

Learning Uncut Episode 124
LTUK 2023 Highlights: AI, Adaptability and Impact –
Donald H Taylor, Michael Osborne, Shannon Tipton &
Laura Overton
Hosted by Michelle Ockers



Michelle Ockers:

In a break from our usual case study format this episode dives into the experience of the Learning Technologies UK conference, also known as LTUK, which was held in London on 3 to 4 May 2023.

I had the opportunity to speak at the conference, my first overseas conference since 2019, and it was a busy, vibrant experience. There were four to five speaker sessions happening simultaneously, a bustling exhibition space filled with a mix of established and new vendors, and over six theatres on the exhibition floor hosting ongoing presentations. LTUK was a hub of knowledge sharing and networking.

In this episode, I speak with four individuals who played distinct roles at the conference, providing us with different perspectives on the experience. First, we have Donald H Taylor, the conference organizer, who sheds light on the behind-the-scenes aspects of LTUK. Next, we hear from Mike Osborne, who led the Thirty under 30 cohort, a program supporting young professionals in L&D. Shannon Tipton, a speaker and member of the social media team, shares her perspective on the event, and Laura Overton, a session chairperson and speaker, joins us to wrap up our discussion of the conference's big ideas and themes.

One striking aspect of LTUK was the overwhelming interest in generative Artificial Intelligence. It seemed that everyone, including most of the vendors on the exhibition floor, were intrigued by its potential applications and implications for the industry. Most are still grappling with use cases, although Donald Clarke gave a standing room only session sharing insights from the work he's been doing with AI over a number of years. Laura Overton draws from her 20 years of research on the impact of Learning and Development teams to offer valuable insights into the intense wave of interest in a specific technology and the importance of keeping sight of impact when exploring new tools and approaches. Don Taylor gives us food for thought on potential of AI to help address the recent industry challenges with skills.

Among the sessions that left a lasting impression on our guests was the keynote by Beau Lotto, a neuroscientist who discussed adaptability as the key to dealing with change. His message was a strong personal call to embrace change and continuous learning as part of our professional practice.

In the show notes, you'll find links to Beau Lotto's work on adaptability, as well as information on how to access free recordings of the conference sessions. Additionally, don't miss out on the new Learning Uncut guide to Building Agility with a compelling learning strategy, which was released during my session at the conference. You can download it using the link provided. Now, join me as we delve into the world of LTUK through the eyes of our guests.

Learning Uncut Episode 124

LTUK 2023 Highlights: AI, Adaptability and Impact – Donald H Taylor, Michael Osborne, Shannon Tipton & Laura Overton

Michelle Ockers:

Welcome back to Learning Uncut, Don.

Don Taylor:

It's great to be back. Forgive the gravelly tones. As you know, it's the morning after Learning Technologies.

Michelle Ockers:

Yes, it's taken its toll on most of us. I think it was a wonderful event. So, let's talk about your role with the conference first.

Don Taylor:

I program it, so I decide who's going to speak where and when and what the topics are. And I then try to coordinate the speakers and the chairs to make sure that we have a coherent event that provides value for everybody in the room. And I do the whole opening stuff at the beginning where I stand on stage and get everybody geared up for a great two days.

Michelle Ockers:

It's a big role and I think it could take a whole podcast if we wanted to talk about that, but let's not do that today.

Don Taylor:

I don't think I... Michelle, I don't think it would be very interesting, you know, there's an awful lot of just routine procedure around it.

Michelle Ockers:

Yeah. Yep. Good logistics, right? But, some really careful thought, as you say, around goals and values. So, what were your goals for the conference and to what degree, which goals in particular do you think were really well met?

Don Taylor:

Let's just talk about the second thing you mentioned there, values. One of the key values for me at the conference is to have an open collegiate space where people can come together and learn new things without being questioned or judged, without necessarily being too soft about it. We can certainly be critical, but we need to be supportive as well. That's very important to me because otherwise we live in a world of polarization. It's very important that we come together and find the best ways of solving our problems together. So that's the values behind it. So, thank you for raising that. In terms of the goals, the key goal for me is always to be useful. That's the goal, to be useful. And to the delegates, they are the people who sit in the room for a 70-minute session, those 70 minutes have to be valuable. And that's what it's all about. Have we achieved it or not? I can't say for sure because we only finished it yesterday. The evaluation forms haven't gone out yet. But I do believe, from what I've heard, what I've seen about the sessions, talking to the chairs, talking to delegates, yeah, I think we achieved some really useful stuff for people. So, I'm really happy with that.

Michelle Ockers:

So, with this overall goal of being useful, were there some key areas that you were leaning into this year where you felt that there's something that to be super useful, there's something that we actually need to lean into or some style of sessions that you wanted to bring to the conference?

Learning Uncut Episode 124

LTUK 2023 Highlights: AI, Adaptability and Impact – Donald H Taylor, Michael Osborne, Shannon Tipton & Laura Overton

Don Taylor:

There are, yes. We can talk about styles of sessions in a minute. There's one particularly important thing right now in learning and development. It is May 2023 and the thing that everyone wants to know about, is artificial intelligence, AI. There is something behind that as well though, which is with the pace of technology and the dramatic changes and what's possible with technology, how do we respond rather than simply having a knee-jerk reaction to do something around a particular tool. How do we step back and think about how we deal with this changing world as individuals, as a community and indeed in terms of our role in society and as a learning development professional? And so the keynotes were all about that. The keynotes on the first day were all about how we think about the future and how we react to it. And then the second day was Beau Lotto who did a great job talking us through how our perception shapes our reality.

Michelle Ockers:

And in a changing world, we need to be very aware of that because we can't hang onto our assumptions. We need to be able to challenge them. So that was the overall theme. That's why those keynotes were chosen to do that. And then of course, it's all about the technology and the AI, and we had a number of sessions around technology. And Donald Clark's session on AI was absolutely packed. Yeah Don, I must say thank you very much for scheduling my session at the same time as Donald Clark's session. I truly appreciated that. [laughter]

Don Taylor:

I'm sorry. It wasn't deliberate.

Michelle Ockers:

How can you compete with Donald Clark on AI?

Don Taylor:

Well, if you... Particularly at this time, we are at a particular juncture where the anticipation and the practical reality with a few tools like ChatGPT of AI have exploded people's understanding of what's possible. But vendors haven't caught up with supplying anything around it. Well, somehow, but they're already there. Nobody has, since the launch of ChatGPT on the 30th of November last year, nobody in those few months has developed anything substantial around AI that's very new. They were already doing it beforehand if they had something. And so we had this huge gap between expectation and reality. And that is a combination, to use Donald Clark's words, of excitement and fear.

Michelle Ockers:

Mm-hmm.

