Michelle Ockers:
Welcome back to Learning Uncut. I'd like to acknowledge
the traditional custodians of country throughout Australia and the connection to land, sea, and community, particularly those of the Brinya Yuin Nations on whose land I am sitting today. And I'm joined by Michelle Parry-Slater. Where are you coming in from, Michelle?

Michelle Parry-Slater:
I'm joining you from the Yugambeh lands today. Thank you, Michelle, for having me here.

Michelle Ockers:
And thank you for joining me. So listeners, you might hear a little bit more of Michelle's voice joining me on Learning Uncut. I thought it was time to mix up the voices a little bit. And here is someone you have heard many times before on the podcast. Welcome, Donald Taylor.

Donald H Taylor:
Thank you, Michelle. It sounds like you weren't sure whether you were happy to have me back again, but you are happy, aren't you?

Michelle Ockers:
Of course I'm happy. You always bring interesting insights and today will be no exception to that. So of course, the last time we spoke was about the Global Sentiment Survey for 2025. And the time before that was October last year, you released the second of your annual, it was a third report, but I think the second annual review of AI in L&D, which was called Intention and Reality. So a year on, you've done another update to your research in conjunction with Egle Vinauskaite. So the two of you have been doing a multi-year research project looking at AI and L&D and trying to get to the heart of what is really going on to cut through all of the noise. And you use a survey methodology plus case study based on. Can we set the scene just to recap on how you undertake this research?

Donald H Taylor:
It all began on the anniversary of the launch of ChatGPT. Coming up to that, I realised we'd had a year of mania around AI. A lot of talk. Nobody knew exactly what was happening. There was a lot of fear, I think we could say. I got together with Egle, we did a report on just the state of play. And that's what it was called, AI and L&D, the state of play. Subsequently released another report each year around the same time. So that was 2023, one in 2024, one in 2025, and an interim one as well in 2024, when we looked at how things had evolved, things were moving so fast. And each time, apart from the first one, the methodology is the same, it's survey, combined with some interviews and some case studies that enable us to say, that's what the quantitative data says. This is the numbers that we have around usage. And then we have the qualitative stuff. What are people actually doing? Very much like your Learning Uncut podcast, Michelle, where you look down in detail what

people are doing. So that's the methodology. And each year, of course, things have changed very dramatically. And the number of people on the survey have increased. So this year, we had 606 people from over 50 countries. But it's largely Europe, the US, and the UK, where we have the representation from. Looking to expand that, obviously, in the coming years.

Michelle Ockers:
So if we look back over the names of the reports, there's something perhaps that it says about the trajectory of the research and what you're finding about how the state of play, if I can use that, from your first report is shifting with how AI is being used by L&D. November 23, the report was the State of Play. April 24, from Talk to Action. October 24, Intention and Reality, and the most recent report you've released, September 25, The Race to Impact.

Donald H Taylor:
Yeah, so I think that does tell the story, doesn't it? You've got the State of Play, but just trying to figure out, what the heck's going on? Then you've got, yeah, if we look at the annual ones, Intention and Reality, okay, so that's what people think, and this is what we're actually getting to. And then this year, the Race for Impact reflects the fact that we are now in a position whereby, and we'll talk about this more, AI is part of the toolkit now for L&D. Now, the degree of sophistication is another matter, but people are not as freaked out by AI as they were three years ago. So it's part of the toolkit now, but what does that mean? It means people are scrambling to show that it's having value, that it's adding value, and that they can have impact as a result, partly because they want to justify the use of this new tool, partly because it should be able to justify itself, and partly because certainly in those areas where we've got our data from, US, UK, and Europe, there are tight economic circumstances and the need for L&D to justify itself is felt quite strongly I think now.
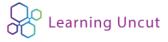
Michelle Ockers:
There's almost like a double-edged play on the word impact here. And the way you explained it then, Don, that people are scrambling to show that AI is having impact, which is a very different thing about just generally stepping back and seeking to create and show impact and AI being then used as a tool to achieve that goal. So when we talk about this race for impact, Just to be quite clear, are we still stuck in, hey, it's the latest thing on the block, so we've got to grab it and then we've got to justify why we grabbed it, or are we genuinely approaching it from the perspective of we want to create greater impact and we believe this tool can do that for us?

Donald H Taylor:
I'd say both, and it depends which population you're looking at. I think you've got a population of new users who are wanting to justify the use of AI, and other people have been using it for perhaps longer or using it at a more sophisticated level, who are wanting and indeed are capable of showing that it does produce business impact. Does that answer the question?

