

00:00 Welcome to this Learning Uncut Elevate episode, where we explore a skill, topic or resource to help you elevate your practice and impact as a learning professional.

00:12 Michelle Ockers Welcome back to the conversation that Ravina and I are having about skill development in this special Elevate series. Hi, Ravina.

00:20 Ravina Bhatia Hi, Michelle. I'm excited to be here and to talk about my favorite subject, skills development.

00:26 Michelle Ockers Yes. And last time we spoke on Elevate 19, it was all about some fundamentals, laying the groundwork, where to get started with skill development. Today, we're going to talk about the key elements of skill development. What does that even mean, Ravina, key elements of skill development?

00:44 Ravina Bhatia Fantastic question, because I had to ask myself that question. There's a lot of this in my head from the work that we've done together over the years and over a lot of years. So in saying that, I had to sit down and think about what are the key components? What must we have in place in order to ensure that we're able to set up the skills development journey for our organization well? So if we want to do skills, if we want to build skills, if we want to develop skills in our organization in the right way, what should we have in place? So that's really the most simple way I can explain what these seven elements are.

01:23 Michelle Ockers OK, so we've got a list and we're going to talk briefly about this list in a moment. But how would people use this list? How is it intended to be helpful to them?

01:35 Ravina Bhatia So if you're starting your skills development journey, or even if you're midway through your skills development journey, these are the key components you've got to have in place. So what that means is you look at this list, you look at what these elements are, and you identify as part of what you've crafted or what you've designed in your skills development journey and ask yourself, am I doing this? Have I accounted for this? Or in what way am I doing this? Let's take an example. So say, for example, goal alignment. ensuring that employee personal development goals are in alignment and they mesh well with organizational objectives. How are we doing that? That's a very lofty statement. So how do we go about doing that in our skills development approach in our organization? So almost think of these as they're not philosophical questions. They have to be tangible actions at the end of the day that you're taking as part of your plan as part of your skill development approach in your organization.

02:42 Michelle Ockers So it's almost like, I don't really like the word recipe, but a list of things. It's like if you're starting your journey with skill development, like what do we need to make sure we've got in place? So you could use it as a planning tool.

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I'm also thinking, Ravina, if it's like, well, we've started, but we're not getting the traction we need. We feel a little bit stuck. They could use it as a checklist to go, well, why might we be getting stuck?

Which of these elements might be tripping us up? Would you see people using it that way?

03:13 Ravina Bhatia Awesome. I actually love that second one there, because that's exactly what I would do. So if someone's skills development approach isn't working, this will answer the question of, what are some of the possible reasons it's not working? And that's exactly what I asked myself, the counter of that question, which is, what do I need in place in order to make my skills development approach work, firstly? And secondly, if any of these are not in place, that means that approach is likely to fall down. And this is by virtue of everything now that I've learned over the last couple of years, not couple of, 16, 17 years that I've been adopting this approach, doing this work actively on organizations, testing and learning to identify what parts of this are working, what's not working. So it's almost I know you didn't like the word recipe, but it is in that essence, a recipe for making sure you've at least got your basics in place. This isn't to say you can't do more. But this is these are some important things you've got to have in place in your approach.

04:20 Michelle Ockers Yeah, yeah. So it's tended to be practical and usable, like so many of the things we try to do here at Learning Uncut. So you talked about one of the elements, which is goal alignment. There's a total of seven that we've derived. Run us through the other six.

04:38 Ravina Bhatia Fabulous. So there's fostering a growth mindset in the organization. How are you going about doing that? Ensuring that we're cultivating, we're doing more work around the culture. where learning and when I talk about learning here, this is really important. We're talking about learning and development. Michelle, quite often, you've seen we've answered this question so many times in conversations that we've had with clients. Learning is thought of as courses and resources, event based, classroom based. The approach that we're taking to skills has to be a development-based approach, employee development, rather than only learning or what people consider as learning only. So that's firstly, that's, that's what we mean by having that growth mindset and culture. So ensuring there's enough being done around that space. We've talked about goal alignment, multifaceted development approaches. This goes back to the first point we talked about around having a development-based approach rather than courses and resources, event-based only, ensuring there's a variety of learning methods and closely related to that, feedback systems. So robust feedback loops, right? Now, this could be through 360-degree reviews, specialized coaching, metric-driven evaluations, assessments, competency or skills-based assessments, what have you. But having those feedback loops in place in our development approaches. So that's why they're really closely tied together. Very often, people say, all right, you've got to develop your skills in XYZ. So let's say someone says to me, Ravina, you've got to get better at your communication skills. Now, you've already told me, let's say you're my leader or somebody I work with, that I've got to be better with my communication skills. How do I go about doing that? What are the approaches I can use? And how do I know

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I'm doing well? Can I just do that course and be, all right, Ravina's great with her communication skills? We know, obviously not. So that multi-faceted development approach, inclusive of activities, inclusive of actual things that I can do, try, learn from others, not just courses and resources, will help me ensure I build my skills. And the feedback loops will help ensure that somebody is telling me whether I've gotten better at it or not. Or am I on the journey to getting better at it or not? Accessible development. It's got to be in a place where it's easily accessible, that employees go to again and again, are able to find easily, whether they're working online or offline. in a manner that is conducive to your organization. I mean, each of these, these seven elements, I could talk about them forever. And we probably will talk about these as well. There's so much that underlies each of these. But this, I would say, is one of your critical points of success.

