
LEARNING IN 2023: KEY ISSUES AND TRENDS

A GUIDE FOR MANAGERS



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INTERNATIONAL
WORKPLACE

INTRODUCTION

“The pandemic caused shockwaves, including talent disruption, inflation, skills shortages, and global tension. But with more companies realising that daunting challenges demand new skills, L&D has never been better positioned to help,” says [LinkedIn’s 2023 report, Building the agile future](#).

“Just before the pandemic broke, there were some really interesting trends around technologies,” adds Andy Lancaster in the [CIPD Podcast, Evidence-based L&D: the rise of virtual learning](#). “We were seeing a significant increase in mobile, device-based learning and virtual classrooms, whilst instructor-led learning and external workshops and events were decreasing. So that trend towards digital was already happening.”

Back to 2023, and [Gartner](#) reports that the response to the pandemic has fast-forwarded digital adoption further by five years. One result of this “digitalisation at scale and velocity” is massive skill shifts. The shift in skill needs was already a challenge, but more than 58% of workforces report skill transformations since the onset of the pandemic.

Employees have to keep pace – they need to constantly update and advance their skills or they (and their organisations) risk falling behind.

Costs are also a key issue in 2023. The cost-of-living crisis is anticipated to worsen this year. Employees are understandably concerned about their jobs, pay and benefits. After having dealt with soaring energy bills and pay freezes, employees will be wondering what their organisation has to offer. [HR Magazine’s Employee Development Trends for 2023 survey](#) found concerns around cost of living was one of the most popular trends for employers, with some looking to employee development in lieu of a pay rise.

Despite money troubles, employers are recognising the importance of L&D and allocating a strong budget accordingly. The 2023 LinkedIn report found that, while this year’s number dipped slightly from last year’s high, it still represents the third most optimistic view in seven years of tracking. And only 8% of L&D professionals expect their budget to decrease.

This guide looks at how L&D has changed and what the year ahead holds for what has proven to be a vital business function.



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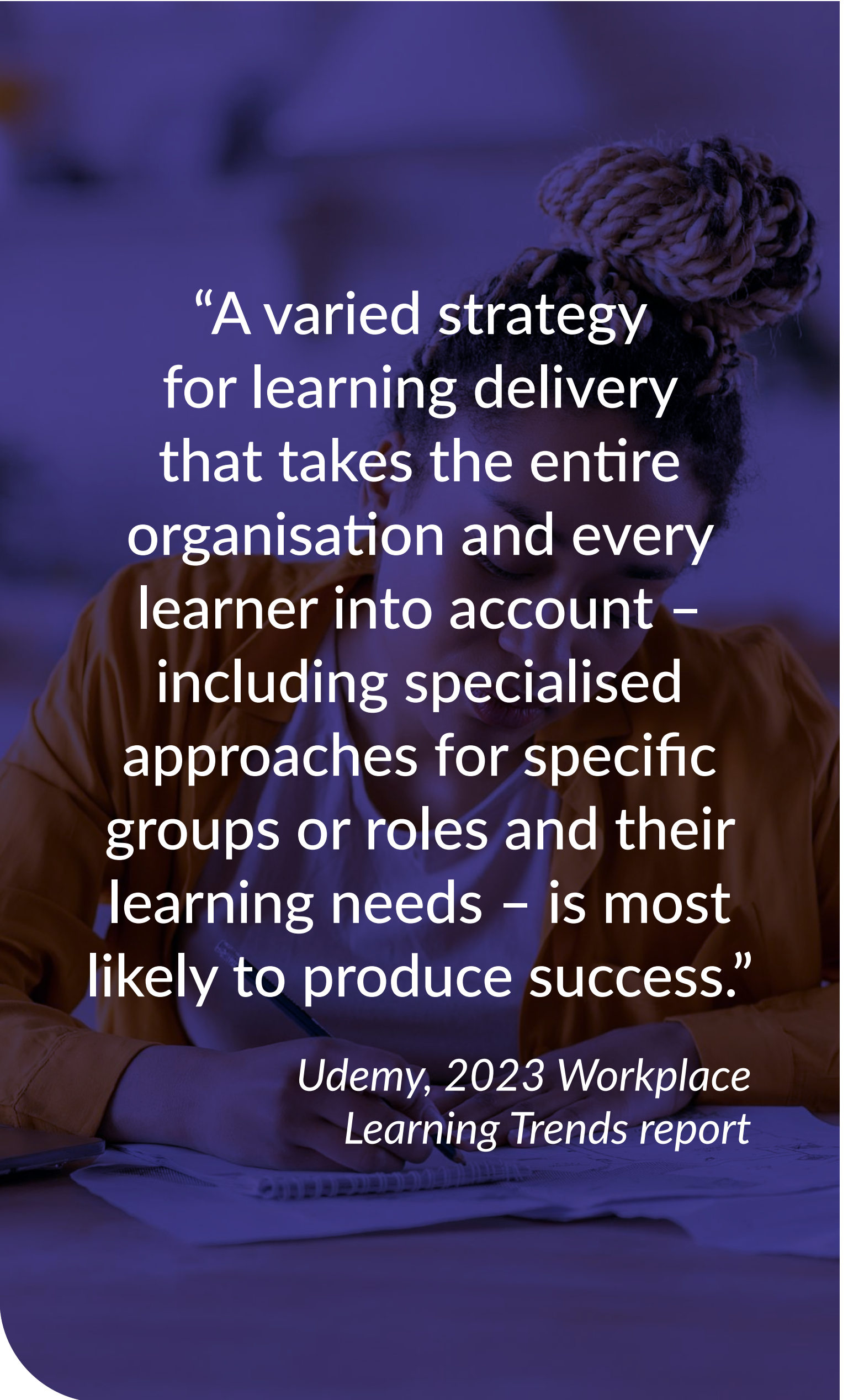
CREATING A CULTURE OF LEARNING