Michelle Ockers:
I think it does. And I think it's time to dig a little deeper, Michelle. What do you think?

Michelle Parry-Slater:
Absolutely. I'm really curious about this particular report, this whole piece on impact, because as a profession, we're seeking it, we're trying to prove it. And like you say, Don, in some areas of the world, the economics is pushing that. But you have said in this particular report, that we're a bit of an inflection point, and that something's shifted, something's different. Now, is that just part of your everyday sort of change and change adoption? Is that part of the political socio-economic situations that shifted? Or is it to do with our skills? What is this inflection point?

Donald H Taylor:
The inflection point is about the use of the tool. It's not really to do with anything else outside it. And it's a natural consequence of more people understanding and deciding to use it. We have to bear in mind that the survey that we do is self-selecting. So people come on here because they are interested in AI, and there are other things as well. For example, they're online. They are usually active on social media. That's how they hear about it. Or they're on my mailing list. And they're on my mailing list because we've been in contact in the past. So they are active and keen users of learning technology. So this is a group of people that is almost certainly the innovator slash early adopter stage of the Everett Rogers adoption of innovation curve. So I'm not saying this is true for L&D as a whole necessarily, but of our sampled population, it is the case that this year we had a leap where over half the people surveyed said that they were using L&D, which means they either said they were using it or they were using it intensively. That doesn't mean they were piloting it or they were experimenting with it, that's a different group. And there were two other groups as well, people who were thinking about it, people who had no intention of using it. So the people who were actively using it in some form are now constituting over half the surveyed population. And that's a big jump from last year when it was 40%. And the number of people experimenting has shrunk quite a lot from 41 to 36% this year. So what's happened is, over the three years of the annual survey, we've seen an initial enthusiasm, then we saw more people coming in who were just thinking about it last year. So it's a large number of people, 19% of people, just thinking about it last year. That's shrunk down to 10% this year. And there's been a big increase in the number of people actually using it. So that's the inflection point. Nothing to do with any other circumstances, it's the natural evolution. I think it's worth noting, though, that even in the middle of a bubble, when everyone is talking about something so furiously as AI, it has taken three years to get to the point where half of our population of early adopters is using it. So things never happen as fast as everyone always says.

Michelle Parry-Slater:
An interesting comment, really, because there is this assumption, isn't it? We've got to get on the gravy train. We've got to jump on the big shiny thing. And if you're not doing it now, then you're behind the curve. But actually, are you seeing people who are using it? Has there been any shift in that use, that adoption sort of beyond content? Because that's what first happened, wasn't it? Everyone was like, oh, we can do the same we've always done. We can just do it faster. We can create more content. The world does not need more content. So are you seeing some more complexity in the use?

Donald H Taylor:
Michelle, that's a great question. So here's what we do when we're looking at the usage and how people are using it, because that's the core of this. We ask people initially a very simple multiple choice question, and we give them 12 things, they can choose any number of things from it. We then ask them in a free text question, how are you using it? The two sets of answers provide an initial superficial look, and then a much more detailed look. And we analyze the how are you using this bit in some detail in two ways. There's a straightforward numerical count of the number of ways, number of times that certain words occur. And there's also a more qualitative approach where we say, well, what are people doing? What are they talking about? How is it different from previous years? So if you like, there's three different approaches to asking about usage.

So if we look at the very simple approach, hey, here's a multiple choice list. What are you using for? Yes, content comes out on top. Content, creating learning content is number one. Learning design tasks, number two. Administrative tasks, number three. And researching subject matter, number four. And this is all about L&D doing its job that it's always done more effectively, all right. But on that list, in the fifth position, and by the way, there's almost no change in those top four from last year. But in the fifth position is qualitative data analysis, which largely means people surveying people and then getting an idea of what that means by using a large language model to understand, to summarise what they're talking about. And that's jumped up from eighth position last year to fifth position this year. That's a very substantial jump. And that is a straw in the wind that shows to us there is a change taking place. Underneath this superficial vista that nothing's really changing. There are increasing levels of sophistication in what people are doing underneath it all.

