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Key eLearning trends

New technologies are being developed every day, and there are more and more debates about training methods brought about by the development of these technologies.

After the first few weeks after the outbreak of the pandemic, organizations began to adopt digital solutions on a large scale. Initially, it was a question of how to ensure that companies would continue to function. Most organizations were asking their employees to work from home or remotely. So organizations began to think about how to train and equip their employees to maintain business continuity.

As the world enters the post-pandemic phase, however, there are questions about whether we can actually return to pre-pandemic normalcy. Some experts believe that the old normal was not normal because it emphasized a single mode of training. With the technologies we have available, we can now aspire to either a mix or a hybrid model of training for work and learning.

To facilitate understanding, we will review the major eLearning trends by distinguishing between:

- Organization-driven trends
- Trends driven by learners

Organization-driven or driven trends

Learning analysis
Learning analytics must be mentioned as first among eLearning trends. We know that the future is based on the data and information we have at our disposal, and the more there is, the better the insights will be and, as a result, decisions will be made with more awareness. **Learning analytics is the foundation on which new eLearning technologies and trends are emerging and developing**.

With a distributed workforce, learning teams should rely on learning analytics to make decisions. The importance of learning analytics is such that it can be said that the future of learning and its transformation begins with learning analytics. Analytics used together with artificial intelligence and learning platforms are capable of creating a whole **new learning ecosystem**. Educators, in fact, can visualize data, which can be used to define processes for identifying, assessing and developing skills to make informed business decisions.

Individual-centered learning experiences
One of the most important trends shaping the world of education is the design of individual-centered learning experiences.

What is meant by this term? Traditionally, organizations set training calendars and times that are not based on the needs of employees. These are mandatory exercises that must be performed to be sure that all learners have completed the training courses or achieved a certain score.

The pandemic, however, seems to have changed all that. Organizations have begun to realize that employees need to be encouraged and motivated, especially when they are in an environment with more distractions than the 'office. This led to an overhaul of the way training was conducted and new ways of designing training programs with what is known as "**human-centered design**" that is, putting the learner at the center.
Learning resources are much more empathetic to employees, adapt to their training needs, and are linked to organizational goals, which is great news for both organizations and learners.

Experiential learning platforms
In terms of individual-centered learning experiences, organizations are increasingly focusing on **learning experience platforms**

(LXPs). Technology is being used to help people achieve better learning experiences through **hyper-personalization and just-in-time learning**. Companies are leveraging these platforms to obtain real-time data on learners' behaviors, preferences, and needs to personalize learning experiences. The goal is to promote deeper training and better employee participation. LXPs also help create communities of learners who can come together and exchange ideas or even get answers to pressing questions through interaction with subject matter experts. A portal accessible to all employees and integrated with LXPs can help learners get the support they need through social interaction facilitated by forums, chats, and dashboards.

Artificial intelligence
In recent years, we have witnessed an exceptional development of artificial intelligence to the automation of various tasks and, to date, it is being applied more and more in different areas.
The world of 'learning is also trying to incorporate artificial intelligence. In this area, AI is being used to improve learning and question solving. A significant trend of many companies in the eLearning industry is the use of machine learning to take AI to the next level. Machine learning allows AI to create new algorithms that can predict user behavior and thus have better interaction capabilities.

As much as this may creep some people out, AI can be used to create a **more empathetic method of learning**. There has been increased attention to the fact that different learners have different needs and that it is necessary to provide personalized experiences to learn better. The application of artificial intelligence in education is offering this possibility. Artificial intelligence will help personalize learning experiences, interpret data or questionnaires generated for courses taken, and make better recommendations to both student and teacher.

Virtual training for remote employees
There is much talk about the hybrid work model, in which many employees choose to work from home. For this reason, virtual training will continue to grow and become a key part of corporate training.

Among existing technologies, virtual training is the preferred way for remote employees or those scattered around the world to access quality training from experienced facilitators and lecturers.

Virtual training has its advantages, mainly:

1. It can be interactive, significantly increasing the level of student engagement through games.
2. It can help connect people scattered all over the world.
3. Provides tangible results through quick surveys and quizzes.
4. It can cut training costs without reducing the quality of training.

Student-led trends

Mobile-First Learning
Students use their smart devices to perform an endless array of activities: socializing with friends, ordering food, paying bills or rent, playing games, watching movies, and the list could go on and on.
The point is that because our smart devices are so ingrained in our lives, it is not surprising that students demand learning experiences adaptable to these devices. Long training sessions bore them and reduce their ability to store information. With shorter attention spans, students need a more engaging medium than traditional learning.

For this reason, learning must also be deliverable on cell phones. Organizations must realize the power of the **mobile-first strategy** and adapt their learning experiences to this approach. When delivered via mobile, microlearning creates a unique experience for learners.

Virtual and mixed reality learning experiences
Learners are increasingly demanding better learning experiences. Virtual reality helps students become deeply immersed in learning, which is why it is a popular trend.
One of the most important factors for successful student engagement is **immersiveness**. Although schools are starting to introduce this technology recently, it seems that students give very positive responses. For example, one of the most common uses of virtual reality in schools is to replace the laboratory experience. This allows students to access labs more often than they could in person, allows them to learn without risk but at the same time experience the consequences of any mistakes (e.g., if you mix two wrong items I see the explosion in the virtual world but I don't get hurt in the real world).

Continuous learning paths
It is becoming increasingly clear that traditional training is no longer sufficient to impart knowledge and skills. The problem has existed for some time: people tend to forget or lose the information they have learned after a few days, sometimes after a few weeks. This phenomenon is known as the forgetting curve. In the past, there was no way to solve this problem, but today technology offers several solutions. Learners need to constantly learn new tasks and remember them. Not only remembering, but also thoroughly understanding information to apply it in the appropriate context.

This is where technology can step in with games, videos or quizzes before or after a lesson. The goal is to provide students with just the right amount of information that is not too long and is helpful in strengthening their concept memory in the short and long term.
The central idea is to blend traditional, more formal training with technology to create optimal learning plans for students.

Conclusions

These trends are among the most discussed learning modes in the eLearning world. Whether learning technology trends or learning content trends, these trends will continue to influence the way students and employees learn. The premises look promising for the future of training: on the one hand, learners and employees will be better able to apply training to their work and remember information, and on the other hand, organizations will save several hours of training if these tools and methodologies are implemented effectively.
To know which and whether one of these trends will take over from the others will take time, but it is legitimate to think that in the coming years the application of these technologies will significantly change the world of training.

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