Don Taylor:

In terms of your session, Michelle, all I can say is this means that we're going to have to invite you back next year because obviously you need another crack. And of course, what you have talked as well is tremendously valuable because we're not just talking about the technology, but everything else that goes around it. So yes, we'll have you back, of course.

Michelle Ockers:

Well, thank you. I'm looking forward to that. And I'll talk to you about the programming beforehand, shall I? But you're right. I mean ChatGPT, generative AI both in the conference area itself, and I actually spent a lot of time in the exhibition hall this year more than I usually would. And we can talk about that a little as well. This move over the skills obsession. Now we're all grappling with generative AI and it's pretty clear that it's the next big disruptor. It's

Learning Uncut Episode 124

LTUK 2023 Highlights: AI, Adaptability and Impact – Donald H Taylor, Michael Osborne, Shannon Tipton & Laura Overton

here now, right? And everyone's trying to get their head around what does it mean? How do we use it in our role to create learning solutions, to support and enable learning. How do we use it to learn? What does it mean for learning in organizations?

Don Taylor:

All of these questions which you've just asked, were absolutely on people's lips in the exhibition. And I too spent quite a lot of time on the exhibition floor. It was noticeable just walking around. It was also noticeable talking to people that if you had AI in the title of your session on the floor, it was standing room only. That was just the way it went. And it was also noticeable that people were going from theatre to theatre far more than in the past, particularly on the first day. There was a lot of research going on. People were coming in to find out what they could find out, answering those questions you've just asked, how on earth do we respond to these changes which are going on? So that was a real noticeable shift in the exhibition this year because of this gap between expectation and reality around technology and AI in particular. Now, I think it will be different next year. I think we'll have a much clearer idea about where we are with AI.

I don't think the skills obsession will end. I think we'll get to this point where the idea that AI is some sort of force that is going to transform everything immediately, will have settled down. I think it is transformative but it won't happen immediately. That will settle down. But people will start, then it won't be necessarily the case that AI is being used, but they'll start to understand the ways in which AI can be used to solve some of the problems which are perpetual, one of which is the skills obsession.

Michelle Ockers:

Yes.

Don Taylor:

So people will be using AI smartly to deal with skills as actually some companies already are.

Michelle Ockers:

Yeah. Yeah. And I did go to several sessions on skills both in the exhibition hall and in the conference. So, we certainly are still grappling with skills and I like the idea that this... It feels like a new technology, even though as you say, it has been something in development for many years that could help us to address inefficient, flexible ways that are easier to stay up-to-date with this ongoing shift in skills.

Don Taylor:

Yeah. Absolutely.

Michelle Ockers:

Than we've been able to using our kind of fairly blunt tools from the past. So apart from AI, were there any other particular sessions that were especially popular or topics?

Don Taylor:

I never like to pick out anybody in particular. Because I think it's always invidious. We have something like 100 people who are involved in speaking and chairing and facilitating and what have you. One I must pick out though having said that, is Kevin Yates for two reasons. Firstly, he was talking about value, which is a perennial issue. How do we show the value of what we do? But also, he did it in a very different way, which was to get people really involved in the topic and make it much less chalk and talk and much more what he calls, an

Learning Uncut Episode 124

LTUK 2023 Highlights: AI, Adaptability and Impact – Donald H Taylor, Michael Osborne, Shannon Tipton & Laura Overton

immersive experience. But that doesn't mean a VR experience, it means something else. You get people engaged and immersed in the issue.

Michelle Ockers:

Yeah.

Don Taylor:

The reason why that is important to me is firstly, I love the approach he took, but also, I think that the point about value is one that, and learning impact is never going to go away. It's always going to be part of what we do.

So, I think there are perennial... Behind and underneath this fluff on top of our AI, there is substance behind it underneath or to one side of all these topics, there are real issues around value, which challenge us to think, what's our role in learning development? We look at the tools we've now got, we look at the questions which remain unanswered. We look at where the value resides in the organization, in the intangible assets and the skills and the knowledge that people have. Where's our role? And I think our role goes well beyond what it was when I started, which was creating and delivering courses.

Michelle Ockers:

And that's a really great reminder, Don, that no tool is ever going to be our saviour that we need to come at it thinking about what's our role, how do we create value, and then how do we use whatever tools are available to us to support that. So Don, there's one other really important part of the conference that I wanted to ask you about. I think it's a wonderful initiative and it's the 30 Under 30. Can you tell us a little about that program, what it is, what you're trying to achieve with that, and how it works?

Don Taylor:

Okay. So this was begun by Elliot Maisie in the States, in his conference, Learning - and with the year added after it. Learning 2023 this year. That became part of the Closer Still Learning Technologies family of conferences a few years ago. We maintained it and adopted it and brought it over from the States to the UK. So we're doing it in both places. The point of the 30 Under 30 program is to recognize not so much achievement, which is what other 30 Under 30 programs do, but potential. So we're looking for people who, if they can get a highly, highly reduced ticket to the conference, are able to make good use of that as a way to drive their career development. People who've come on the cohorts in the past have found that it has accelerated what they're able to do. They find that they get a boost in their confidence, they get exposure to great people. Kevin Yates was speaking, a lot of other people from the conference are put together with the 30 Under 30s, give them a brief, tell them what's going on, and we also get them on stage. Now, for a lot of people who are in that age group, it's very unusual to be in front of say, 800 people, which is roughly the number of people in the audience. And it can be a little bit of an odd feeling and perhaps a bit nerve-wracking.

But I think it's a great way to start. If you are going to be doing stuff at L&D at some point you're going to have to make a high stakes presentation to people, and you're going to feel nervous. Alright. Well, just feel what it's like for one minute in a group of people, to stand on stage and look at 30 people with a spotlight shining in your face. How does it feel? Just start, then it's up to them to continue. But afterwards, we do continue with the networking, with supporting people individually and making sure the 30 Under 30s are using this as an opportunity to, as I say, kick-start and accelerate their personal growth.

Learning Uncut Episode 124

LTUK 2023 Highlights: AI, Adaptability and Impact – Donald H Taylor, Michael Osborne, Shannon Tipton & Laura Overton

Michelle Ockers:

It's a wonderful idea. So, what next Don? What are your future plans for the Learning Tech conference? What might we expect to see next year, for example.

Don Taylor:

I think on the Friday morning after a very, very, very intensive two days of conference. That's a very unfair question to ask. Yes.

Michelle Ockers:

Is that too much to ask of you? Okay. Put it this way. Put it this way. What would you fight to keep from the current format? What works really well? What would you fight to keep?

