



Leverage Learning Science for Lasting L&D Impact

FranklinCovey

In a professional landscape that's constantly evolving, learning and development (L&D) leaders need to utilize learning science to adapt to the ongoing and changing needs of individual contributors and executives.

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People value professional development opportunities. According to a 2021 [Gallup survey](#), 66 percent of workers ages 18-24 ranked learning new skills as the third-most important perk when evaluating new job opportunities, behind only health insurance and disability benefits. Existing employees also cited professional development as critical for retention: 71 percent of respondents said training and development increased their job satisfaction, and 61 percent said upskilling opportunities would motivate them to stay at their current company.

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As a result of these trends, HR teams are investing more resources into L&D initiatives than ever before. However, the impact these programs have on individual and collective performance varies widely depending on how they're designed and implemented. This guide explores the evidence-based principles that make learning programs effective and engaging. Share it among your leaders to facilitate breakthrough results and collective behavior change for your organization.



The Performance Crisis of Work-Based Learning

Over the past decade, the L&D industry has grown dramatically, with organizations now spending [over \\$300 billion globally](#) on professional development programs. But what does all this spending generate? Do L&D programs really transform individual, team, and organizational performance? The answer depends on the type of programs in which organizations invest.

Today, L&D programs face an engagement and efficacy crisis. A Degreed survey found that learners give their organizations' L&D departments an average [Net Promoter Score of -25](#). Additionally, [a Gartner survey](#) found that 70% of employees don't have mastery of the skills they need to thrive in their jobs.

The bottom line is that spending money on L&D programs doesn't guarantee your organization will provide value to learners or make a lasting impact on performance. Discerning HR leaders need to look for solutions that are grounded in science and provide ongoing engagement and application opportunities.

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Where Companies Go Wrong With Learning and Development: Gartner Survey

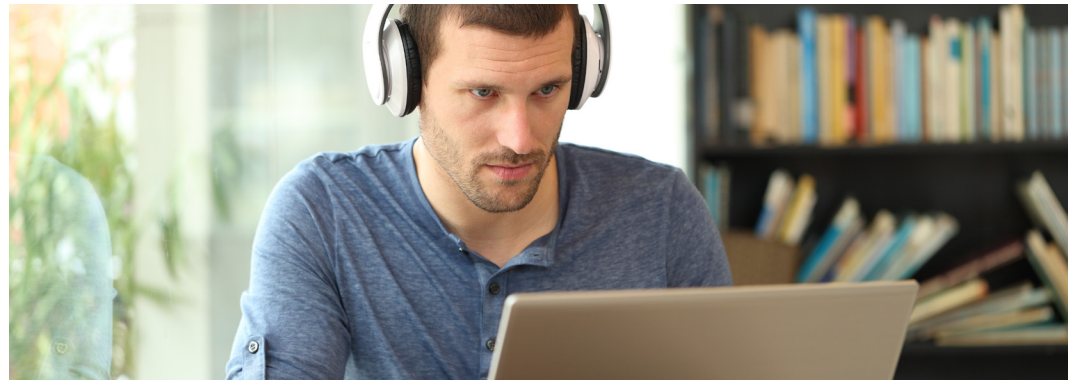


The Opportunity: Impact Journeys Grounded in Learning Science

L&D is no longer a simple exercise of booking a conference room and sharing some PowerPoint slides with your team. Quality professional development needs to accommodate varying learner motivations, instructor modalities, and stages in the learning process.

At times, learners may want comprehensive, lengthy courses that help them develop skills they'll use for years to come. Some might want two-minute instructional videos to help them overcome an acute problem they're facing. Others may prefer to choose which skills to develop on their own. Regardless of learner preferences, your organization needs to provide targeted learning paths to achieve broader organizational transformation—which is no easy task.

Providing a library of learning content is a good start, but it doesn't solve complex professional development needs. Instead, L&D leaders must look for ways to create flexible impact journeys that **combine multiple learning modalities**—in person, online, self-paced immersive, and self-paced micro-learning—to meet learners' needs.