The world of work is unrecognisable from pre-pandemic days, with styles of work demanding new skills, so upskilling or reskilling will be essential in 2023.

As the skills needed in the workplace change, skills attainment must continue. Respondents to the [2021 Deloitte Global Human Capital Trends survey](#) identified “the ability of their people to adapt, reskill, and assume new roles” as the top-ranked requirement to navigate future disruptions successfully. This includes acquiring not only new skills but as many as 10% more skills year-on-year for a single job. At the same time, employees must replace old skills with new ones. Over 30% of the skills required three years ago will soon be obsolete, according to Gartner. Today’s employees must be agile and ready to constantly upskill in technical areas as well as in their specific functional roles and will get there through sustained, organisation-wide learning programmes and a culture that supports learning.

Organisational success depends on people’s success, which means that people must be at the centre of any L&D plan. “Learning is not one-size-fits-all,” says Udemy in its 2023 [Workplace Learning Trends](#) report. “A varied strategy for learning delivery that takes the entire organisation and every learner into account – including specialised approaches for specific groups or roles and their learning needs – is most likely to produce success.”

- **83%** of organisations want to build a more people-centric culture.
- **More than 58%** of workforces report skill transformations since the onset of the pandemic.
- **Over 30%** of the skills required three years ago will soon be obsolete.



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*Udemy, 2023 Workplace
Learning Trends report*

HYBRID LEARNING



The term 'hybrid' is often used – hybrid vehicles, hybrid working and now hybrid learning. The pandemic made us realise how we can work differently, and the same is true of L&D.

“As hybrid work challenges long-held ideas and expectations around engagement, productivity and career development, L&D teams are uniquely positioned to reimagine how organisations tackle today's toughest challenges and navigate the uncharted waters of tomorrow,” says the [Panopto Essential Hybrid Training Playbook](#).

“Training managers have the opportunity to develop a strategic culture of hybrid learning. Before you can craft a successful training strategy, understand the challenges your employees face when training, learning, and accessing the right information to do their jobs.