Don Taylor:

I think one thing which I think nobody gives enough attention to, is the role of the chair people we've got. And in fact, we might be changing the name of the chair people next year. Chairperson in the session is often regarded as somebody who turns up five minutes beforehand and reads an introduction. Our chair people spent a lot of time working with the speakers beforehand to make sure that the, what they're saying is useful to the audience. Coming back to that key goal, that 70 minutes has to be useful, right? How do we make that work? And that's the role of the chair people. They put a lot of effort to that. I'd fight to keep that for sure. In terms of what I'm excited about for the future, this year, I didn't actually make a big thing about this but we had a far greater stress on case studies this year.

Almost every session was case study focused. We had far fewer consultants speaking, meaning where we did have consultants speaking, they were carefully picked to be the very best people who could deliver on a particular topic. And that's more work for the chair people, because when you're working with a case study, you have to help them tell their story well. But at the same time, I got a real sense talking to people and I didn't lead with it. I didn't make a point of it. So they were volunteering this to me that they found it was more useful this year. They were hearing stories that resonated with them and taking away stuff they could use. So the other thing I'm going to be doing more of next year is maintaining that focus on real people with real stories, with real value.

Michelle Ockers:

That could almost be the tagline for a great podcast, Don.

Don Taylor:

I love it. I love it. Yeah. Yeah. But that's, but Michelle, to be fair, that's what you do. That's what you've been doing.

Michelle Ockers:

Well, real stories about real work from real people. That's basically the tagline of the podcast. So I did pick up, for the listeners, I did pick up some great case studies, and have reached out to some people to share their stories on Learning Uncut.

Don Taylor:

Fabulous.

Michelle Ockers:

So thank you, Don, for bringing those people to us. Don, thank you so much. Is there anything else you want to share about the conference that we haven't had the chance to talk about today?

Learning Uncut Episode 124

LTUK 2023 Highlights: AI, Adaptability and Impact – Donald H Taylor, Michael Osborne, Shannon Tipton & Laura Overton

Don Taylor:

One thing I always say at the beginning of the conference, and indeed to the 30 Under 30 cohort is, a conference is a two-day event. Great. It happens and then it stops. But we are part of a community, and I think it's essential that we remember that we are part of a community and continue as you do, Michelle, to share with each other and to bolster each other's skills and I think, professional expectations of each other. So we need to be giving ourselves a tough time setting high standards for each other, and also sharing and supporting each other. And I think if we do that between these events, the events are useful, but what really matters is how much they foster and develop the community that exists in the other 363 days of the year.

Michelle Ockers:

Absolutely. Don, that's a great note to finish on. Oh, in fact, one more thing to finish on. [laughter] Do you still put the recordings of the sessions up on YouTube?

Don Taylor:

They're not on YouTube, they are on, they are up on an app called Swapcard. And you can get access to that by registering for the exhibition. So you have access to the videos. You just have to register for Learning Technologies exhibition. Even if you have no intention of coming, because you're in Australia, for example, you can still get access to the videos.

Michelle Ockers:

Okay. So can people still register for this year's conference in order to get access to the videos?

Don Taylor:

Okay. That's a great question. I have no idea. I'll find out. But for the purposes of this, let's say yes, why wouldn't we do that? Because it makes perfect sense.

Michelle Ockers:

Alright. I'll follow up with you and [laughter] I'll put some information about it into the show notes for people, so they can go and explore the sessions directly. That's really generous. Thank you so much, Don.

Don Taylor:

It's great to be here, Michelle. Always a delight to see you. Looking forward to seeing you again in UK or Australia again soon.

Michelle Ockers:

It's April next year, isn't it?

Don Taylor:

It is April.

Michelle Ockers:

Okay. We'll put some dates on the show notes as well for next year. Thanks, Don.

Don Taylor:

Great to speak to you.

Learning Uncut Episode 124

LTUK 2023 Highlights: AI, Adaptability and Impact – Donald H Taylor, Michael Osborne, Shannon Tipton & Laura Overton

Mike Osborne:

So I am Mike Osborne. Pronouns are he/him. I am a learning designer at a company called UpSkill Digital, and I have been in the learning and development space since 2012, so straight from the university. My degree is in games technology, and I sort of fell into the industry a little bit. Originally, I saw serious games as a route, as a stepping stone into the games industry. And when I saw the impact that we have on people due to the fact that what we do literally can change lives, I got the bug and I decided to stick around. Fast forward another 10 years or so or eight years or so, and in 2020, I was fortunate enough to be one of the UK's Learning Technologies very first Thirty under 30. So this is kind of a very exciting opportunity for me which has led to a lot career-wise, and yeah, I think that's a nice overshoot of me.

Michelle Ockers:

And so can you tell me a little bit about your experience as part of the Thirty under 30s? For many of our listeners, it might be the first time they've ever heard of a Thirty under 30s program as part of a conference. So give us a little bit of a feel for how that runs and what your role was this year with the Thirty under 30s for LTUK.

Mike Osborne:

Sure. So I'll take you back to, again, 2012 with my... So I graduated from university and I did not come from a learning and development background. So one of the things that I used to do is I used to follow a Twitter chat that used to run at 9:00 AM. I think it still does run at 9:00 AM every Friday called #LDInsight. And it just so happened that that year in 2020, so the year I turned 30 in that October, so lucky to get in. I saw that, so I applied. So I had been in my very first role from the university probably for about eight years or so. And I was kind of stuck in the rut a little bit, kind of just enjoying what I'm doing very, very much. But I wasn't being challenged necessarily.

Mike Osborne:

So I applied to this Thirty under 30 not expecting to be selected, but so when I got their email come back about "Congratulations, you have been selected," I was absolutely thrilled. This was in the February of 2020. I would've turned 30 in the October, so it really was my last opportunity to have been selected. Now I know this had run for a few years in this, in the Learning Technologies sister company over in America, but it was the first year for the UK. So it's real kind of coincidence. I'll always be one of the first Thirty under 30, and which is an amazing thing to put on the CV. And coming out of it, I was really inspired for a multitude of reasons. So number one, I think we all experience that sense of imposter syndrome sometimes to, "Why would somebody listen to me to know?" Or just even kind of feeling like a fraud when you put yourself in front of people.

Michelle Ockers:

Let me tell you something, Mike. That never goes away fully. It never goes away fully. I had a little bit of an attack after the conference last week, [chuckle] so that's normal. Yeah.

Mike Osborne:

So on the day one morning of the Learning Technologies, this is the year in 2020 when I was one of the Thirty under 30, we had a icebreaker challenge which was to practice our elevator pitch. We were going to speak... We were going to be meeting a lot of speakers over the next few days, whether on the exhibition floor, the conference speaker so it's a real opportunity to practice it. And Donald Taylor gave us this one word or this short piece of advice. So, Don was saying how when he speaks on stage, that's a learned behaviour, something that doesn't come natural to him. Now I'd been attending the conference

Learning Uncut Episode 124

LTUK 2023 Highlights: AI, Adaptability and Impact – Donald H Taylor, Michael Osborne, Shannon Tipton & Laura Overton

exhibition side of things for many, many years now. So I've seen Donald Taylor for quite a few times and it always seems so authentic and so natural when he arrives on stage.

