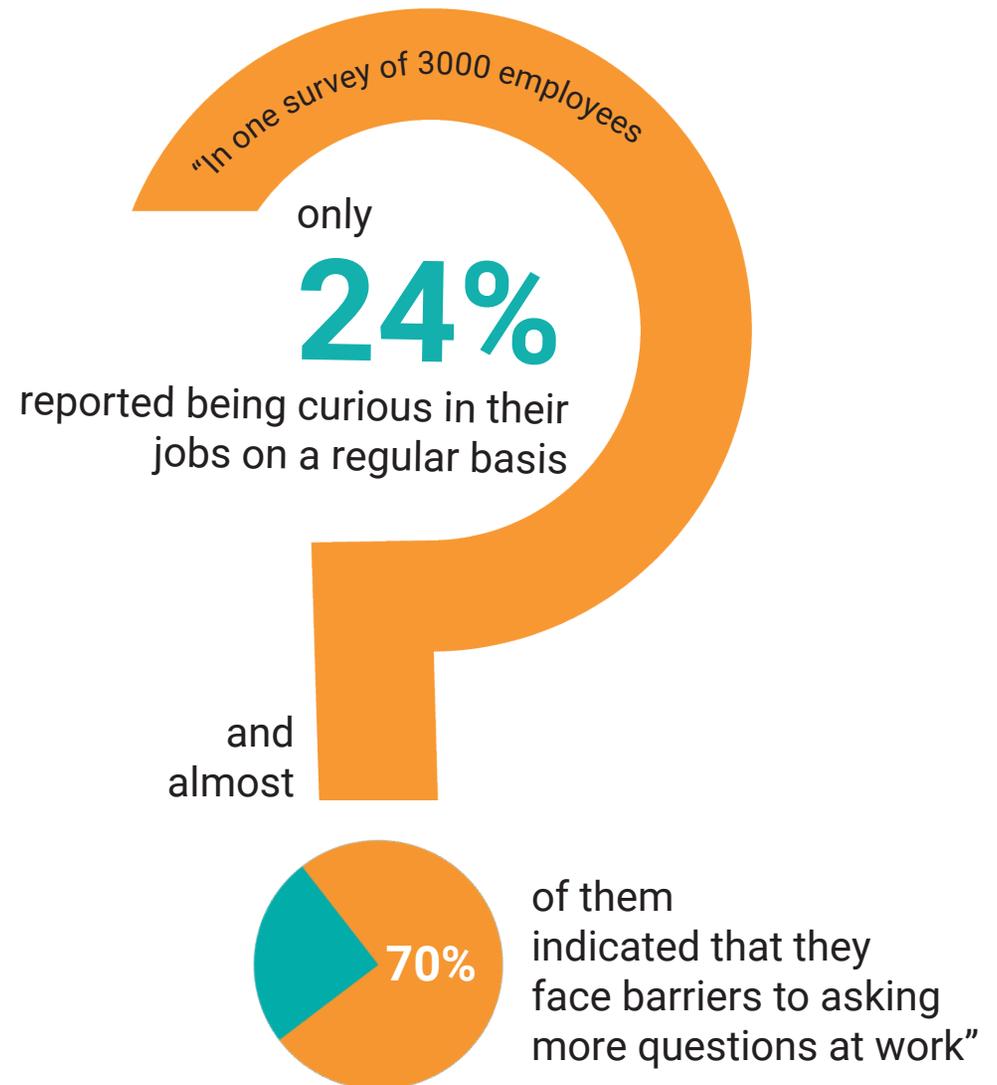
The Case for Curiosity

There is a quote at the end of the Disney movie, Meet the Robinson's, that has always stood out:

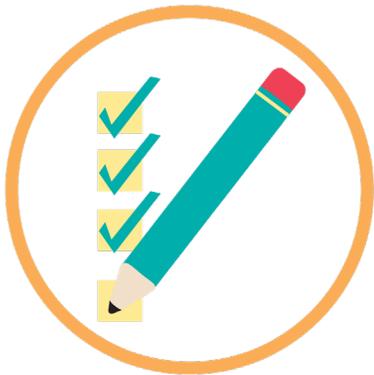
"Around here however we don't look backwards for very long. We keep moving forward, opening new doors, and doing new things and curiosity keeps leading us down new paths."