“Flexibility can actually enable consistency across the hybrid training experience by allowing employees to take control of their learning experience. When, where, and how your hybrid employees best learn will be different for each individual. Training programmes that allow for synchronous and asynchronous methods entrust learners with the ability to customise their training experience, improving engagement and outcomes.

“The benefits of flexibility aren't only for employees. A more flexible training model can help reduce costs and shorten training schedules by optimising hybrid synchronous classroom time. It also enables training programmes to scale by empowering learners to take control of their training experience rather than relying on instructors alone.”



58% of companies are concerned that they are not aligned with employees on hybrid work expectations.

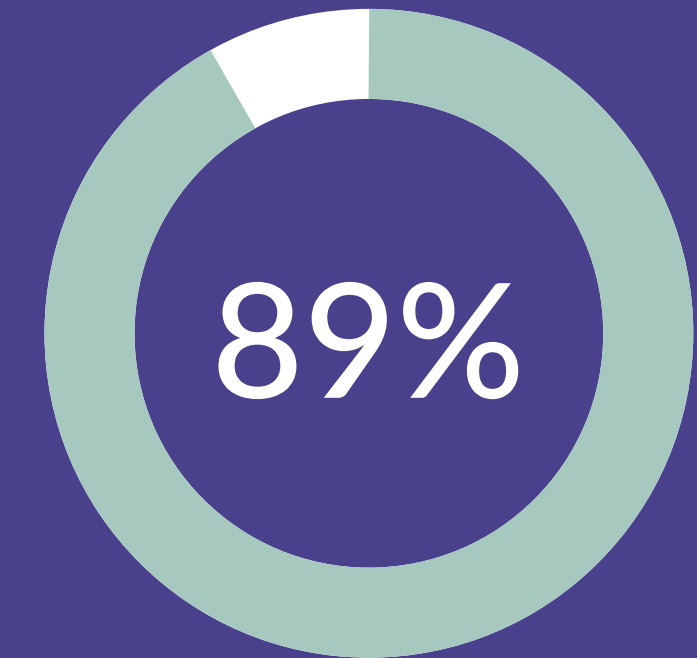
EMPLOYEE OPPORTUNITIES

Many organisations grappled with unprecedented employee turnover in the wake of the pandemic. While some layoffs have made headlines in recent months, talent development professionals continue to struggle with skills shortages and turnover risk for critical talent.

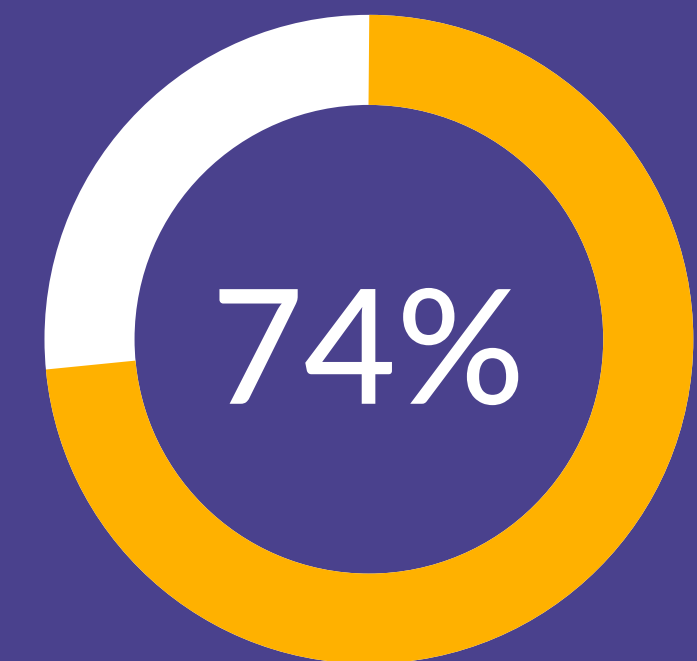
The main factors that people consider when pursuing new jobs reflect their desire to stretch, grow and develop new skills. But it's also important to continue to attract existing staff, and providing learning opportunities is the number one way organisations are working to achieve this.