"Hi I'm Donald Taylor" and everyone is like engaged listening to that every word. And then that kind of was really eye-opening to me because as a neurodiverse individual as I said, I have Tourette's Syndrome. I never saw myself attending client meetings let alone attending the conference and perhaps having these speaking opportunities. I then had the opportunity to speak on stage on day two. So on day two of the conference, all of the Thirty under 30 are invited are on stage. And two of them are asked a question. Now I was asked the question, what are things that are the big challenges with the learning development industry as I have seen either on the exhibition floor or through the conference. So I took that opportunity to speak about accessibility which is something really important to me.

And then later that year, Donald invited me to speak at the conference on that very topic. So back then I had two choices. Either to pass up the opportunity because I was too scared and let that fear of failure or that imposter syndrome overcome me or to really take that opportunity that was presented to me and educate a broader audience on a topic I was really passionate about, so designing for people with disabilities. And what I normally find is people don't design to deliberately exclude. They're just often not aware they are doing it. So, I had an opportunity even if people were just taking away two or three things and applied that to their practice and 15 people do that, the potential reach was massive. So I took that opportunity and that led to a number of speaking opportunities.

And the other exciting thing that happened to me was a change in my career. So I had been in my role for about eight years or so and I just thought, okay, I've been here for a long time. I'm looking for that next opportunity. And then I come across this company called UpSkill Digital. And when I landed on their website, I saw this really diverse team. It's a Black-owned business. And when I looked into what they do a little more, I saw that they did an awful lot on diversity and inclusion primarily for under-represented groups.

And also to help women into leadership. But one of the things that they didn't do was on the disability front. So they didn't do a lot for designing for people with disabilities. And I thought I had a real opportunity then to expand my offering. So I joined that two years ago and I'm really proud of myself to say that last year in August I was promoted to e-learning design lead. And then this year, just last month actually, that was again extended, I now lead the entire learning team at UpSkill Digital. So, all of these amazing opportunities, whether it's the speaking opportunities or career opportunities really do stem down to the Thirty under 30 opportunity that was presented to me. And just that little bit piece of information that Donald shared with us in the morning, it inspired me and I'm so glad I took that opportunity. So, I really did try to feed that back this year. So obviously the year that...

Michelle Ockers:

But what was your role this year in the Thirty under 30 then, Mike?

Mike Osborne:

So, last year, I supported the Thirty under 30 program and this year I was asked to come and lead the cohort. So, an exciting opportunity for me which again I had to weigh up the pros and cons because on the 16th of May, I have a little boy due. So, I'm very excited about that. So it is cutting it fine and I had to have that conversation with my wife, but it's a real opportunity for me to give back to this year's Thirty under 30 cohort.

So, on the Tuesday night, we all get the group together for a meal at the Zero Sette, very near to the Excel Conference. A big shout-out there. It's a fantastic all-Italian. And then over

Learning Uncut Episode 124

LTUK 2023 Highlights: AI, Adaptability and Impact – Donald H Taylor, Michael Osborne, Shannon Tipton & Laura Overton

the next two days, I orchestrated what people were doing. Now I didn't want to over-prescribe what we do over the next few days, but we kicked off with some breakfast activities. So again, I wanted to replicate what I'd... What I had done in the first year with the elevator pitch exercise. And then on day two, we looked at doing our reflections from the previous day, and also what we were looking forward to the day ahead. Now one of the things I think really did help this year's cohort especially in terms of the feedback I have received is creating that safe space for people at the conference, because as I said, I'd attended the exhibition for many years. I'm aware of how overwhelming that can be because everybody wants to sell to you, but also when you are new to this type of thing, so you're attending the conference. For many, that was our first-time experience and it really can be overwhelming. So I'd highlighted to them both my experiences. I had a couple of others, so Tom Pieroni, Zara, Esther, and a number of people supporting me who are former Thirty 30 Alumni.

All supporting and joining us, and sharing his wisdom as well. So what we wanted to do was to really inspire them about, okay, what opportunities does the Thirty under 30 present to us? And also, what can we get from that? So going forward, I will be making sure that they are networking at least once on a quarterly basis, because they've met these 30 fantastic individuals, and I really do want to keep that alive, and also ensure that this... A number of speakers come along to these sessions. Now one of the things I took on board was to try and get as many of the speakers at the conference over to lunch across both days as possible. And I was genuinely surprised and slightly overwhelmed by the positive response that I got. So there were a couple of hiccups on day one, don't get me wrong. But on the Thursday, we had probably eight to 10 of the conference speakers actually come and join us over lunch, giving up their free time, giving up their lunchtime to come and engage with these kind of up and coming individuals in this space. And they were so very much... So very thoroughly engaged. They were asking questions. You can see they were all switched on, listening. And I love the fact that when I went on to LinkedIn later that day, not only were the Thirty under 30 sharing about it on their social media platforms, sharing on their Twitter or their LinkedIn, but also the speakers did as well. They were saying what a fantastic group of people we had.

Michelle Ockers:

Look, I think it's a wonderful initiative. And I was one of the people who joined the luncheon the second day and it was a great opportunity for me to learn what's going on for the newer generation in our profession, what are they seeing, what do they think we should hold onto, let go of, shift? What topics are they interested in? And I think many of us recognize that there's this new generation coming through and there's an opportunity to provide some input and support people to be successful in the profession. So thank you for giving me that opportunity too, Mike.

Mike Osborne:

Thank you for coming. It was very much insightful. So I'm glad you could make it.

Michelle Ockers:

Yeah. It was a delight. So Mike, can you tell me, and I think we might just kind of just do a broad question and see where it takes us, what were your... So quite aside from the Thirty under 30s, which of course is something we really wanted to feature in today's podcast, what were your key takeaways from the conference this year?

Mike Osborne:

So, there are two key takeaways for me. The first was on David Kelly's emerging technologies session on day one. And David spoke about focusing on the opportunities. So,

Learning Uncut Episode 124

LTUK 2023 Highlights: AI, Adaptability and Impact – Donald H Taylor, Michael Osborne, Shannon Tipton & Laura Overton

if you have to think about things as a SWOT analysis and really looking at what is the opportunity here, that kind of thing can help us make better decisions, And the second... My second key takeaway was, I was blown away by Beau's session.

Michelle Ockers:

Oh yes. Beau Lotto. Yes. And Laura Overton is talking about that on the podcast, so there's a nice linkage there. It was great. What did you like about that session?

