

# Performance through learning

---

white paper

from The Learning and Performance Institute

# Contents

## Performance through Learning

---

- 1 Overview
- 2 Work Smarter
- 3 Building Capability
- 4 L&D in the 21st Century
- 5 The Performance Approach
- 6 Skills Profiling
- 7 Formal and Informal Learning
- 8 - 9 Push vs Pull
- 10 Time to Competence
- 11 Integrating Learning at Work
- 12-13 The New Sweet Spot
- 14-16 Making it Happen

## Appendix

- (i) The L&D Maturity Model
- (ii) The Learning Technologies Maturity Model

This white paper has been put together by Learning and Performance Institute Executive Consultant, Alan Bellinger.

Alan Bellinger is executive consultant to the Learning and Performance Institute ("LPI") and has been writing on skills issues for IT Training magazine for the last 25 years. He is Director of Certification for ISO 15504 Assessor Certification Program, and a Non-Executive Director of a number of emerging enterprises. He is a former Director of the IITT, Technical Director of the e-GIF Accreditation Authority, and a director of IT Skills Research. He holds the Colin Corder Award for services to IT Training for 2002. As an independent journalist and consultant specialising in IT skills issues, he writes regularly for a number of skills-related publications.

He has held a number of senior sales & marketing management positions in the IT training industry, in the UK, in the EMEA region and in the US. With over 45 years' IT experience, he believes he has demonstrable skills of applying agility in practice!



Alan Bellinger

The Performance through Learning white paper has been developed and designed by the Learning and Performance Institute. Any citation or reference to information contained within this document should be clearly credited to the Institute.

For further information on this topic please contact the Institute.

### Learning and Performance Institute

Westwood House  
Westwood Business Park  
Coventry  
United Kingdom  
CV4 8HS  
T. +44 (0)845 006 8858  
E. [info@learningandperformanceinstitute.com](mailto:info@learningandperformanceinstitute.com)  
W. [learningandperformanceinstitute.com](http://learningandperformanceinstitute.com)  
Follow: @YourLPI

# Overview

As an L&D Professional, what do you actually do? Many people would answer this simple question with a response that, one way or another, can be summed up as “I train people”. And the next question to those who respond in this way, is why? The answer is that we train staff in order to improve performance; but that concept of performance is not always easy to grasp in its entirety.

As L&D Professionals we create value-add by developing a performance benefit; and that benefit will always relate to one of two core value-adds; it will be designed to either improve performance or avoid risk. But we need to drill into this in more detail in order to get a comprehensive understanding of the nature of performance through learning.

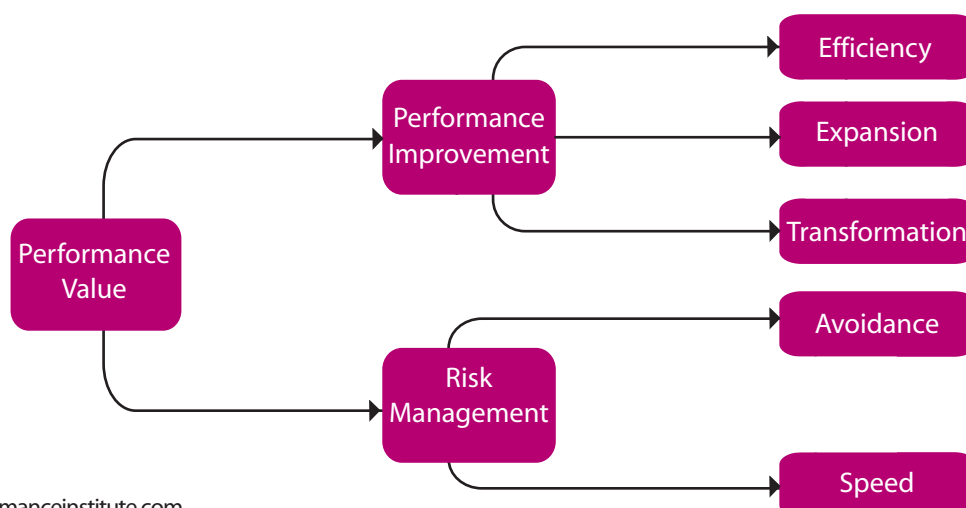
**Performance Improvement** – our traditional perception is that, through appropriate learning interventions, we are able to improve the performance of an individual, or group of learners, in order to enable them to do their job better. The fundamental benefit that a learning intervention provides is that it reduces the lead time to competence (see section 9 below); the corollary to that is to get clarity on the way in which that performance benefit is turned into a business benefit – and that is management’s responsibility. A performance benefit will yield one of three business benefits:

- Efficiency – the business goal of efficiency enables the organisation to do “the same for less”; by improving the performance of an individual, group or even the whole enterprise, the organisation is able to save money through a variety of different approaches (e.g. through downsizing, recruitment freeze, job sharing etc.).
- Expansion – the objective here is “to do more for the same”; if the organisation is growing this business objective enables expansion to take place without a comparable increase in costs and drives an increased margin to the bottom line.