07:35 Michelle Ockers the accessible development. How often in the work we've been doing with learning strategy and learning and development management systems with organizations do we, I think I would struggle to find an example where the issue of accessible resources, for instance, has not come up. And there's never a problem with there's not enough resources. Sometimes they're not the right resources. Often organizations are swimming in resources, and they are all over the place, and people just cannot find what they need. So that accessible development is really important, right?

08:14 Ravina Bhatia Very, very important. We talk so much about learning in the flow of work. That can only happen if you offer that development, if you offer that learning in a manner that is accessible to your employees, not what we think is accessible, but specifically tailored to your organization and the context of your organization. 100%. It just, I mean, as you've seen, it's come up in every single organization we've done work with. I think it has.

08:40 Michelle Ockers Yeah. Yep. So we're up to number six. Number five.

08:45 Ravina Bhatia And then there's a self-assessment, the opportunity for people to be able to assess themselves, to be able to identify strengths, gaps and focus areas of development. You can do this in simple ways such as a self-reading, you can have something more a complex that is a skills-based assessment. You could have automated assessments. Our recommendation would always be to start simple, irrespective of what you do. Have a form of self-assessment in place for people to be able to, in a safe environment, assess their skills and where they are at in those specific skills. And finally, and this is really important, because most skills development approaches fall down with the lack of the, there is a lack of this, which is time investment. So time investment from the employee, from managers of employees, from leadership. So the agreement that this is an investment fund, people need to put time aside for this in order for this to be a success. So if we think that people are just going to do this in their own time, the concept of own time has changed. Let's just put it like that, has changed. So what is that own time? And how can we create that safe environment for employees to be able to carve out the time to be able to invest in this? Because if we're saying that skills development is important to achieving your business objectives, it becomes incumbent upon us as

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L&D professionals, as organizations, to make sure employees have the time to invest in their...

10:34 Michelle Ockers That is such an important issue. You know, time after time, we're constantly, we're seeing both people directly, we hear it in our work. Time is the biggest barrier to engaging with learning. We see it in industry research report after industry research report. So I think at some point you and I need to do an Elevate episode or just on this question of time and how do you make time and different approaches to making that happen because it is a real blocker in a lot of organizations. So we've gone through briefly with a little bit of an unpack on a few of those, the seven elements, fostering a growth mindset, goal alignment, multifaceted development approaches, feedback systems, accessible development, self-assessment, and time investment. We're going to link to a really nice LinkedIn post that you put out, Ravina, with an excellent graphic that if people want to go back and take another look at those seven elements, they can do that. And in upcoming podcast episodes, we're going to dig a little bit more into some of the combinations of these elements and bring them to life more for people. So in addition to that LinkedIn post, we have a webinar on the 11th of October 2023. So if you have gotten to this episode hot off the presses, it's coming out on the 10th of October, go to our website, learninguncut.global, go to the events page, you'll see where you can register for the webinar. If you're sitting there feeling a bit sad because you missed it, because you're listening to this later than that, just reach out to either Ravina or myself. We'll pop our LinkedIn profiles on the show notes, but we're easy to find. And reach out to us via LinkedIn and let us know you'd like access to the recording and we can arrange for that to happen as well. Because we are going to be talking about not just each of these skill elements in depth, but some other of the fundamentals and sharing some more around kind of a practical roadmap in the first of our webinar series on skill development, so it will be worth you tuning in for. Ravina, any last words for people before we sign off on this episode?

12:38 Ravina Bhatia If you're unsure where to start, if you haven't listened to our first episode, which was about how do you get started, I would definitely recommend that you go back and listen to that episode. If you need help with framing that up, reach out to either of us, reach out to people in the industry. I always say use the people around you to set yourself up to set success, set yourself up for your journey, and even to make the case in your organization, we can help you do that. So reach out.

13:09 Michelle Ockers There'll be a link in the show notes on the landing page on the website for the episode, if you want to book in a call with Ravina as well to talk about skill development and get some help to get started. Thanks, Ravina. I'm looking forward to our next Elevate episode, where we're going to dig into a couple of these elements in more detail.

13:29 Ravina Bhatia Absolutely. And I'm excited, too. And lovely to meet all of you today. Bye.

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13:34 Thanks for listening. Head to the learninguncut.global website to access resources mentioned in this episode and more to help you elevate your practice and impact. If there is a topic you'd like to cover in the Elevate series, contact Michelle Ockers on LinkedIn.

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Learning Uncut are learning and development consultants that help Learning and Development leaders and their teams become a strategic enabler so that their businesses can thrive. We work in evidence-informed ways to drive tangible outcomes and business impact and are strong believers in the power of collaboration and community. We specialise in helping to build or refresh organisational learning strategy, update their L&D Operating Model, enable skills development, and conduct learning evaluation. We also offer workshops to shift learning mindset and practices for both L&D teams and the broader workforce – as well as speaking at public and internal events.

Learn more about us [at our website](#).

About your host, Michelle Ockers



Michelle is the co-founder and Chief Learning Strategy at Learning Uncut. She is an experienced, pragmatic organisational learning strategist, L&D capability builder and modern workplace learning practitioner. She also delivers keynotes, workshops and webinars for learning and broader professional or workforce groups at both public and in-house events.

Michelle received the following prestigious industry awards in 2019:

- Australian Institute of Training and Development Dr Alastair Rylatt Award for L&D *Professional of the Year – for outstanding contribution to the practice of learning and development*
- Internet Time Alliance Jay Cross Memorial Award – *for outstanding contribution to the field of informal learning*



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