“Every person in HR, regardless of seniority, should be talking about learning with respect to career mobility within their organisation,” says Jane Oates, President, Working Nation and Former Assistant Secretary, Employment and Training Administration, US Department of Labor.

“Learning is not just a nice-to-have. Building an effective workplace learning operation is about asking each employee what their career aspirations are within a company as a way to retain them. As the economy changes, HR has to help get people on pathways to different jobs. We must collectively build a career lattice rather than a career ladder.”



89% of L&D professionals agree that proactively building employee skills will help navigate the evolving future of work.



74% of global workers see training as a matter of personal responsibility.

TRENDS IN LEARNING SKILLS

To acquire the quickly evolving skill sets required for the workplace, employees can't stop with the specific functions of a given role anymore, says Udemy's report. Learners are looking to boost their business capabilities and expand them across broader categories, including soft skills, tech skills and operations. Key business skills matter for every employee, regardless of role or level of seniority. Learners are focusing most on communication, underlining the importance of creating alignment, fostering collaboration and teamwork, mitigating conflict and enabling productivity.

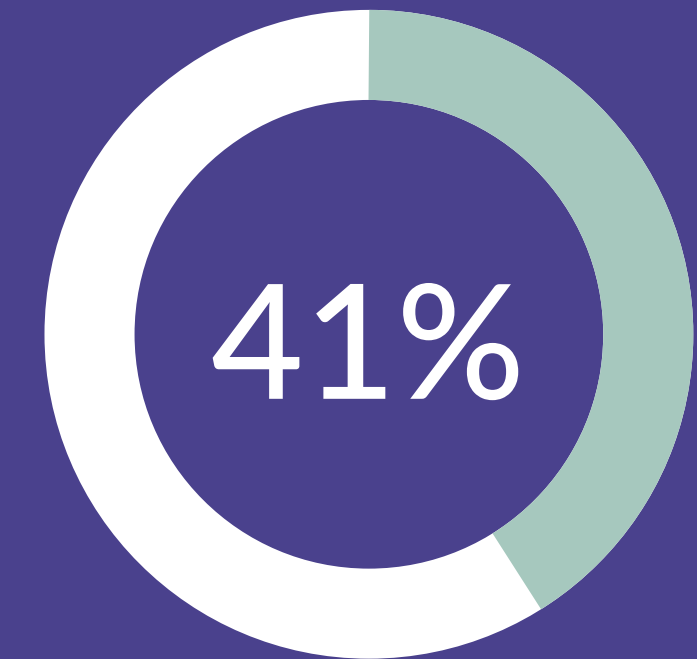
We've seen a growing overlap between personal and professional lives throughout the pandemic. While we call these personal skills, and they do matter for the personal lives of learners, most of these skills really position them for success in the workplace. Skills to help employees manage workplace stress, avoid burnout, and live fuller lives – in or out of the office – are pulling learners in. So are skills that empower them to navigate the workplace more effectively and do their jobs more efficiently.

Many companies are aware these days of the need to integrate EDI (equality, diversity and inclusion) training into the company strategy both for legal and ethical reasons.