So if we then look at, for example, and bear with me when I talk about this, it's a little bit geeky, but I do a word stem analysis. So I don't look at analysts, analysis, analyzing. So I just look for analysts and all the words that could be made from it. And if it occurs 20 times in one comment, I'm not interested, but I count that as one comment, one instance. So the top four instances are the same for the last three years. And they are content, generate, learning, and creating. Anything to do with those words are the same. But there are three words in particular that have come up from nowhere in the past three years, which are analysts or anything to do with analysing, data and research. These all come down from in the 20s, 30s and 50s in terms of rankings to in the top 10 this year. So from 2023, they were nowhere. Now they are somewhere. And this indicates to me that L&D is using AI in more sophisticated ways. And we use this to check against our assessment of the use in a more subjective way. That's a very objective approach, how many times the words appear. We also have this more subjective way of looking at it, where we look at the responses to the usage question. We say, well, what are people telling us? And when we look at that, we see that people have got probably four different ways in which they're using it. Content and Design, Operations and other things; Strategy and Insight, and Workforce Enablement. And those four things have all grown in some way in sophistication and complexity. Even the Content and Design is being done last year and certainly two or three years ago. So there has been a shift, even if superficially it's all about content, it's not just about putting a question to ChatGPT and then getting an answer. It's much more sophisticated than that now.

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Michelle Ockers:

I was just thinking about the Global Sentiment Survey, Don, and whether you've kind of put these two against each other and thought, you know, is there any explanatory power between the two? And the fact that you've got that creating value, like the three items on the Global Sentiment Survey, which are all about creating value, and they kind of they don't drop out of the Global Sentiment Survey. And in fact, there was a little bump this year. And the fact that we're using AI more for analysis, data research, do you think there might be any, and it's just speculation, of course, but any linkage between those two data points?

Donald H Taylor:

That's a really good point, Michelle. So just to recap for listeners, in the Global Sentiment Survey, in the past, there are three options which have remained pretty constant in the history of the Global Sentiment Survey. They are consulting more deeply with the business, performance support, and showing value. And these three have all been more or less in the middle of the table, not what normally happens is declining over time. Last year, In 2024, they took a dip. 2025, they bounced back to where they had been beforehand, when nothing else bounced back. So it was a real anomaly, that whole behaviour. And I think you're right, Michelle, I think it's very astute. I think what we have here is a focus by the people responding to the survey, I'm not saying it's necessarily true for L&D as a whole, but a focus from people responding to the survey on the need to show value/impact, the need to show that we are doing something. And I think that's a response in the survey population to tightened economic circumstances that people feel they need to show that they're worth their budget. And I think it marks also, and this is speculation on my part, the beginning of a change in how L&D sees its role. Because I think we'll see a difficult period of L&D coming up where economic situation is not going to get better, it may even get worse. And it is only those who are able to demonstrate value who are going to be retained. And when we come out of that, in conjunction with AI, we will see in a few years time, a learning and development function that looks very different and is very much focused on providing value in a directly measurable way. I don't say necessarily a dollar measurable way, but in a way that aligns with something the organisation's focused on. And I believe that we may not in the future even call it L&D. We might call it something like performance and capability. The idea being that we're focused on not the means of doing something that we learn and develop people, but the result, which is that people can perform in the short term and they have capability for the long term. And those two things, performance capability, are very much what the use of AI that we're seeing right now is beginning to make happen.

Michelle Parry-Slater:

I'm loving that we're starting to talk about the future because in the report you've talked there about there being three futures and it'd be great to hear from you about what they are. It'd be great to get some real world examples because that's what people want. They want to realise that we can do this in L&D. We are in fact doing this in L&D because the stories that are out there are often content creation stories like we've just been talking about. Don, what are these futures?

Donald H Taylor:
It's a great question, Michelle. So firstly, let's say we are moving away. We're saying very clearly that we need to move away from content-focused L&D. If we are focused on content, we are focused on an area where, unfortunately, content is no longer a differentiator, and it is becoming a commodity market. It is impossible for people in organisations who are buying this stuff to understand high-quality content. They are presented with glossy stuff that they think looks good and they will pay for that. If we align ourselves with content, therefore we can know a strategic role. We can't be taken seriously, I don't think.

But if we move away from that, still producing content, but move away from our focus on it to one of three areas, then we'll see that there are other things we can do. And these three areas aren't just conjured up out of thin air. These are things which are the embodiment of what we see people actually doing with AI in L&D at the moment. And they are our attempt to summarise 20,000 words that we got from the survey in terms of how people are using this, in terms of the eight full-length case studies, in terms of the 10 short case studies, and all of the interviews that we've done, we're summarising all of this into these three nodes of a triangle to reflect the reality of how people are actually using AI and L&D.