Mike Osborne:

I thought it was a masterclass in storytelling. So, I've attended a lot of sessions over the years, but I think just in terms of the amount of... And I'm not kind of pinpointing anyone at the Learning Technologies necessarily, but I think it's all too easy to come to something like Learning Technologies and present a deck, especially in the exhibition hall. But I thought Beau used a great amount of humor. It was accessible, it was relatable. At various intervals, he brought videos into the challenges. So, he got people stood up, he got them hands-on and waving their hands. He asked... Beau got them engaging with the conversations and when he is talking about the kind of the heated debate examples, it was all very much things we could relate to.

Michelle Ockers:

That's really important and went beyond inspiration to the practical things we can put into action around opening ourselves up to change in an era which is constantly evolving, right? And linking it back to all of the interest in artificial intelligence. There's this huge sense-making process we're all going through at the moment. It reminds me a little bit, Mike, at the start of COVID, how we all had to kind of lean in together and go, what is going on here? How do we work our way through this? What can we take from the past that's worked? What new approaches, what do we need to open ourselves up to that the conversation around artificial intelligence was a lot like that, or in generative AI at the moment? What does this mean for us? It's big sense-making, and being open, curious, reframing, looking at how we're making meaning at the moment, which was one of his key ideas, was we need to shift how we understand things if we're to open ourselves up to change. I thought that was very powerful. I am with you. Mike, by way of kind of closing out, is there anything you really want to share about the conference that you haven't had the opportunity to share yet?

Mike Osborne:

Just if there's anyone listening who's thinking about applying for the Thirty under 30, and might be a bit nervous, absolutely take that advantage. And for those of you who are maybe older than 30 and kind of want to get involved in some way, to take these opportunities when they're on stage, kind of come and meet us at the end of day two. I'm sure it is running again next year. I've been asked by Donald if I'm kind of interested in either supporting or leading that. Come and kind of say hello to these individuals, have these conversations and network with them, network with each other because I think that's where the real power of these conferences lie. Not just in the sessions we attend, but the conversations we have.

Michelle Ockers:

Absolutely. Thanks so much for joining us today, Mike.

Mike Osborne:

Thank you so much for having me.

Shannon Tipton:

I am Shannon Tipton, the owner of Learning Rebels and based out of the Chicago land area in America. And what we do at Learning Rebels is that we help organisations think differently

Learning Uncut Episode 124

LTUK 2023 Highlights: AI, Adaptability and Impact – Donald H Taylor, Michael Osborne, Shannon Tipton & Laura Overton

about their training, taking their big fat content and turning it into something usable. So that's what we do at Learning Rebels. And I was at Learning Technologies this year for two roles, I had the speaking engagement about building learner engagement, how do we get people engaged before they come to a training session, but what was new to me this year was helping them with their social media accounts. That was a lot of fun. And I raised my hand to volunteer, I really didn't think they'd accept it, but they did and so here we are.

Michelle Ockers:

How could they not accept it, Shannon? You've got such a lovely engaging presence, interactive presence on social media as a general rule.

Shannon Tipton:

Oh, thank you.

Michelle Ockers:

So how did that work? Being on social media, part of the social media team, what was expected of you?

Shannon Tipton:

Well, it was very well organized. I have to give Fiona McBride a lot of kudos for her organizational structure of this. I can't imagine, it was probably like herding chickens, but she was very clear, and what I had was two assigned sessions each day. So, the conference runs for two days, so there were two sessions that I was supposed to go to, and she was kind enough to ask me which ones I wanted to attend, so I did that, and then also a little bit different is I went down to the expo floor and took some video of the expo, just to give people a feel for how different the expo environment is at LT versus what they might experience in the States. So that was a lot of fun.

Michelle Ockers:

Yeah, and it was very lively this year down on the exhibition floor. I spent almost as much time, if not more on the exhibition floor as I spent actually in the conference itself. And the exhibition of course is free for people to go to, multiple theatres with people giving talks, and yes, it is people from the vendor sector of the industry, but some really interesting topics, I thought, being offered down there on the floor.

Shannon Tipton:

I agree. And usually when I go to LT, I spend more time on the expo floor than I do in the sessions, just because of the energy that's there. And like you said, even though it's free, there are many learning opportunities there, because a lot of the vendors have a speaker space where you can go in and you put on headphones and you can hear them talk over all the ruckus that's happening around you, so it's a very lively environment to be in.

Michelle Ockers:

Yeah, it is. And while it's not all about tech on the floor, a lot of it is about tech, so it's a great way to dip your toes in and see what's out there, maybe what's new, what's developing, and I guess along those lines, either at the conference or on the expo floor, what did you notice as key themes or trends?

Shannon Tipton:

Well, one of the things I noticed is the more things change, the more they stay the same. So there were a lot of learning platforms out there, and to be honest, it surprised me. I didn't expect to see so many different learning platforms, and some of them were new. And you and I have been around this block a time or two, and to be able to say, "Oh, I've never heard

Learning Uncut Episode 124

LTUK 2023 Highlights: AI, Adaptability and Impact – Donald H Taylor, Michael Osborne, Shannon Tipton & Laura Overton

of that," is a little surprising. Brand new platforms that have nice big booths in the middle of Learning Technologies, you're like, "Wow, okay, I need to find out more about that." So, there was a lot of learning platforms, but what I found was really interesting was the focus on AI.

Michelle Ockers:

Oh, you noticed that, did you?

Shannon Tipton:

You couldn't help but miss it, right?

Michelle Ockers:

Exactly.

Shannon Tipton:

I will not put on my cynical hat here, but there were a lot of vendors that have pivoted to the AI world, and I wish I had seen more vendors tackling not just AI, but really applications for it. So, there was one booth there that had a really wonderful AR, VR stand, and they were showing how augmented reality can help you, how virtual reality can help you, and I wish that I had seen more of that, not just AI attached to a learning platform ecosystem.

Michelle Ockers:

Do you think it's because it's still relatively new for a lot of the vendors? So they might say, "We're doing AI or our platform uses AI," but they're still figuring it out and trying to nut out the use cases rather than having something more mature that they can actually show people?

Shannon Tipton:

I think that's exactly it. That's exactly it. They haven't quite figured out how they need to use it, but they know they need to have it in order to gain eyeballs on their booth.

Michelle Ockers:

Yeah. It was interesting though leaning into use cases, right? So even just talking to other L&D professionals, like, who's using generative AI is kind of the big thing at the moment, of course, who is using it? What tools they're using, how are you using it? So I know I walked away with a whole stack more use cases, even to improve my own productivity, to improve the quality of my research, the quality of my thinking at a personal level, let alone really thinking through, "Well, what... Where might this be heading?" It's like, we don't quite know yet. We haven't quite figured it out.

Shannon Tipton:

And I wanted to just piggy-back on your point about finding use cases, I found use cases through talking to the participants of the conference, not necessarily through the vendors who were on the floor. So I think that leading up to something that I spoke about in a wrap-up video that I put out there was about the power of connecting with other people and finding out what they are doing, because a lot of times they're going to have some experimental type of ideas that you can harvest, if you will.