5 Scientific Principles For Effective Learner Engagement

Regardless of what content you share and what modality you use to deliver it, there are a few evidence-based learning techniques you can leverage to maximize your L&D impact. Based on decades of research on how people learn, here are five principles you should incorporate as you develop impact journeys.

1. Active Learning
2. Intentional Application
3. Accountability
4. One-on-One Coaching
5. Automated Reinforcement



1. Active Learning

Most people don't learn by passively consuming content. The most effective learning happens when learners actively engage with and investigate challenges alongside instructors, coaches, peers, and managers. For example, a [study](#) found that students performed 12.5% better on average when instructors used active learning versus passive techniques.

It's important to note that [active](#) versus passive learning isn't the same as live versus [asynchronous](#) learning. You can have passive live learning and active asynchronous learning. A sage-on-a-stage lecturing at your learners or a one-way stream of digital content won't yield the best results for your organization.

Impactful learning experiences encourage, empower, and excite people to participate. Active learning experiences encourage learners to reflect on their own experiences and wrestle with new ideas through interactions like role play.

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FRANKLINCOVEY'S APPROACH TO ACTIVE LEARNING

Our solutions are grounded in active learning principles. Content facilitators are trained to incorporate active learning techniques into their sessions both in-person and online, and participants are prompted to engage with new topics through assessments and activities as part of their self-directed impact journey.

70% of learning happens on the job, 20% from discussions with other people, and 10% from coursework.

2. Intentional Application

While it's important to create active, engaging, inspiring learning experiences, content absorption is only the first step. For people to truly integrate and retain what they learn, they need to apply concepts contextually in new situations. This method is known as far transfer, and it is a pivotal learning technique.

This concept of intentional application goes by many names: deliberate practice, the Kolb experiential learning cycle, the 70/20/10 rule (70% of learning happens on the job, 20% from discussions with other people, and 10% from the actual coursework). Whatever you call it, it has a big impact on learning. A foundational study showed that application-centric learning led people to retain 2.5 times more information than other methods.



Virtual or in-person instruction is only one step in a broader impact journey. People need to see new skills and principles in practice in order to make them stick. In your L&D program, explore ways to challenge learners to apply lessons in the real world, even when it's hard or uncomfortable.

FRANKLINCOVEY'S APPROACH TO INTENTIONAL APPLICATION
Intentional application is built into the FranklinCovey Impact Platform. Features like application challenges, automated reinforcement emails, and completion certificates ensure that your leadership initiatives don't just check a box but change your people's behavior for good.

“If you can change somebody's identity so they view themselves as a great manager or leader, then they'll want to constantly strive to be in congruity with that identity.”

—Will Houghteling, Executive Vice President of Product at FranklinCovey



3. Accountability

Professional development can be challenging. Everyone's overwhelmed with urgent tasks, emails to send, and direct messages to respond to. Because of this, L&D activities are often *important but not urgent* tasks. Additionally, when people carve out time to learn, the real-world application of new lessons can be uncomfortable for many learners, further decreasing their engagement with L&D programs. Using accountability buddies is an effective way to increase employees' commitment to learning and applying new concepts and skills. Accountability raises the stakes to follow through on learning. People are more likely to achieve a goal or stick to a plan if

they've committed to it alongside a trusted peer or leader who checks in on their progress and provides a sounding board throughout the process.



FRANKLINCOVEY'S APPROACH TO ACCOUNTABILITY

Every learner on FranklinCovey's Impact Platform receives multiple accountability touchpoints to help them succeed. 360-degree Assessments at the beginning and end of every learning journey help people benchmark their strengths, areas for improvement, and progress toward goals. Cohort accountability check-ins provide regular opportunities to engage with colleagues learning the same concepts or skills and encourage each other's progress. And managers can review their team's results so they can check in on how things are going during regular one-on-ones.



4. One-on-One Coaching

In 1984, education psychology researcher Dr. Benjamin Bloom discovered that one-on-one coaching with mastery-based learning **generated outcomes** far surpass those of normal instructional approaches. Since then, education researchers and entrepreneurs alike have been chasing **Bloom's Two Sigma Problem**, trying to find alternative instructional approaches that are as effective as one-on-one coaching—but less expensive.