So the three things are skills authority, Enablement Partner and Adaptation Engine, bit of a mouthful. Let me go through these one by one. Let's have a conversation about them. So the Skills Authority, this is where L&D is working with skills, but it isn't just the bit of the organisation that has created or outsourced a taxonomy of skills, but it's a bit of the organisation that's absolutely on top of understanding how to make this current as the language of performance and capability throughout the organisation, and it becomes the language that the organisation itself uses to understand what's happening with performance. Now, I hope that makes sense, Michelle and Michelle, does that make sense? And have you got any examples yourselves where you've seen people do that?

Michelle Ockers:
I think we've got a couple of great examples of this from Learning Uncut podcast episodes from the last year, really, and with AI enablement being a key part of the approach they've taken. I'll pop a couple of links in the show notes. Firstly, in episode 156, we talked to Cameron Hedrick. from Citibank about a skills portfolio approach and what does that look like? And they were in pretty early days of moving towards this and he was being very deliberate and he's thinking about kind of what's the plumbing look like and who owns skills and is it L&D or is it someone else or is it a new skills portfolio office that has to be set up? So that's one example. But another that I think, Don, you may be familiar with already is from Ericsson, episode 147, Putting Skills to Work. They have made a lot of progress with introducing a skills architecture, if you like, to the business and shifting from jobs to skills as the fundamental kind of organising principle for work. Are you familiar with them?

Donald H Taylor:
Yes.

Michelle Ockers:
Oh, I think I got that example from one of your early research reports, Don.

Donald H Taylor:
Yeah, yeah.

Michelle Ockers:
It's come full circle. There you go. So yes, thank you for introducing Peter.

Donald H Taylor:
Eric's doing a really good job of taking a really organisation wide approach to putting skills out across the organisation it is extraordinary. And we do have a case study, I don't really want to draw on our own case studies too much because I think it's unfair to bring up one particular case study where we have so much good work in the report, but I think Dr. Sandra Loughlin of EPAM is known as, if you like, Dr. Skills. She's the woman who's writing the most at the moment on LinkedIn about skills and they've been doing this at EPAM for something like 20 years.

Michelle Ockers:
30 Years. I've got her case study in my book, which was recently released as well. And it started well before HR was a thing in the company, right? It started with people solving a practical business problem. It started with engineers wanting to match skills to client consulting projects.

Donald H Taylor:
Exactly. And I think that's the common thread here between Ericsson and EPAM is this fact that this is a culture of an organisation where you see a problem and you've tried to put in place a logical, systematic way of solving it. Ericsson's engineering, EPAM's consulting and product engineering, it's the same thing. What I love about EPAM, apart from the fact that they are so level-headed about this, is that they have this STRIVE acronym. And I think if you think about AI, you may think about a whole bunch of things, but what they're including in their approach, STRIVE, S stands for social learning, R stands for reflection, E stands for experiential learning. So this is not what you might expect an AI supported skills approach to look like, but it shows how sophisticated an approach can be if you do it right. And I think they are doing it right.

Michelle Parry-Slater:
The opportunity there is to really link AI, the opportunity for AI and the overlapping nature of what we do. We're not kind of throwing everything away and saying AI is going to replace everything. It's about working in partnership, working alongside, And you're talking about that in your second of those futures about partnership. Do you want to talk us a little bit more about what does that look like?

Donald H Taylor:
When you say the second one, you're talking about the enablement partner bit, yeah?

Michelle Parry-Slater:
Yes.

Donald H Taylor:
I think with the enablement partner, this could sound like, oh, it's decentralised L&D, but it's more complex than that. So with the enablement partner, what you're doing is you're going out and you're saying, look, we understand that L&D doesn't necessarily know everything about the business. And there's a great quote that we've got from one of our case studies, Leighton. The reality is that no matter how well integrated learning is into your ecosystem, your employees are going to know more about what they need than you. Now, this may not be true for long term capability building, but it's certainly true for the vast majority of what L&D does, which is why do we need a central body, which is a bottleneck, when there are people out there who can make stuff happen faster and answer the questions that people have got faster?