Michelle Ockers:

Absolutely. And speaking of your social media coverage, one that caught my eye was a personal reflection around the continuous learning session that you went to and that it wasn't quite what you were expecting. Do you want to tell us a bit more about that session and that experience as a participant?

Shannon Tipton:

Yes, the continuous learning, I found that to be so fascinating, and unfortunately I felt as though it was mistitled on the program because I went in expecting to get information about continuous learning and what does that mean for organisations, etcetera. And if I had been a regular attendee rather than my role, excuse me, rather than my role with the social media, I probably wouldn't have gone because I would think, "I've been in L&D now for 30 years. I think I'm okay with continuous learning, I get it." But then I went and it was all about apprenticeships, and that to me was hugely interesting. It was a really different take on how we use and build continuous learning within our organisations and build in that very important culture. How do you get organisational buy-in? Well, you create apprentice programs and not just for senior leaders, but for everyone. Everyone where it's possible.

And I thought, "This is brilliant." I was very excited by that. And then, like I said in my video, just sort of disappointed in myself, I suppose, for having that initial reaction of thinking, "Oh well, there couldn't possibly be anything there for me." And indeed there was. So I was excited on one hand and disappointed in myself with the other, but that just goes to show, I've said this time and time again, if you go to a conference with the expectation that there's nothing new, then you're doing it wrong. You need to come to conferences, regardless of whether or not they're paying you to be there, or if you're a speaker or if your organisation is paying you, to take full advantage of what's around you because you just never know.

Michelle Ockers:

Yeah, yeah. And I guess the same goes with the expos. I know there was a time when I kind of never spent any time on the expo floor because it's like, "Well, I'm not in the market for tech, therefore I don't need to be down there and be sold to." But I've really shifted my perspective on that because I think there's real value in just taking the pulse on what's happening in the industry with tech. And it is mostly tech. And over time, you start seeing what is new, and it helps you to be a more discerning buyer, I guess, into the future when you do need to buy, to keep yourself abreast of what is changing and what is different, and being able to distinguish between the different suppliers in the market.

Shannon Tipton:

Right, and it's about honing those questioning skills before you go into the expo, because I completely agree with you, Michelle, and especially now, when you own your own business, you're a small business owner and your needs are very specific, so you find that you don't talk to a lot of these people because maybe it's not for you. But what I'm finding out is, I don't know what to call it, it's hovering around the edges, because around the edges of the expo are the smaller businesses, the ones that didn't have \$20,000 to invest in a big giant booth like Docebo. So there are some exciting stuff happening around the edges.

Michelle Ockers:

Yeah. Maybe the new start-ups who are catching on to, "Well, there's a market gap," something that's not being met, or a different way of doing something.

Shannon Tipton:

Exactly. Right, and so you find these new businesses that are exploring this space and outside of the tech world, like you had... I was really happy to stumble upon Stellar Labs, Stellar Labs, and so she was there. I'm like, "What are you doing around the edges here?" So Stellar is always doing fabulous things. And so you have an opportunity to talk and listen, more importantly, listen to what people are doing. I was excited to see StoryTagger there, and the work that she is doing. So you find things that are... When you look down on the

Learning Uncut Episode 124

LTUK 2023 Highlights: AI, Adaptability and Impact – Donald H Taylor, Michael Osborne, Shannon Tipton & Laura Overton

expo floor, it's really easy to get sucked up into all of that tech because that's the shiny bit, and now it's about what's maybe not as shiny, but is twice as helpful and useful.

Michelle Ockers:

Yep, yep, so well worth it. Are there any other key takeaways or insights from the conference that we haven't talked about yet for you?

Shannon Tipton:

It really was about people and talking to different people and finding out what they're doing and how they're going about it, and I think those hallway talks are always important. Getting out there, and it's, again, it's, Learning Technologies is set up just so differently than any conference in the States, and you're all really kind of packed together, so you don't have an option other than to talk to your neighbour, which I kind of appreciate, because sometimes it gets a little overwhelming and you want to hang out by the wall and this way they arrange it so you really can't do that. So the more that you can get out and talk to people and help people... There was a young lady there who, it was her first... This was her first LT, and she was very nervous because she had ADHD and she was very concerned about whether or not she could handle the crowds, or whether or not she could even make it through a conference session without being fidgety or agitated, and sometimes you just never know who you're gonna bump up against that needs some help, and just some simple words, where I said, "You know, don't worry about it, get an edge seat. And if you feel like you need to leave, you can leave." And believe me, 100% of the speakers will tell you, "If you have to leave, leave, because that's what we want you to do." So it was great to have that conversation and realize that people have barriers, they have fears, they want to do things, but they don't know how to do things. How do we help them with that? So I thought that that was just a nice by-product of the conference experience, was just to talk to different people and find out what their needs are.

Michelle Ockers:

Yeah. I'm super appreciative of just being able to connect with people again face-to-face, for those few years where we just couldn't travel or meet up face-to-face, and there's definitely something high value about that networking opportunity, being back face-to-face as opposed to just doing it online.

Shannon Tipton:

Oh, yes. And we don't have time for this. I know you wanted to keep this short, but I hope you put a link to the keynote somewhere.

Michelle Ockers:

Oh yes, yeah. The second day keynote or the first one?

Shannon Tipton:

The second day keynote.

Michelle Ockers:

Everyone's talking about Beau Lotto.

Shannon Tipton:

Beau Lotto. I mean, no, ladies, the first day, you all were wonderful, the second day, I left there wanting to fall down a rabbit hole and discover everything that this man had ever done. So well done to the team with LT this year in finding that keynote because it was very enlightening for me.

Learning Uncut Episode 124

LTUK 2023 Highlights: AI, Adaptability and Impact – Donald H Taylor, Michael Osborne, Shannon Tipton & Laura Overton

Michelle Ockers:

It was, it was. And the kind of message we need right now when there's just constant change, and we know that that's just the way the world is, and as learning professionals, to be able to learn is not just about acquiring new knowledge ourselves, but being open and shifting our understanding and even about behaviours, like shifting our understanding of things, shifting our meaning and how we make meaning, so useful. Yes, I will share that, Shannon, thank you.

Shannon Tipton:

Thank you.

Michelle Ockers:

Okay, looking forward to catching you at the next conference, Shannon.

Shannon Tipton:

ATD is at San Diego.

Michelle Ockers:

That's it.

Shannon Tipton:

Whoop, whoop.

Michelle Ockers:

Thanks so much. Bye-bye.

Shannon Tipton:

I look forward to seeing you there, Michelle. Bye-bye.

