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## The Road To Learning, A Toolkit To Aid Self-directed Learning

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## FRI: The Road To Learning, A Toolkit To Aid Self-directed Learning (Claire Sellwood)

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The engineering and design sector is experiencing constant change with the implementation of new technology, changes in regulations and the increasing demands from clients. The role of Learning and Development teams is changing, they are no longer able to keep up with the demand for learning in an organisation using traditional methods. To meet these new challenges employees are expected to take ownership of their learning. They need to be able to diagnose their own learning needs, create their own learning goals, identify resources and implement learning strategies to achieve their goals (Daily et al. 2014). This is not a dissimilar situation to that of many other organisations across a variety of fields. In a 2018 study, 85.71 % of Learning and Development professionals in the financial and professional services sector thought that skills to help people manage their learning was extremely important but only 47.06 % thought that their organisation was currently using these skills (Freeman 2018).

Cercone (2008) suggests that learners may have the preference for self-directed learning however they may not have all the skills necessary for successful self-direction. Skills such as defining research questions, identifying and selecting appropriate resources, critically evaluate sources based on certain criteria and applying knowledge gained from sources are each seen as key skills required for self-directed learning (Ladell-Thomas, 2012). The lack of these skills could be a contributing factor to the disproportion between the importance and implementation of self-directed learning in the workplace. With such a diverse age group of employees we cannot expect everyone to have the same skills, many may have been out of education for many years and have either never learnt these skills or have forgotten them.

To improve self-directed learning in the workplace a new online resource, on the subject of management, is being developed with the aim to help employees to develop the skills that they need to become self-directed learners. To engage learners a gamification approach has been used. Learners are encouraged to participate in quests to build their skill levels in order gain the final status of informed manager. Some of the main features planned for the resource include an initial quest to encourage learners to source and evaluate resources. A shared online notebook will be provided for learners to share resources as well as evaluate resources suggested by others. Learners will be supported by guidance documents to help them to identify good sources of information and determine their own criteria for determining the quality of a resource. As learners progress through the quests they will be required to set their own

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learning goals based around the quest theme, emphasis will be on setting a goal which is personal to them. Throughout the learning journey there be the opportunity for learners to network with their peers, interact with a tutor, and share their learning experiences.

## References:

Cercone, K. (2008) 'Characteristics of adult learners with implications for online learning design', *AACE Journal*, vol. 16, no. 2, pp. 137–159.

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Freeman, C. (2018) '*Empowering self-directed learners: Practical strategies and tools for L&D* [online] Available at <http://dreamtektv.adobeconnect.com/pl06knilkv80/> (Accessed 4<sup>th</sup> January 2019)

Laddell-Thomas, J. (2012), 'Do-It-Yourself Information Literacy: Self-Directed Learning at a Distance', *Journal of Library & Information Services in Distance Learning*, Vol. 6, no. 3-4, pp. 376-386

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[Karen Hornby](#)

11:11am 9 January 2019 [Permalink](#)

This looks very interesting Claire, and I really like your ideas. I'm wondering if you had specific reasons for choosing gamification as your pedagogical approach? Do you have any evidence that this approach has an impact on learning/engagement?

Best wishes

Karen



[Munir Moosa Sadruddin](#)

8:48am 10 January 2019 [Permalink](#)

Hi

Congratulation for choosing this interesting topic.

Who are your target population for this course? Which resources have you used to develop it? What challenges you faced while designing this course? Is there any motivation tool for learners like a digital badge? How will you gather their feedback? Are you piloting it?

You are welcome to visait my page and comment :)

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[patrick shearer](#)

12:30am 30 January 2019 [Permalink](#)

Hi Claire,

Really enjoyed your poster. 100 times better than my sway :) long story.

Cercone makes a lot of sense - especially when it comes to learners who have very little experience of learning and learning situations. Confidence levels seem so low with so many people - especially when you ask them to self diagnose and make actions. We have a lot of mature students who still believe that it is my job to make them learn and to facilitate everything. They do not like it when i organise group work and discussions - they prefer to be led step by step with the end result always in clear view. I think the key is down to knowing their combinded and individual learning styles and expectations coupled with as much about their context as possible - giving them a clear rationale reminder all the time.

looking forward to your presentation



[Phill Grimes](#)

11:02am 2 February 2019 [Permalink](#)

Attitudes to learning and students' ability to conduct self directed learning are modern skills seemingly required more and more by employers.

These skills should be developed during education. Professor Clayton Christensen (2014) talks about the requirement of disruptive innovation in schools and a change of focus to develop these skills.

I am interested in your presentation as to what can be applied elsewhere and not just the workplace



[Claire Sellwood](#)

5:52pm 14 February 2019 [Permalink](#)

Thank you for your comments.

A gamified approach was decided upon as we really struggle to get people to engage with content and wanted to increase motivation to participate in the learning. This is a pilot at the moment so we will be looking at how we can measure the impact of the gamified approach. We have similar sites on other topics which have activities that don't employ gamification so we will use them as a base. The amount of activity in the collaboration spaces should provide some data for comparison.



[Dr Simon Ball](#)

3:55pm 18 February 2019 [Permalink](#)

Hi Claire

Well done on a great presentation! Here is a summary of the comments and questions you received following your presentation (including those you may have addressed verbally). Please respond in whatever way you choose - I suspect you may wish to deal with the first few in one response!

Best wishes

Simon

- ▶ Are students particular about what platforms they use, are there any that they feel is an invasion of their space? for me they did not want snapchat as it was theirs!
- ▶ Have you considered micro credentialing with digital badges?
- ▶ What options for alternative presentations do you have? I assume you will potentially have learners with accessibility needs (dyslexia etc)
- ▶ How will employees be enabled to use this resource? e.g. will they be given time to spend on their learning?
- ▶ My Q is about how learners can continue to influence new iterations of the content?
- ▶ Is it ethical to encourage them to do it in own time Or pressure them to do this to progress?



[Claire Sellwood](#)

5:34pm 24 February 2019 [Permalink](#)

In answer to the questions raised during the conference

Q - Are students particular about what platforms they use, are there any that they feel is an invasion of their space? for me they did not want snapchat as it was theirs!

A - We are quite limited in what we can ask students to use as which ever solution we implement needs to be approved by IT. We can't ask them to use their own mobile devices and many do not have company phones so things like What's App, Snapchat etc aren't viable solutions.

Q- Have you considered micro credentialing with digital badges?

A- Yes, once we have completed the pilot we will be moving the activities to the LMS which will allow badges to be awarded upon completion of activities. Trainers can also award badges for things like participation.

Q - What options for alternative presentations do you have? I assume you will potentially have learners with accessibility needs (dyslexia etc)

A - At the moment we have Word alternatives for the Sharepoint pages. We haven't created any inhouse materials but we will ensure that they are accessible.

Q -How will employees be enabled to use this resource? e.g. will they be given time to spend on their learning?

A- This is really down to their line manager. We have put together a resource for line managers explaining the importance of personal development and asking for their commitment to their employee's development. There is a suggested training contract which states that the manager agrees to support the employee and will allow a certain amount of time for training.

Q - My Q is about how learners can continue to influence new iterations of the content?

A -There is a comments section for each activity where they can offer suggestions and we also send out evaluation forms asking for feedback.

Q - Is it ethical to encourage them to do it in own time Or pressure them to do this to progress?

A- Good question - I would say no. However, our staff are not paid by the hour and there is some expectation that sometimes you will need to do some additional work outside of your normal working week. I think that you could argue the same if an employee attends a 3 day classroom course and has to stay overnight. Once again this is another conversation that the employee would need to have with their line manager.

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