So the role of this enablement partner is to help the organisation in its various bits create and support good performance, perhaps through learning, perhaps in other ways, And for the L&D department to see that, find good examples of that happening, support it, and amplify it through the rest of the organisation. So at Leighton, they have this thing called Digibots, it's a tool they produce for their own department, but they've made these now digital bots available for the organisation as a whole to go out and create their own tools to support learning, in particular, in helping them understand the best practice that they need in the daily job. And there are now, I think, 70 of these things across Leighton, where people have created something, which is then, has the expertise of the people locally, which they, other people can learn from, L&D finds these, amplifies them, spreads them across the business. That's a very different, and this is not L&D departments locally, this is just the people doing the job locally, and they're found, they are amplified and spread across the organisation. That's a pretty radical change in some ways for L&D to step back from being the bottleneck and the police controlling content to be the amplifiers and supporters of good performance support. I don't know, Michelle Ockers, have you had anything like that on Learning Uncut elsewhere in other episodes?

Michelle Ockers:
Yes. Strangely enough. So it reminded me of Westpac in episode 116, Catriona Malcolm talks about, she talks about what she calls design patterns for learning, but it's really about providing enough guidance tools, templates and support, including access to L&D specialists to work with you if you would like. And if that the complexity of whatever it is you're trying to develop learning for, so supporting people across the business. So rather than trying to, we all know there's a black market, particularly in big organisations, right, for L&D and that everybody thinks they can develop learning and deliver learning and so on. It's happening. So it's about meeting it where it's at, to your point, Don, surfacing those people out there who are enthusiastic, who are embracing learning, who want to share their knowledge and supporting and equipping them to do it better. So Westpac have done a great job with that and very deliberately and wholeheartedly embraced that and sought to enable it. So that is one really good example. I had another example from, gosh, from the first year of the podcast, seven years ago, an engineering

consulting firm called Arup, who actually Ove Arup, who founded Arup Engineering, designed the Sydney Opera House for Australian listeners. So there's a really nice connection there. They do good work, but they, basically, their whole approach to building capability is through the enablement of support of communities of practice for different engineering disciplines. Those engineering disciplines hold the skills frameworks, they hold the budget, they shape the strategy for development of capability in their discipline. And again, L&D supports them behind the scenes, coaches guides them to amplify their work and support it.
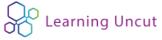
Donald H Taylor:
There's lots of interesting stuff from that reflection. One is that, again, we're coming back to engineering as a place where people accept that there's a problem, there will be a way of fixing it, let's go and do that. And that's very much an engineering mindset. But underneath that, there's a tacit trust. And I think that's something which is crucial to this, that you cannot be an enablement partner, if the rest of the business doesn't trust L&D, and L&D doesn't trust the rest of the business to be able to do this stuff. So we have to build and support that culture of trust. And it might be that in some organisations, it's simply not possible to do this, or that you can only do it once you've established trust in the first place. And I think that's really important here. Also, the other thing from your reflection there is this was happening a long time ago. So it's not that AI has enabled this suddenly to happen, but rather AI is making it easier, faster, and you can do it now, crucially, at scale. But that happens because you've got the trust and the right culture in the organisation, not because AI suddenly enables everything. I always say AI is like wine and coffee. It helps you do stupid things faster. So if you're doing a bad thing right now, it's only going to be much more of it more widely. But do the right things well, and you've got a steal in the competition.

Michelle Parry-Slater:
We've got then the third element, all about that sense of adaptability and what you're describing there is we've moved to this AI future through a reality that we've had for many years, it's just now we've got a name for it. Now we've got, you know, my mate Chatty G who I can, you know, have a conversation with and help me to be, do all of this quicker. That third future, I'm sort of seeing them not as separate actually, but let's talk about the third one and then I want to offer you my reflection on how are they actually going to work together or are these three potential separations. So talk us through, what is our third potential future in L&D?

Donald H Taylor:
The third one is the most radical change, the adaptation engine, where L&D ceases to exist as a separate entity in its own right, but it becomes part of a wider team that is looking at business problems and goes out to solve them. So a classic example might be, hey, we've got high turnover in one part of the organisation. Traditional approach might be manager spots this or a leader spots this, go and implement a training program in order to work out, to tell the managers how to make their people feel more loved or whatever it is, right? In the adaptation engine, L&D is part of a squad or a team or a department that is helping the organisation constantly to adapt. And here, you'd go out and you'd say, well, what's the issue? And you'd look at why the churn is happening. You find that churn is because, and there's an example of