-Walt Disney

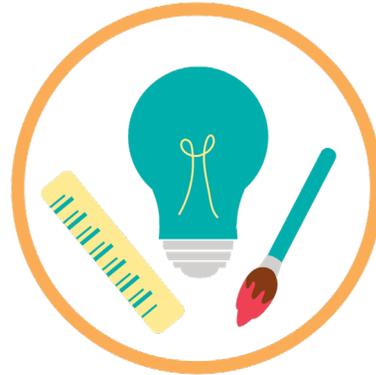
What the quote suggests is that **curiosity** is a driving force for collaboration, innovation, learning, and change. This begs the question. Why more L&D organizations do not encourage, nurture, or champion curiosity in their companies?



Francesca Gino, Professor at Harvard Business School In her Harvard Business Review article, [The Business Case for Curiosity](#), lays out the benefits of curiosity to the organizations as:



Fewer decision-making errors



More innovation and positive changes in both creative and noncreative jobs



Reduced group conflict



More open communication and better team performance

If curiosity is such a powerful driver of organizational change and advancement, then why do more learning organizations not make it a central strategy to their efforts? In a survey of Chief Learning Officers conducted by Professor Gino, she found that *“they often shy away from encouraging curiosity because they believe the company would be harder to manage if people were allowed to explore their own interests.”*

This point seems to run counter to both the rallying cry of personalization of learning and is a detriment to the organization at large.

Building Curiosity into Content Development

What does it mean to build curiosity into your learning and content development?

For WeLearn it means starting with our first principle, [putting learners in the center](#) of the learning experience. We start with a framework of curiosity and ask ourselves questions like “**what would make this learning more personal?**” or “**what would make this learning more joyful?**” – and trust us – you can create joy in learning – [even for the driest of topics](#) (we are looking at you compliance training).

We also think about how can learning experiences spark curiosity. For example, placing easter eggs in courses that prompt exploration of a topic outside of the course. Or, creating wrap assets that support the formal objective of the course like a backstage podcast. Or, a curated set of resources on the company’s intranet or internet. No one learning experience is going to provide a learner everything they need to know about a given subject.

We need to stop designing learning experiences like they will be build to meet the objectives at hand. Rather, we need to think about that moment when the learner wants to know more and provide pathways for them to do so.



The Five Dimensions of Curiosity

In 1994 George Lowenstein, of Carnegie Mellon University, theorized that people become curious when they realize they do not know something. This lack of knowledge creates an adverse feeling of uncertainty which sparks curiosity to acquire the missing knowledge. He called this “The Information Gap Theory.” If we have you curious (see what we did there) about curiosity and how to build it into the way in which you develop learning content, did you know there is not just one dimension to curiosity – ***but rather five of them***. As a content creator, consider how to incorporate the different dimensions of curiosity in the learning content you develop:

Deprivation Sensitivity

Integrate the “keep you up at night” scenarios into your learning experiences. These types of scenarios prompt your employees to ask “What If” or “What About” questions –which drives opportunities for innovation and collaboration.



Thrill Seeking

Build in an opportunity for learners to take risks. Allowing learners to experiment in the margins, try new approaches, and apply new skills to ensure that learning sticks.



How are you sparking joy for your learners?

Social Curiosity

Embed discussions with those who have excelled in the topic. Allow learners to see the paths that others had tread



Joyous Exploration

Provide the opportunities for learners to reflect on their learning journey and how they have grown.



Stress Tolerance

Construct “tabletop” simulations or “fish bowl” exercises that both create a safe environment for learning and allow learners to work through the stress of learning what they do not know.



Creating Meaning in Content Development

Feeling like our learning is worthwhile is a fundamental human desire. If learning or work feels meaningless, it can lead to fatigue, burnout, and even unprofessionalism in the workplace. Despite its immense importance, the connection between deep meaning and learning is rarely incorporated into content development planning strategies and as a result, many learners are left feeling unengaged and uninspired. This article will help you explore what meaning looks like in content development, how it connects to personalized and emotion-driven learning, and why it is something that learners must ultimately create for themselves.