• Transformation – the third business goal is to enable transformation, for example, a business initiative, corporate change programme, or new venture. Enabling the transformation objective means that learning interventions are targeted at making the transformation effective more rapidly.

**Risk Management** – but the fundamental business objective for many learning interventions is to reduce risk; and the conventional notion is that this does not relate directly to performance. But let’s look into it a little deeper. A typical scenario is that of a Financial Adviser writing to clients who have said that they are risk averse, but have opted to invest in some riskier investments. The Financial Adviser needs to write a letter to ensure that his organisation is not at risk. A learning intervention relating to the drafting of that letter has two performance objectives:

- Avoidance – the letter needs to be drafted in such a way that it ensures that it is tight enough to eliminate all elements of risk; and
- Speed – to ensure that the letter is written and despatched as fast as possible.



# work smarter not harder

---

A concept that sums up the goal of performance through learning is the need to work smarter rather than harder. The “work smarter” mantra is a strong rallying cry for new ways of working – especially where organisations create the environment in which “the network is the new power structure” and where information flows to you through your network connections. A key goal of the working smarter approach is to integrate learning and work (see page 11). By positioning themselves in support of the “work smarter” mantra the L&D professional will be able to better position the service they offer to the organisation.

In an article that was published by Training Journal in early 2011, the Institute argued that a natural consequence of “work smarter” is that one of L&D’s main metrics is to be found in a key aspect of Talent Management (TM) – and that is workforce planning. The consequence of working smarter is to reduce the head count required to support growth – and that further emphasises that TM should be a critical part of L&D’s sphere of influence.



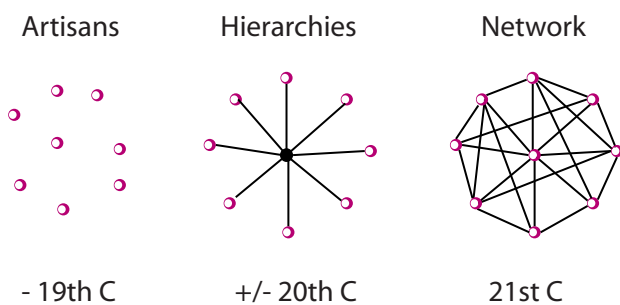
**LEARN**

**WORK SMARTER  
NOT HARDER**

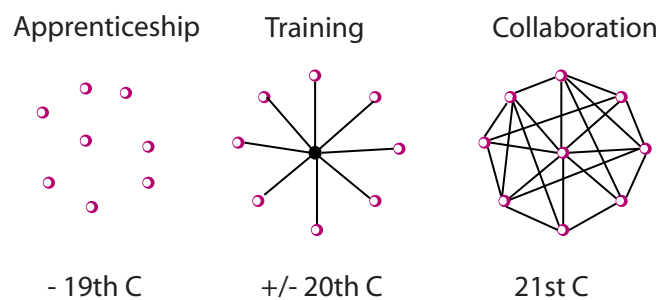
# building capability

The chart below highlights the way in which there are fundamental changes in both work and learning that L&D Professionals need to understand and apply.

## Work has Changed



## Learning has Changed



We are increasingly seeing the old command & control approach of the hierarchical organisations of the 20th Century superseded by a more dynamic networked environment that is increasingly being referred to as a “wirearchy”. This evolution started in the late 1990s with the elimination of middle management, and the erosion of the concept of “span of control”. Now, as our IT systems have been integrated with the web, and new interfaces, hyperlinks and databases have been created, a new cognitive and social environment has emerged.