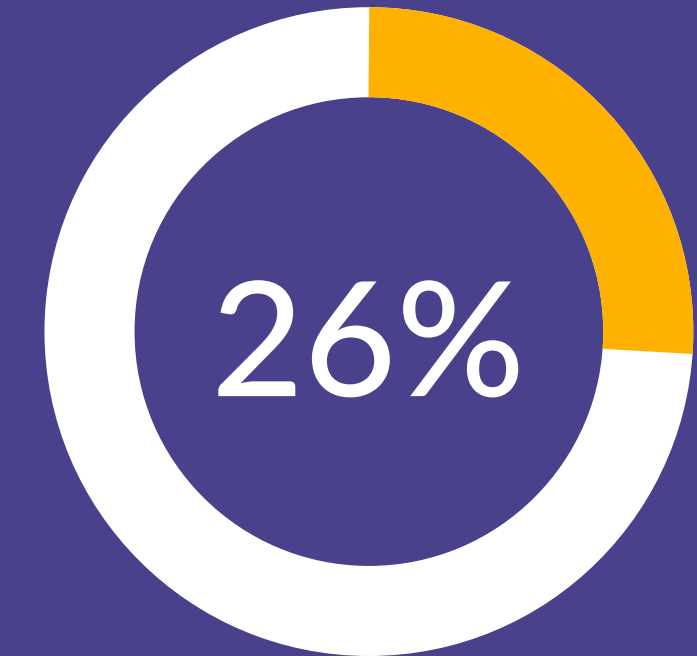
Legally speaking, companies have a duty of care to look after employees whilst, ethically, it is simply the right and fair thing to do. Organisations should treat staff fairly, equally and well.

Similar to EDI training, wellness and wellbeing is an area that continues to trend and is unlikely to decrease in importance in the coming years.

Healthy employees mean happier and more productive staff. Happier staff have been proven to stay in their job longer, have a better working relationship with colleagues, and work more efficiently.



41% of organisations use EDI programmes to improve employee retention.



Only 26% of employees say their organisation challenged them to learn a new skill.

DATA AND AI

The results of [2023's L&D Global Sentiment Survey](#) were revealed in February 2023, showing AI and analytics as the number one trend in L&D. Says Donald Taylor, Chair of the Learning Technologies Conference:

“The power of AI and the ability to handle data have grown hugely more sophisticated. ChatGPT is only the latest, public expression of decades of work that have been taking place in the background. Has L&D's understanding of AI and data kept pace during all this? Or are we destined to play catch up with the powerful technologies that bewitch and bedazzle us? We can expect to see the growth of AI and the power of the use of data continue apace this year and beyond. The challenge for L&D is whether it can master it.”

Data and analytics affect our everyday lives more and more by the day, so it is only logical that we are starting to see their influence in L&D.

The goal of using AI in education is to enhance the learning experience, improve the effectiveness of instruction, and provide learners with more personalised and efficient education.

Hurix Digital's [Role of Artificial Intelligence in Learning and Development](#) highlights AI's potential. The report includes the following recommendations:

1. **Personalised learning:** AI can be used to create personalised learning experiences that are tailored to the individual needs and preferences of learners. For example, AI-powered learning platforms can assess a learner's progress and adjust the content and difficulty of the material accordingly.
2. **Adaptive learning:** AI can be used to create adaptive learning systems that can adjust to a learner's progress and provide additional support or challenge as needed.
3. **Automated grading:** AI can be used to grade assignments and assessments, freeing up instructors to focus on more high-level tasks such as providing feedback and engaging with students.
4. **Learning analytics:** AI can be used to analyse data on student learning and performance and provide insights that can be used to improve the learning experience and inform instructional decisions.
5. **Virtual instructors:** AI can be used to create virtual instructors or tutors that can provide personalised instruction and feedback to learners.
6. **Translation:** AI can be used to translate course materials and other learning resources into different languages, making them more accessible to learners around the world.

CONCLUSION

Those who support learning of essential skills as a foundational element of a stronger, more vibrant culture will see both higher employee engagement and a better-prepared workforce. With a comprehensive, integrated approach to learning that is fine-tuned to the needs of individual teams and learners, organisations will be poised for future growth and well-equipped to handle disruptive change from any source.

“Turns out, robots can’t do everything,” says Dani Johnson, Cofounder and Principal Analyst, RedThread Research.

“The pandemic has taught us the importance of the humans that make up an organisation. L&D practitioners are in a unique situation to nurture those humans by meeting one of their fundamental needs – the need to grow and develop.

“Today, we’re seeing more L&D practitioners embrace their role as agility enablers, which often means less content creation and more learning culture creation. Smart L&D leaders are getting out of the way and creating conditions to help employees focus on the right stuff to build the right skills to move the organisation forward.”