Laura Overton:

I'm Laura Overton. I'm founder of Learning Change Makers, but most people know me for my work in research in the field of learning and development for the last 20 years. And my role at the conference... Which role do you want me to talk about?

Michelle Ockers:

I think briefly talk about all of them, and then we might dig into one of them.

Laura Overton:

Okay. So I was chairing part of the conference. I was doing a lunchtime session on research, and I was also facilitating an out of hours evening of discussion. And I had two sessions on the exhibition floor. So yes, I am still recovering, Michelle.

Michelle Ockers:

There's a lot of roles in there Laura, you were everywhere. So, we haven't heard from anyone else in the podcast wrap up on the conference about the Chair role. And of course, it's a really important role and a really great opportunity to be of service both to the speakers and the participants. So tell us a bit more about that role and what that looked like and how you approached that.

Laura Overton:

Oh, it's such a brilliant role at the conference because it's not just about turning up and introducing the speakers. Our role as Chair is to really think through what is it the audience

Learning Uncut Episode 124

LTUK 2023 Highlights: AI, Adaptability and Impact – Donald H Taylor, Michael Osborne, Shannon Tipton & Laura Overton

needs from that session. So in all of the preparation, we got a chance to kind of reflect with the speakers about what their amazing experiences have been and then how we can help them be really applicable to the people who are in the audience. So it's just a... As for a researcher, Michelle, it's just a fantastic opportunity. I get to spend time with the speakers to dig in deep about what they're looking for, and then time with the audience to help them make the connection. It just is a role that is just full of insights and new ideas and I really love it because it helps just to bring something new and fresh to the conference. And also Learning Technologies, we're always allowed to do something a little bit different if that's what the audience could really benefit from. So a great opportunity to be creative with the speaker inputs as well.

Michelle Ockers:

So how do you work with the speakers before the conference to help them with their preparation? What does that look like?

Laura Overton:

Well, it's all about, obviously the content description that's gone out to the delegates. It's the priority, it's the starting point. But we spend time with the speakers by saying, okay, well, what is it you really want to be able to share? What are the lessons that you want to take away from the session? What do you want people to remember? And then so that the speakers can complement each other, and if there's something on the agenda that actually they, neither of them are 100% sure about covering, that's absolutely fine, because that gives us an opportunity to create an interaction, to bring in the audience and to really dig into the kind of collective wisdom in the crowd. Because I think all of us who've ever spoken at a conference, we're always kind of nervous. But actually we're all on a journey, and the role of Chair is to say, actually, it's fine to be on a journey. It's fine for all of us to be able to learn together, and we don't have to be the expert just because we are the person who's speaking at the particular event. So that kind of role of Chair is about encouraging the very best to come out of everyone who's going to be in the room at that time.

Michelle Ockers:

I love the idea that the participants are there to have the very best of themselves brought out as well as the speakers. Nice touch. So what did you notice at the conference this year? Were there any kind of key things that stood out to you, either trends or themes or observations that really struck you at the conference this year across all of these roles?

Laura Overton:

Well, it was the 23rd Learning Technologies event, and actually it was, I think the 23rd show that I've been to and so what was really lovely for me was the fact that we were celebrating 20 years of the Learning Performance Benchmark. And so that was ringing in my mind and it was great to obviously do a session with you, Michelle, and the Mind Tools team, looking back on that 20 years of research. But the thing that really stood out for me was the power of the keynote speakers, because for me, I've been tracking and have been tracking high performing learning teams and their behaviours for 20 years. And I've also been tracking the whole process with you and Shannon under the Emerging Stronger banner of what we need to do to be adaptable and to think differently. And what I've found is that those keynote speakers, they almost like crystallised all of our experience of the last 20 years in terms of what we need to be doing as the learning profession to be adaptable and resilient and responsive to change.

So for me, it was really those two keynote sessions on both of the days. And some of the things that came out were Njeri (Mwagiru) talked about success means that we need to be agile and flexible and adaptable and be able to be responsive. And that means that we need

Learning Uncut Episode 124

LTUK 2023 Highlights: AI, Adaptability and Impact – Donald H Taylor, Michael Osborne, Shannon Tipton & Laura Overton

to understand what's going on around us and apply those insights with curiosity and cooperation. And I'm thinking, yes, Michelle, you and I know that that's what the high performing teams do. They're not fixed and rigid in a particular way. They're always on the lookout to see beyond themselves. And that was reflected in Robin's (Teigland) talk and in Beau's (Lotto) talk as well. And what I loved about Beau's talk was the action. All of them talked about needing to take action in order for us as professionals to remain resilient and flexible and adaptable. And he talked about the fact that any decision is a reasonable decision. It's how we respond to that decision in our flow of work that's important. And that really spoke to what I've seen in terms of really driving better business results is our ability to be able to cooperate, read the room, be adaptable, be willing to experiment, and to see where that result leads to.

Michelle Ockers:

There was something Beau talked about around understanding and the way we bring meaning and the way our perspective shades the meaning of things and the way we interpret things and needing to be open to shifting or being aware of how we've made meaning of things and being open to shifting that so that we don't use change to simply reinforce existing biases and block ourselves off to new information or new opportunities.

Laura Overton:

Yeah, yeah. Absolutely. And he talked about the shift from knowing something to understanding it involves application. He talked about the fact that we can know a recipe, but unless we actually start to use it, then that doesn't in part turn into understanding. It doesn't inform the decisions. We can't say that we're a chef just because we know a recipe or we bought a book. We need to be able to do things, experiment. And that really links into the kind of academic thinking about what understanding actually is. Understanding something that's important when it means something to you, when it can be applied to your own situation. And for me, the whole of the conference gave so many opportunities for us to apply new ways of doing things, not just talk about them, not just debate, but really practical insights that we could do differently.

Michelle Ockers:

So the new kid on the block, perhaps not so new, but for most of us new is generative AI and it was everywhere. It was the hot topic this year. So what's your take on the way we're approaching AI and you saw a lot of interest in it at the conference, right? And there was a lot of conversation going on between participants, a lot of vendors were talking about it. If you think about this idea of understanding, of taking action, how do you bring all of that together? What's the Laura Overton perspective or take on where we're at with generative AI and what might be a useful way to approach it when we're engaging with all of this talk about it, not only at conferences, but wherever we look at the moment particularly with social media at the moment?

Laura Overton:

Oh, the Laura Overton take. My standard take is that I have been tracking technologies for the last 20 years, and each time we get something new, the internet, the mobile learning games, and the Metaverse, before it was the Metaverse and it's a second life version. I've been tracking it. And every time a new technology comes in, there's this big furor and two camps of Learning and Development professionals. Those that say it's going to change the world. This is what we've been waiting for. It's going to really make the difference about learning in the flow of work, about application. This is going to... Or it's going to be, I am frightened it's going to take my job away. There's always been this tension. And Michelle, you know as well as I do that in 20 years of genuinely looking for the technology that actually

Learning Uncut Episode 124

LTUK 2023 Highlights: AI, Adaptability and Impact – Donald H Taylor, Michael Osborne, Shannon Tipton & Laura Overton

makes a difference in the impact that we can make, there hasn't once been a correlation between the tool and the impact. It's always been about how we apply the tool.