this in the report, that, well, yes, we had a high turnover rate in this department because people didn't feel that they were getting what they wanted out of the organisation. They felt that they weren't able to progress. And so they left. Now, in that case, what you need is not a training program, that's not going to solve anything. What you need is a new employee value proposition, new EVP. And you create that, you go out, you build it for people. And you say that this is what the situation is. And you get the managers able to convey that and support it through their actions. And then guess what? The turnover falls and you have a longer period of stay for people in the organisation. So it's not rocket science, but it is an extraordinary change for L&D to be absolutely part of the business. Now, this requires L&D to think about itself completely differently, and it requires organisations to think about learning differently. So, I mean, this is so rare at the moment. I'm going to issue a challenge, Michelle Ockers, surely you have nothing like this, nothing on your vast reservoir.

Michelle Ockers:
You know what, I am going to throw this challenge to Michelle Parry-Slater because whilst I have nothing, I think Michelle has a lens on this and it's just struck me as we've been listening to you talk and I've just flicked a little message to Michelle which has gone yes, so go ahead, Michelle, give us your reflection on this.

Michelle Parry-Slater:
So my reflection overall is this future that you're describing, this skills authority, this enablement partner, this adaption engine, is this not organisation development? Are we actually sort of growing up from delivering content, delivering workshops, delivering solutions which are driven in that way to a much more holistic approach? You know, when you were first talking about that future number one skills authority, my brain just went, well, push the authority to where the knowledge is. Give people the permission to share, to learn. Then you started talking about communities of practice, Michelle. And of course, a community of practices where you can discuss these problems in a much more appropriate way than perhaps you can in a content-shoved workshop. So yes, this is exactly what I was thinking, is the future of learning and development simply moving us towards that holistic lens of organisation development? Now, many of my colleagues over in the UK listening to this might be thinking, of course not, Michelle, OD is much more sophisticated, but there's definitely an approach that I've always taken. I didn't know that I had that organisation development lens. It's just how I think about learning and development. But if we push the authority to where the knowledge is, if we partner with the organisation, and if we build adaptable, Intelligent futures that are solving problems, that's very aligned with that more holistic view. Do you think?

Donald H Taylor:
You'll notice on the triangle in the report that there are dotted lines between what we're trying to indicate is that this is not necessarily three alternatives you have to choose between. Rather, you can indeed have a mixture of them where you end up eventually. The key thing for me is these arrows moving away from content. I'm not dissing training, it is an important thing, especially when people are learning something for the first time. But this is not where the future of L&D lies. The future of L&D lies if you want to put a circle around the triangle, Michelle, and call it

organisational development, or perhaps the Michelle Parry-Slater approach, then I would heartily back that.

Michelle Parry-Slater:

Well, the thing is, there's a book about that I wrote a few years ago, and people have genuinely said, you know, OD professionals have honoured me with, this is like an intro to OD, because I can't not think in that way. I can't think about if you have a strategy, then how do we make it work? What AI brings us is the ability to do this, like you say, Don, at scale, more quickly, and more responsively, we can we can look at the bigger picture and then we can piece together a puzzle in a much quicker way. So I think that from a skills development perspective, from an L&D person, we need to be just a little bit more aware of, you said earlier, we love a model. Well, you know, the Burt Glitwin model helps us to understand if we do something over here, it blows up something over there. And so those are the sorts of things that we can start to get skills developing around, that bigger picture thinking, that more strategic thinking, that more systems thinking, I personally think that that's the difference between us and AI because AI can't think in that human way, it can only think in the mechanical way which it's trained and that's the differentiating factor perhaps.

Donald H Taylor:

For me, the crucial factor here is context and culture of the organisation. And I think that, and I get bored of saying this, and I'm sure people get bored of hearing me say it, but we put people through an educational process between the ages of, let's say, 5 and 18, where everybody, regardless of their race, culture, background, monetary, situation, class, experiences the same thing, which is that learning is a matter of sitting down and listening to somebody talk. If you wanted to indoctrinate an entire population, that's what you do. You subject them to the same thing between these ages, at the formative ages of life. And we know that learning takes place in many ways as well as that. We know that performance is enhanced in many ways beyond learning. And we know that capability is a result of so many things which go beyond short-term performance and indeed learning. What is it that, and I'll pose this to both of you, what is it that's going to be the determining factor that enables the Learning and Development Department to step up and help organisations understand that the future is very different for their short-term performance and long-term capability, and that L&D has a role to play with that? What is it that L&D needs to do to help organisations make that change?