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- > Organisational success depends on people’s success, which means that people must be at the centre of any L&D plan.
- > Learning is not one-size-fits-all.
- > A more flexible training model can help reduce costs and shorten training schedules.
- > Flexibility can enable consistency across the hybrid training experience by allowing employees to take control of their learning experience.
- > Factors that people consider when pursuing new jobs reflect their desire to stretch, grow and develop new skills.
- > It’s important to continue to attract existing staff, and providing learning opportunities is the number one way organisations are working to achieve this.
- > To acquire the quickly evolving skill sets required for the workplace, employees can’t stop with the specific functions of a given role anymore.
- > Skills to help employees manage workplace stress, avoid burnout and live fuller lives – in or out of the office – are pulling learners in.
- > Similar to EDI training, wellness and wellbeing is an area that continues to trend and will not slow down in the coming years.

THE LEARNING LANDSCAPE

In 2023, there are a number of methods that can be used to deliver training. For example, at International Workplace we provide the following:



ELEARNING

A flexible way to study online, where learners gain access to our digital learning platform and interactive workbook. An online learning approach that allows learners to study when and wherever they want.



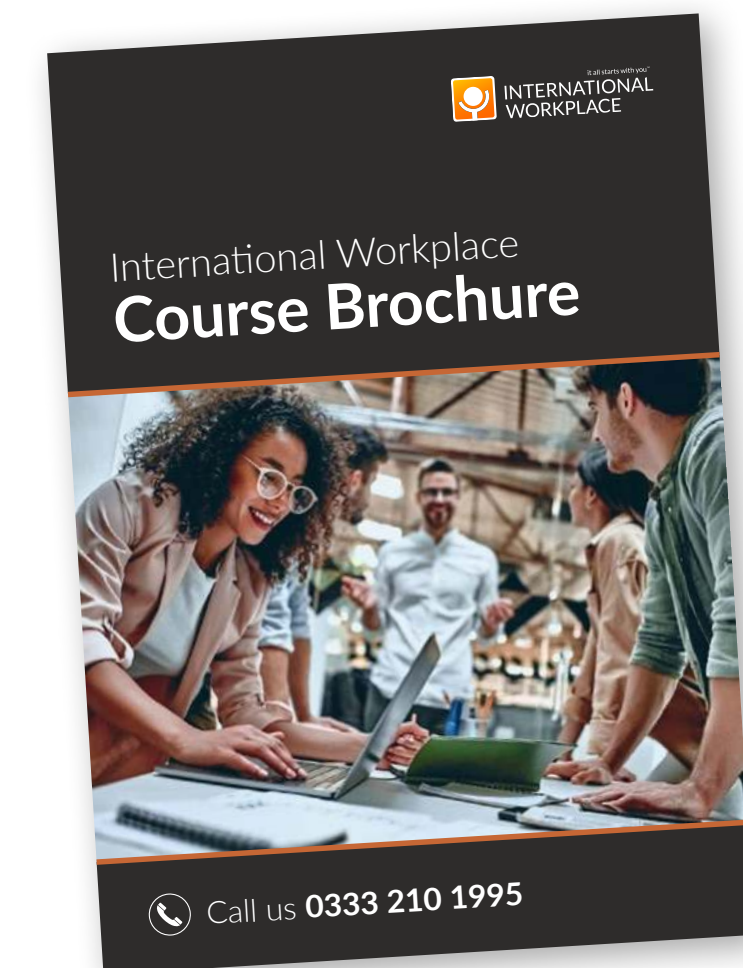
VIRTUAL CLASSROOM

A combination of live online tutorials led by qualified trainers, and supported by a digital learning platform, where learners can access all course content and resources.



FACE-TO-FACE CLASSROOM

Delivered via a traditional classroom approach where a qualified trainer comes to a company's premises or other location.



Download the International Workplace course brochure [here](#).

To find out more about how we can help your organisation on its learning journey, please call us on **0333 210 1995**, visit www.internationalworkplace.com/in-house-training or email support@internationalworkplace.com.