Investing in tutors or executive coaches can help individual team members work through the most complex, high-impact issues. If one-on-one coaching at scale isn't feasible, look for solutions that allow learners to personalize their learning journeys or pair them with internal experts to have a customized learning experience.

FRANKLINCOVEY'S APPROACH TO ONE-ON-ONE COACHING

FranklinCovey employs a team of professionals with hands-on leadership experience to provide tailored coaching for individual leaders. Our Impact Platform also tailors learners' experiences at scale with targeted content, reminder emails, and feedback based on their organization's unique curriculum and their own personal activity.

5. Automated Reinforcement

It's important to spend time, energy, and money creating engaging learning experiences—but it's not enough to offer a great training seminar or workshop once a year. You also need to reinforce learning over time. Pioneering educational researcher Hermann Ebbinghaus coined the term *forgetting curve* after discovering that students forget **56% of what they learn within one hour**, **66% of what they learn after a single day**, and **75% of what they learn after six days**.

“People forget information predictably over time. That’s why we’ve built automated reinforcement emails to remind people of the content and encourage application.”

—Will Houghteling, Executive Vice President of Product at FranklinCovey

You can overcome the **Ebbinghaus Forgetting Curve** with spaced repetition of information, sending reminders to learners about the materials at increasingly **spaced distances** over time. This keeps learners engaged with new concepts long after they initially learn about them.



FRANKLINCOVEY'S APPROACH TO AUTOMATED REINFORCEMENT
Once learners have completed their core curriculum in-person or online, they're assigned a set of self-directed learning activities and application challenges to reinforce the material over time. Homepage tasks clearly lay out what learners need to do and when, and smart reminder emails prompt them to stay engaged.

The FranklinCovey Impact Platform: Content+People+Technology

FranklinCovey helps organizations achieve lasting results that require collective behavior change. Our content, based on timeless principles of human effectiveness, is designed to help learners change both their mindset and their behavior so they can solve your organization's most pressing problems and consistently meet your most important goals.

The FranklinCovey Impact Platform provides a science-based solution for L&D leaders who want to provide learning experiences at scale. The Impact Platform empowers you to:

DELIVER PRINCIPLE-CENTERED CONTENT that supports active learning in whatever modality works for your organization's needs: Live In-Person, Live-Online, or On Demand.

HELP LEARNERS APPLY what they've learned through application challenges and exercises.

KEEP LEARNERS ENGAGED with new concepts and skills using time-triggered communications and activities.

PROVIDE A BUILT-IN SUPPORT NETWORK to increase concept retention and accountability.

EVALUATE GROWTH AREAS AND PROGRESS for each individual learner through 360-degree Assessments.

AUTOMATE L&D PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION, tracking, and reporting so you can focus on high-impact work.

“The hard part about online learning is *developing* the motivation to complete content. Our technology increases motivation for continued content absorption throughout each learner's journey.”

—Will Houghteling, Executive Vice President of Product at FranklinCovey



Next Steps: Moving From L&D Investment to Impact

L&D leaders have a massive opportunity ahead of them. Their people are hungry for opportunities to learn and grow, and executives are brought in on the competitive value L&D programs bring to their organizations. The next step is to evaluate L&D programs through the lens of impact. Don't settle for passive learning solutions that provide short-term value for your people. Now's the time to look for partners that deliver high-quality content based on proven learning science to create lasting results. Not only will you get more out of your program investment—your people and organization will be transformed, growing greatness from the seeds of potential that exist today.



Make a Lasting Impact with FranklinCovey

FranklinCovey is the most trusted leadership company in the world, with operations in over 160 countries. We transform organizations by building exceptional leaders, teams, and cultures that get breakthrough results. Available through the FranklinCovey All Access Pass®, our best-in-class content, experts, technology, and metrics seamlessly integrate to ensure lasting

behavior change at scale. Our approach to leadership has been tested and refined by working with tens of thousands of teams and organizations over the past 30 years. FranklinCovey is the most trusted leadership company in the world.

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