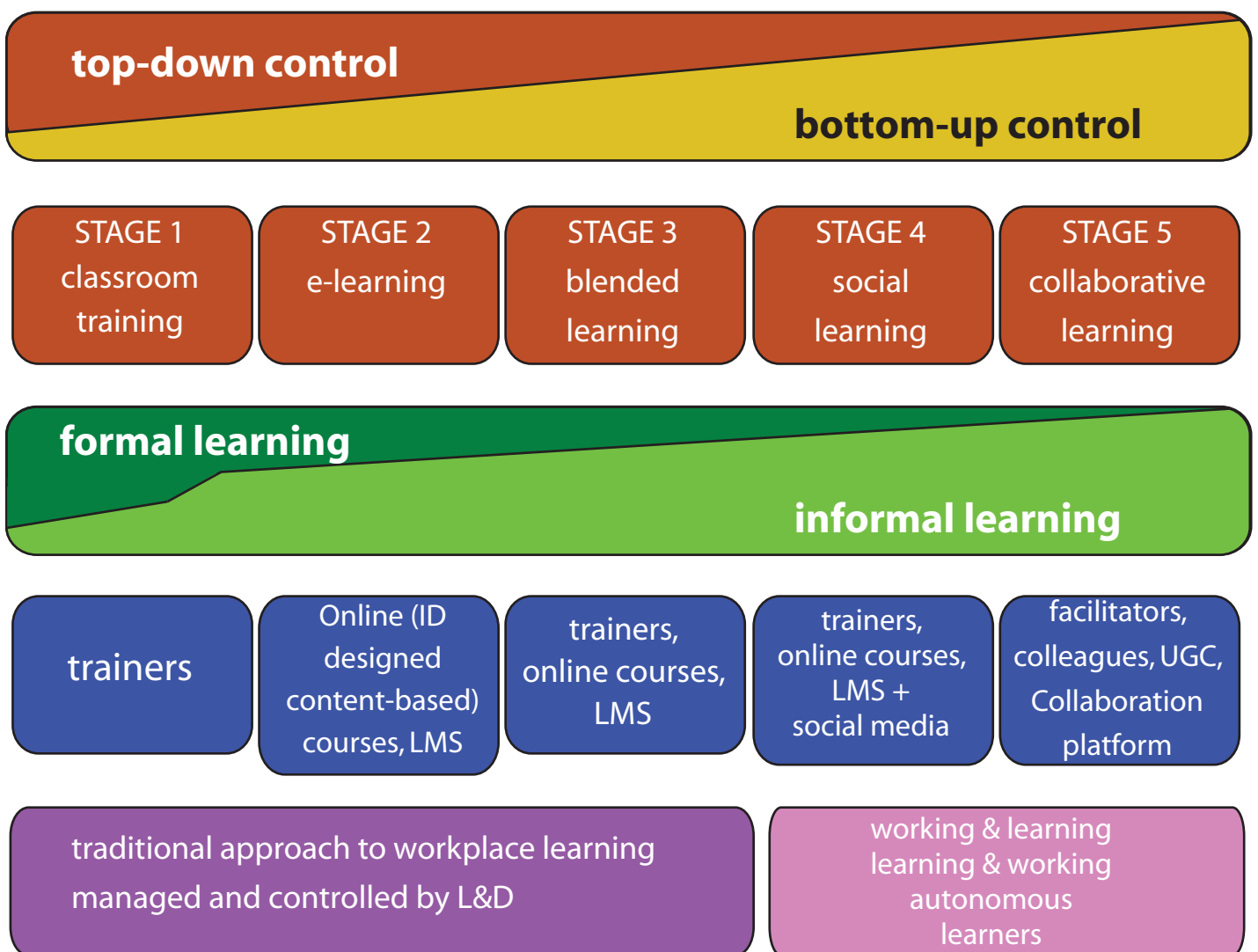
*Jon Husband describes wirearchy as a dynamic two-way flow of power and authority based on information, knowledge, trust and credibility, enabled by interconnected people and technology.*

For us, as L&D Professionals, we need to recognise that learning has changed too. It’s no longer a case of filling classrooms and delivering training, but much more a case of facilitating the transfer of knowledge and skills **through** the network. And it is the nature of this change that is highlighted within the succeeding sections of this white paper.

# Learning & Development in the 21st Century

The L&D function is in the middle of a massive transition and the big problem with any transition is that you need to have a very clear vision of where you're going – otherwise, any road will get you there! That's when maturity models become extremely useful, and the model developed by Jane Hart in collaboration with Jay Cross covers many of the bases. In particular, it demonstrates the position of a number of key variables at each stage of L&D's evolution (from stage 1 to stage 5).

In addition, the Institute's L&D Maturity Model ( see appendix i ) addresses other aspects of the evolution.



# Get the full report

---

Get your hands on the full 22 page white paper today.

The Performance through Learning white paper is available exclusively to members of The Learning and Performance Institute (LPI). Membership starts from as little as £77.50 for the entire year.

As well as the Performance through Learning report, LPI Members receive:

- Professional recognition through post nominal letters applicable to your level of membership. Membership levels are based on your experience and qualifications.
- The Learning Survey report - A comprehensive report based on the Institute's largest survey to date. Discover the views of today's learning professionals on a number of key L&D topics.
- Access to a host of free webinars dedicated to workplace learning, with an average of one new webinar per week.
- Discounted access to key learning events throughout the year including LEARNING LIVE and Learning Technologies.
- Access to an exclusive high street discounts programme providing a host of discounts on lifestyle items from over 320 top retailers.

To find out more contact the Institute's membership team today:

**T.** +44 (0)845 006 8858

**E.** [membership@learningandperformanceinstitute.com](mailto:membership@learningandperformanceinstitute.com)