Michelle Ockers:

That is a very good question, isn't it? You know, there's a level of threat in the adaptation engine because it's about letting go of our identity as a standalone function and working in this more integrated and systemic way. So I think the first thing for us to do is to kind of sit back and really question our own intent and what are we here to do and not be precious about losing that separate standalone label. But we won't be the only ones going through this, right? There will be others in our organisations going through some sort of sense of where do I fit in moving into the future? And I don't know if that has answered your question, but my immediate thought is change starts within. It starts with the way we see ourselves. And I think just the whole tuning in process, the way we connect to our organisation, to our people, the way we understand our culture and context, and then reach out to others

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and collaborate almost as if we generate the adaptation engine where it isn't in place already and seek to collaborate with others to really understand What is going on in the organisation? Where is the organisation headed? How do we meet our people where they are with the culture, with their grounded work reality and shape the future, help the organisation and our people to adapt in collaboration with others? It's almost like, as I think, talk while I think that if we can get beyond our own identity to see our part in systemically in the bigger shaping working with others to help organisations to adapt, that we can generate that adaptation engine, that we don't need to wait around and maybe defend our turf? Or am I just being really naive and idealistic?

Donald H Taylor:
I like it. That's what we have to do. How do we persuade the organisation that we've got something to offer?

Michelle Ockers:
We show value. We start small. We find somewhere we can test things out with others who are willing to work with us from other disciplines.

Michelle Parry-Slater:
We've done it before. I mean, this is not the first rodeo where something big has arrived in the world of learning and development. I mean, you can go back to, I don't know, video discs or when we first invented e-learning and even, you know, in more modern times when we started looking at ways of delivering live online. You know, you taught me everything I know, Don. But that was a big shift in mindset. You know, it's a different set of skills, facilitating an in-person workshop is a different set of skills to facilitating live online and the industry has stepped up. We have learned the skills and we will do it again. And so I have every faith in our profession that we will find our space, but we do need to have an open and growth mindset to doing it. We need to stop thinking about let's make faster horses as they did when they invented the car. Stop creating content more quickly, but think about what are the new problems that we can solve with this technology. And in that way, we'll have the opportunity to, as you say, Michelle, collaborate with other disciplines in the business, to do tiny trials, to prove our value through the tiny trial. That's my take anyway. What's yours, Don?

Donald H Taylor:
I think the whole thing could be summed up in three songs from musicals from what you've just said. I think Michelle started it by saying, look, we've just got to let it go. That's from Frozen. You said, look, we've got to get people enthusiastic about this idea that something's coming from West Side Story. And finally, I think we need to rally the organisation and the L&D profession together with something from High School Musical. We're all in this together, and I think that is the core theme for us. Look, this is something which goes beyond, as you were saying Michelle, an individual department. We're all in it together and if we work together we can have a great impact.

Michelle Ockers:
Absolutely.

Michelle Parry-Slater:
Who knew you had such a musical theatre knowledge?

Michelle Ockers:
Okay, so I invite listeners now to reflect on the report. Share it with your team. share with others, particularly others in people and culture teams or in, I don't know, operational excellence teams or continuous improvement teams in your organisation, others you might be able to collaborate with, and have an open and curious conversation around, you know, how are we engaging with AI? What do we think about these three possible futures? What resonates with us? And what little step or experiment might we try to see what will work in response to our organisation's needs? Michelle Perry Slater, thank you for joining me.

Michelle Parry-Slater:
Thank you for having me. It's been an absolute joy.

Michelle Ockers:
Don, do you have any other key messages that you would like to send out to the listeners before we wrap up?

Donald H Taylor:
I think what you said there is really important, Michelle. In our research, we always try to reflect reality and identify good practice and share that rather than trying to invent something from nothing. So I thank you for making the point also that these reports are there to generate discussion. We don't try to pretend that we have all the answers. The answer is always in the room. But this is a great stimulus for you and your organisation, discussing this together and trying to work out, well, what do we do next? And I hope it's useful for you.

Michelle Ockers:
Thanks so much, Don. And we'd really love to hear what people are trying off the back of the report and any ideas sparked by this conversation today. We will share, of course, a link to Don's LinkedIn profile, as well as a link to these reports page where you can download not only the current AI report in L&D, but previous reports. So please dig in and get the conversation going with your team and with the community via LinkedIn.

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 About Learning Uncut

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 experience, 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