

## Donald H Taylor blog

### How should we deliver learning?

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'How should we deliver learning?' We shouldn't. Or rather, we can't.

Let's be clear about this: it is individual people that learn (I'm putting to one side for the moment the contention that organisations learn). To repeat: individual people learn.

If individual people learn, how can we 'deliver learning' to them? We can't.

I'm not trying to start a semantic witch-hunt here. I'm sure that I have made this mistake plenty of times myself in the past. No, this is not about the way we use words.

It's more important than that.

This idea of 'delivering learning' has its roots in our thinking. It's essentially another way of saying 'delivering training' or 'delivering a course'. Now there is nothing wrong with courses and training. They remain an important part of the learning and development (L&D) mix.

However, some years ago we shifted from describing our field as 'training' to calling it L&D, with the intention of suggesting that we do more than training alone. In particular, there was a sense that we provided opportunities for people to learn. We do this in a variety of ways, including:

- Providing the infrastructure for sharing information
- Ensuring people have the skills to learn
- Facilitating the production of user generated content
- Creating useful materials
- Curating a range of content
- Setting up communities for learning, online and face-to-face

None of these 'delivers' learning. Each of them helps people learn better. This is a crucial shift in our role and in the perception of it by us and by others. That's why every time I hear the phrase 'deliver learning' I wince. Because it indicates to me that perhaps we haven't moved on quite as far as we should have by now.

Let's stop trying to 'deliver' learning and instead concentrate on supporting it.