

Book Review

Designing for Modern Learning: Beyond ADDIE and SAM, Association for Talent Development, June 30th 2020, Lisa M.D. Owens, Crystal Kadakia.

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DOI: 10.56177/red.7.2022.art.2

The book of Lisa M.D. Owens and Crystal Kadakia is addressing a critical topic of learning and development (L&D) activities mostly as performed in business areas but also with parts applicable in learning in general. The authors are describing both details of the evolution of L&D and, also, they make a proposal for a model of work in adapting to new and rapidly changing needs of learners.

The author's definition of learning for nowadays is that modern learning is continuous, on the spot, craved, a part of everyday conversation, two-way, crowdsourced, contextual, and vital. Asking people today about their relationship with learning - young, old, in the workforce, in school, at home – we might find out that that learning is no longer a luxury to be indulged in at stages of life or career. Whether or not one's employer or circumstance supports it, people crave remaining relevant, solving in-the-moment problems, and having the opportunity to learn whenever and wherever they need it. Now, with the advent of digital technology, this need, this objective for lifelong learning, is as close as one's fingertips. The introduction of digital technology grew the possibility, necessity, and the appetite for lifelong learning.

The authors are identifying 4 major shifts in learning as following: when and where learning happens, who creates and delivers training, how the learners find information, and how learning

providers are ensuring that the information is reliable. As of today, digital technology allows people to learn whenever and wherever they are, with increasingly sophisticated tools that more fully mimic the classroom experience. Digital technology also allows anyone to create content using smartphones, and to converse with whomever they deem an expert, not just those selected by their organization as subject matter expert. Historically, the knowledge pool was limited, so the demand for learning materials was naturally high. But today, people have a lot of options that are sorted and filtered for them instantaneously. The shift in how we ensure that information is reliable – in business context but not only, drives an expectation for learning to be two-way and crowdsourced.

The authors, trying to answer to the question about *what can serve as a long-lasting foundation for designing learning for the next 100 years*, propose a proactive, process-based, long-lasting philosophy. In this philosophy, the proposal is not to focus on telling the L&D specialist “what” to create, but better on building capability around the thought process — the “how” and “why” for a digital age. The future of L&D in a digital age is about unleashing human potential rather than reinforcing quality, routine work. Aiming to operationalize solutions on findings, the authors developed a model named “OK-LCD”, composed of five actions to take when designing modern learning.

The five principles of the OK-LCD model are about a call for a new way of thinking, a new understanding about L&D’s goal and role in organizations. First, it is the going beyond the one-and-done approach. It’s no longer sufficient to design one learning asset, a class or course, but to aim is to meet the businesses or an employee’s learning goal. It is followed by the principle of designing the whole, and not only the parts. Multiple learning assets must be viewed and designed as part of an integrated whole. The third is to focus on learner’s needs and the fourth is about changing the on-the-job behavior. The authors formulate five actions set as base of the OK-LCD model, supporting learning developers about how to create a new product. Instead of focusing on designing just one class or just one course the OK- LCD model is proposing to create learning clusters. The authors defined the construction as a “CLUSTER”, composed by the following elements of action. *C* is for change on-the-job behavior, by setting the goal for the learning cluster. *L* is to learn learner-to-learner differences, by identifying learner personas within the target learner group whose behavior change will have the greatest effect on the desired

business impact. *U* is the acronym used for upgrade of existing assets by applying nine elements of modern learning to quickly improve current programs. *S* is about to surround learners with meaningful assets, by combining the work and insights from the other actions. The fifth element is *TER* and it's referring to tracking transformation by identifying those measures, both qualitative and quantitative, that will indicate the impact of the learning cluster.

Regardless of industries, high-tech or low-tech industry, wherever there is a fast-paced and changing environment, businesses will need L&D's expertise on how to help learners learn, engage learners, match new learning technologies with true learner needs, connect people with the best resources to enable purposeful learning, and to strategically measure performance to ensure we all keep learning what's needed. The authors consider that the future mindset of a learning deliverer is about taking responsibility for what happens beyond the class. Because content has been democratized and readily available to anyone with a connection to the Internet, L&D cannot control what is learned. Instead of delivering a one-size-fits-all approach, modern L&D is analyzing deeply who the learners are, and what learning assets might accelerate their skill development. Afterwards modern learners will use these paths to meet their learning needs — even though the paths to learning are not always the best paths to get the results. For any topic that learners want to explore, through today's technology, they can find relevant contents, such as articles, videos, and much more, they can also search for people who are world experts, contact experts, practitioners, or peer learners, chat through blogs with experts and practitioners, take courses, get micro-certifications.

Considering this context, the authors are proposing nine elements of modern learning needed to update learning assets. First, the accessibility element, which is about improving how quickly learners can find the information or learning asset. The autonomous element is about learners doing it on their own, which might be an e-learning course, a book, or a website. The chunked element is all about giving people just enough to meet the immediate need. The element related to be current often means that there is a method for updating the content on the fly. In class, trainers can do this easily, simply, by noticing that something changed and telling class participants about the change, thereby increasing the trainers' credibility by confirming that they themselves are up to date. The fourth element is the experiential one, and it is about users getting different responses based on an action they do during a learning experience. The *For Me* element

is about the fact that learners want their learning pathway to be curated for them, not to be given a list of everything L&D has to offer. A separate element is dedicated to hyperlinks make everything easier, so contents can be easily referred and the *MVAK* element is all about multimedia, including visual, auditory, and kinetic neural inputs. And as a last element, the social one has several layers, as learners want to interact with other people, because dialogue may help them learn and expand their perspective.

The book is offering a practical guide to L&D practitioners but not only. The authors are offering a larger contextualization of learning in business environment but with applicability in any other learning contexts too.



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