And so for me, Robin made a comment actually. She said, don't start with the technology. It only helps us do the things that we used to do in the past. And so my take on AI is a little bit of that. I think a lot of people are saying, oh, how can it help us to do the things we did in the past? How can it help us to create content and lesson plans and all of these types of things? And of course it will be helping us, but it's not a piece of software. It's actually something that almost has a mind of its own. So I think that it's a very interesting service to watch because in my own experience of using it, it's been much more of a conversation.

I've tried an idea out with it, I've seen what it's come back with. I've dug in a little bit deeper, but all the time, Michelle, I've never quite trusted it and so therefore it's been like an intern, it's been like a porter, it's been like a coachee. It's been a useful conversation that sometimes accelerated my thinking, but I've always had to apply my own insight to whatever's come out of AI. And I think that that is going to be the opportunity for us. If we see it as a technology that will either save us or kill us, then actually I think we're looking at AI in the wrong way. But if we see it as a service that works alongside us, that allows us to bring our own expertise and accelerate new ways of thinking and exploring, experimenting, that to me is exciting. So I'm watching this with interest. I'm not too scared, but I'm absolutely sceptical of its truthfulness. And therefore, that makes me want to be a better practitioner as a result of working with it.

Michelle Ockers:

And in 20 years of researching practices of Learning and Development teams that actually generate impact, there's never been a technology that's come to the fore that's been the answer, right? No silver bullet. It's been about our practice.

Laura Overton:

Yeah, absolutely. And we are responsible for our practice. Hence the two opening keynotes and the other sessions in there that talked about what are we doing differently? So I was super excited in the session I was chairing. We were looking at learning experience design and Pam Mandy gave two very different examples, but they really showed how we moved away from just content and platforms into the opportunity to reflect and to practice and to explore. And the difference that made to both the onboarding process and to leadership. And for me, every time I see someone doing something exciting like that, that gives me a tick in terms of those high performing learning strategies, I get very excited and there was a lot of things that we could take away and do differently from this conference.

Michelle Ockers:

So when you think about someone coming to a conference as a participant and looking for opportunities to really make the most of the conference, what do you see as the biggest opportunities for somebody to come along to a conference and get the most out of it in terms of improving their practice, improving their impact?

Laura Overton:

I think it's important to come with an open mind and be willing to say no if you feel that something isn't resonating with you, but be prepared to be challenged, oh, go to the exhibition floor with an open mind, but also look out for other opportunities that are going on that perhaps aren't on the main agenda. For me, one of the most exciting things that happened over the conference for me actually wasn't on the conference agenda. And I was co-hosting a dinner with twelve Learning and Development leaders where we were exploring with an organization called Lepaya just how we need to rethink our relationship with

Learning Uncut Episode 124

LTUK 2023 Highlights: AI, Adaptability and Impact – Donald H Taylor, Michael Osborne, Shannon Tipton & Laura Overton

business impact. And we were really digging into the challenges of what does driving business value look like? What are the things that are holding us up? Where do we need to think differently?

And having that chance just to have that conversation around the dinner table was so vital with a different perspective about business value being linked to credibility for us as an individual, before our credibility may be put down, how business value isn't just about measurement, but it's also about how we set ourselves up for mutual success. Our business value isn't what I need to do for you, but how we work and co-create value together with organizations and to the partners that we meet at events like Learning Technologies. So those outer curricular activities are really vital for us. And I'll have to say, Michelle, after a day at conference, we had four hours discussing this over a glass of wine and some amazing Japanese food. My voice was going and this was just day one, but there's so many opportunities to really be able to dig in and explore with people. And I'll say seek them out and use your partners there, and Lepaya brought many of their customers together to network which was a fantastic way of being able to connect and engage with each other.

Michelle Ockers:

That's so interesting. So if you are someone who is working with external partners, you could reach out to them and find out if they're running any activities or events. And I guess if the answer is you don't have any external partners who are running events that you could join in on, why not create a little event of your own? So go beyond just the social element and add in an element of reflection. Get a group of people together to discuss with some purpose. What did we see today? What did we learn from that? How might we apply it? But be intentional about that to make the most out of your time at a conference.

Laura Overton:

Absolutely. Absolutely.

Michelle Ockers:

Is there anything else that stood out from the conference that you want to share with us before we wrap up, Laura?

Laura Overton:

I think for me it was just there were some themes, which are perennial themes. Yes technology, it's Learning Technologies after all. But also for me, the number of people who are starting to be really interested in impact. So Kevin M. Yates, L&D Detective was talking about impact, various different people were looking at this. It was a theme in our 20 year reflection. And also it was a theme down on the floor in one of the events that I was kind of presenting at. But I think that impact is so vital for us. We need to rethink our views of impact and then that makes sense of everything else. It makes sense of those keynote speakers that says, we need to be agile, we need to be flexible. We need to adapt to change because we want to make a difference. It makes sense of all of the stories we hear about learning design and the learning experience and learning transfer because we want to make a difference, and it makes sense about the way we start our learning journey with organizations and we finish that learning journey with organizations because we want to make a difference. So for me, I have no problem that impact is a recurring theme over the last 20 years. Long may it be so.

Michelle Ockers:

Long may it be so. So I think that's a really nice place to wrap up the whole of this special edition of Learning Uncut, looking at reviewing what we heard, what the experience was, what we saw at Learning Technologies UK in 2023. And I think Laura, you've really nicely

Learning Uncut Episode 124

LTUK 2023 Highlights: AI, Adaptability and Impact – Donald H Taylor, Michael Osborne, Shannon Tipton & Laura Overton

tied things together by linking kind of the tech theme represented really strongly by AI this year with themes around impact and change and how we embrace change with that north star of impact regardless of what is shifting around us, particularly in the tech world. So thank you very much for rounding us out with this special conversation about Learning Technologies UK.

Laura Overton:

Thank you.



About Learning Uncut

Learning Uncut are learning and development consultants that work with learning teams and/or business leaders to accelerate learning transformation. We specialise in supporting organisations to create or update their learning strategy, enhance their learning team's capabilities, align learning to business value, and implement modern learning approaches.

We are highly collaborative and pragmatic. We partner with organisations to align learning to their business needs, unleash continuous learning, and build capability to help them thrive.

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

About your host, Michelle Ockers



Michelle is the founder of 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*



Find Michelle on [LinkedIn](#) or [Twitter](#)