Meaning and Personalized Learning Strategies

Meaning is Personal: A recent study by MIT interviewed [135 people working in 10 diverse occupations](#) and asked them to share their experiences about times when they found their work to be meaningful.

At first, scientists expected employees to find meaning in a strictly work-related sense, such as project engagement or commitment to a job. They also expected meaning to be a set state of mind that people had towards their work. What they found, however, was very different from what they had expected.

At the end of the study, scientists discovered that meaningfulness was:

Intensely personal

Linked to family, friends, and greater society

Often something that arises unexpectedly in a variety of situations

So what does this mean for content developers looking to make their courses meaningful for learners?

Finding vs. Creating:

Every content developer wants to make their courses relevant and meaningful for their learners. Meaning, however, is not something learners can “find” within a course.

Meaning isn't a single graphic, or a video, or a box of text. It can't be pre-packaged and ready for a learner to locate in a specific element of a course. **Meaning lies in the hands of the learner, and is something that they create for themselves over time.**



Learning Services That Let You Create

Emotionally-driven Learning: As demonstrated in the MIT study, human emotion and meaning go hand in hand. [Award-winning psychologist and learning expert](#) Mary Helen Immordino-Yang stated in her article *Emotion, Sociality, and the Brain's Default Mode Network: Insights for Educational Practice and Policy*:

"It is literally neurobiologically impossible to build memories, engage complex thoughts, or make meaningful decisions without emotions."

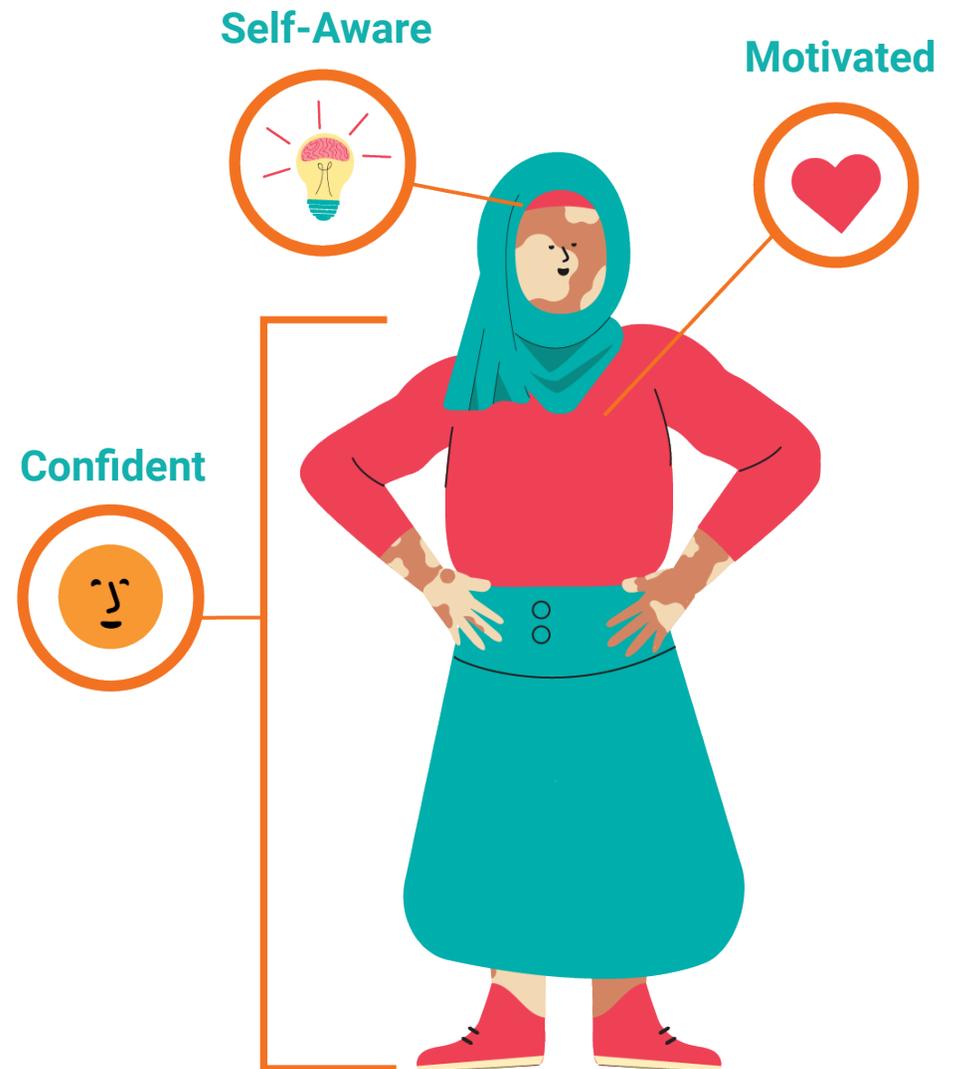
Here are some critical subsets of emotion that help learners find intrinsic meaning and value from a course:

Self-awareness: The ability to recognize and understand one's own emotions, strengths, and weaknesses is important when learning. Self-awareness encourages reflection and ultimately helps learners ask better questions.

Self-motivation: In eLearning, a strong sense of self-motivation for the learner means that they can generate positive feelings such as enthusiasm, tenacity, and persistence while engaging with a course.

Self Confidence: If learners aren't confident in their abilities, they will be held back by self-doubt and will not be able to progress through the course. This is why it is important to keep learners encouraged from start to finish.

For meaning to have long-lasting relevance for a learner, they have to consciously pursue and create it for themselves. By focusing on the learner's emotions and goals, they'll become involved in their experience and in turn, create meaning for themselves.



Anatomy of an Emotionally-Driven Learner



Content Creation For The Real World

While meaning won't magically appear even in the most well-designed course, you can still make content that sparks emotion and encourages learners to create meaning. Here are three critical elements to incorporate into your user-centric design strategy:

Real-World Stories: We only think deeply about the things we truly care about. *Interesting and compelling stories* have the power to make the learner feel emotionally invested. Real-world examples allow us to see how subject matter relates to their personal and professional experiences.

Powerful Visuals: Fonts, composition, and even colors have a direct impact on the emotional engagement of learners. While creating a design strategy, think about the emotions the course images might trigger for the learner, and what kinds of colors and shades you are using to convey information.

Optimism: Boost the learner's optimism and confidence by allowing them to try again when taking assessments and learning from their mistakes. This will help learners identify their strengths and weaknesses more effectively and inspire them to keep giving their best effort even if they are struggling.

Learning Philosophies That Stick

Modern learners want to be guided rather than commanded in the learning process. When a learner is guided with respect and attention to their personal needs, they become self-motivated, confident, and encouraged to create meaning out of the content before them.

WeLearn Learning Services

If you'd like to learn more about our content development services or talk strategies. Get in touch with us hello@WeLearnLS.com Learn more at www.WeLearnLS.com

For Your Consideration:



By allowing learners to access their emotions and create their meaning, you will be on your way to making them more invested in their educational journey, and as a result, more likely to retain information and stay engaged.

About WeLearn

WeLearn is on a mission to help organizations build better humans through learning. We provide a full range of services to assist our partners in building world class learning and a world class workforce.

We are eliminating “the suck” from learning. We have all experienced sucky learning – and we are on a mission to eradicate it. Whether you need a simple consult, a few designers to join your team, a whole new approach to learning, or something in between, we are here to help.

We are helping organizations tap into their untapped potential by creating new approaches to developing their workforces through reskilling and upskilling programs and building new pipelines for talent.

We are all in this together, and together we learn.



WeLearn Values

- We are loyal to each other and our clients.
- We believe in being a steadfast ally to each other and our clients to achieve their mission and their goals.
- We are supportive. We believe that nurturing people and ideas sparks the flow of creativity and learning.
- We are trusted. We strive to be true to our word everyday, because our word is our bond.
- We are grateful. We have gratitude for each other, for the opportunity we have to work together, and for the clients we get to serve everyday.
- We are creative. We are makers and creators in the truest sense of the words. Every day we work to bring forth new ideas into the world.
- We are inclusive of individuals and of ideas. We believe that learning is a tool in advancing equity and addressing the injustices of the past.
- We are empathetic. We practice empathy with each other, our partners, and ultimately the learners we serve. That is why we place the learner in the center of all that we do.
- We are fearless. We are bold and brave in our ideas and our actions.



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