Learning to E-learn Project
Findings and Implications

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Learning to E-learn project completed by

Commonwealth Bank

The Commercial Arm of the University of Tasmania

State Government of Tasmania

www.unitas.com.au

Project players

• The relationship with the Commonwealth Bank of Australia (CBA) results through the establishment of a Knowledge Centre at Unitas under agreement with the University of Tasmania and the State Government.

• Unitas — the commercial consulting arm of the University of Tasmania — established a Knowledge Centre.
Stated project purpose

• To undertake multidisciplinary, global research that will advance current practices by applying e-learning to:
  – accelerate levels of knowledge capture, generation and transfer
  – equip and skill individuals to engage in a unique service relationship;
• To focus on informing sustainable, competitive practice both in commercial organisations and in communities (while research remains broad and covers complex areas);
• To create Intellectual Property that will be owned by Unitas and be made available to CBA and other partners; and
• To publish research.

L2eL research project structure

Phase 1

International Research Report
- University Rigour
- Research Text
- Research & Materials
- Case Studies

Phase 2

Public: Easy-to-Read Publication
Build Tools (Applications)
Manuscripts 'How-to-Guides' and Commissioned Case Studies
Research — Surprise No. 1

• Expectation: existing research and practice would cast light on best practice approaches;
• Grounded theory used to identify, classify, confirm and compare approaches by different authors;
• Three months into research work it became apparent the field had ‘lots of noise’ but very little substance.

Lots of anecdotal information, little theoretical rigour
Lack of integrated theory

Skills and knowledge
Personal factors (cognitive, cultural, biological)
Individual behaviours
Individual learning and performance
Group/ community learning and performance
Organisational learning and performance

Information Technology
Systems Design
Knowledge Management

Need for Unified E-learning Conceptual Framework

Relearning the basics

Key research dimensions to be ‘re’-investigated were:
1. The relationship between learning and knowledge management;
2. Comparison, measurement and reporting of performance, learning and behavioural outcomes;
3. Organisational transformation and the need to respond to change; and
4. Electronic transactions, specifically the relationship between e-learning and e-service transactions.
Research report findings

Five key variables have been identified as consistently influencing e-learning design and implementation:

1. Individuals involved;
2. Current level of transformation in both the organisations involved and the field of e-learning;
3. Required outcomes;
4. Type of knowledge and learning being transferred and generated; and
5. Technology and infrastructure.

Parable of a lost hiker
Research outcomes

- Investigative Research Report with 12 chapters that were ‘stand-alone’ investigative research exercises;
- 37 Observations made within the Report’s 12 chapters;
- Observations and research consolidated into 12 Principles;
- Ten international case studies (augmenting existing business case studies); and

Principles 1 to 6

1. E-learning encompasses a wide diversity of practices in a dynamic, rapidly changing field. It must therefore be defined to encompass all learning experiences involving the acquisition or transfer of knowledge delivered or transacted through electronic means.
2. While global forecasts of the e-learning marketplace have suffered from a lack of comparability and reliability, e-learning seems poised for a major transformation driven more by learner and educator demand than by providers’ hype.
3. The effective and efficient implementation of e-learning relies on complex interactions between the needs and expectations of learners, facilitators and organisations, all of which must be understood in order to maximise systems-wide competitive outcomes.
4. Old paradigms based on e-training need to be revised to ensure that a focus on individual competence related to performance is augmented by targeting identity capabilities, which build purpose, shared meaning and a culture of collaboration.
5. The efficiency and effectiveness of e-learning as a strategic activity should be measured not only in terms of performance and learning outcomes, but also in terms of its overall contribution to an organisation’s potential productive capacity and ability to adapt to changing circumstances.
6. E-learning has maximum strategic impact when it deploys pedagogies and assessment procedures appropriate to the individual learner while enhancing situated performance and strategic thinking.
Principles 7 to 12

7. Effective e-learning requires innovative approaches to the design and delivery of learning programs to accommodate individual differences and actively engage learners in developing their ability to acquire knowledge.

8. E-learning can be intentionally designed to facilitate collaboration and build shared identity and meaning, thereby establishing a virtuous learning circle of knowledge transfer, innovation and adaptability to organisational change.

9. A holistic e-learning strategy can increase an organisation’s responsiveness to change while also acting as an agent of continuous innovation and transformation.

10. E-learning combined with capability reporting can strengthen organisational learning, help to establish a learning culture and facilitate the development of effective learning networks that extend beyond the boundaries of the organisation.

11. By enhancing the e-learning component of electronic service exchanges, businesses can build staff and customer capabilities and improve their own responsiveness to customers’ current and future needs.

12. To implement e-learning efficiently and effectively, a quality instructional design process (e.g. ABII) must ensure a continuous cycle based on rigorous evaluation at all levels.

Implication for businesses

Many implications have emerged. Five major areas of relearning:

1. Capabilities
2. E-training
3. Tacit knowledge
4. Individuals and shared meaning
5. Agility
1) Need for a common currency to measure value-add

Learning +
Performance +
Knowledge Management +
Human Resources
= Human Capital (HC)

HC + Social Capital + Structural Capital
= Knowledge Capital
(Total Potential Productive Capacity)

From competency to capability
Building knowledge capital

Knowledge Capital (actual value as set by contribution to goods and services)

Capabilities: ‘the currency’

Knowledge capital: ‘resource pools’

Human
Social
Structural

Competencies

Identity

Current Productive Capability

Potential Productive Capability

2) Current thinking is restricted by e-training paradigm

Performance and behaviours required to deliver sustainable, effective competitive advantage

Discontinuity – Research & Practice

Identity = Culture + values + behaviours + traits + roles + ??? (Education)

Competencies = Skills + Knowledge (Training)

Time

Today’s e-learning paradigm
3) Both tacit and explicit knowledge are required

Type of knowledge required by organisations to be competitive

Spend on e-learning by type of knowledge transferred or generated (content or pedagogy)

4) A focus on the individual with technology as the enabler

E-learning

Trajectory

Now

Future
Improved e-learning = improved performance

- Experience
- Prior learning
- Multiple Intelligences
- Motivation
- Learning styles

- Learning outcomes
- Personal satisfaction
- Performance improvement
- Confidence

Identity and Motivation
Skills, Knowledge and Behaviours

Capability to collaborate and learn

Close match
- Motivated and committed staff
- Good performance and service
- Satisfied customers
- Strong brand/market position

Poor match
- Low morale
- Poor or inconsistent performance and service
- Dissatisfied customers
E-learning can stimulate interlocking behaviours / loyalty

E-learning occurs during an electronic transaction

Individual interactions lead to group and organisational learning, orient effort and improve effectiveness of the relationships

5) E-learning causes and assists transformation

Strategic Business Impact

- Improved Agility and Organisational Learning
- Improved Potential Performance Capability
- Improved Current Performance
- Improved Learner Satisfaction
- Reduced Training Costs

E-learning Capability
Community and regional development implications

Many implications have emerged. Three major areas of relearning:

1. Virtuous circles and learning communities (knowledge sharing)
2. Unified communications infrastructure (knowledge access)
3. Unified knowledge exchange (knowledge storage and analysis)

1) Building sustainable learning communities (from individual to social)

Long-term viability of infrastructure depends upon building communities that learn, including the following features:

- Local champions
- Anchor user or client driving initial infrastructure set-up
- Time to change existing practices (not an overnight fix or short-term ROI expectation!)
- Ability to exchange knowledge across communities of practice
- Ease of use and ease of accessibility
- Local coaches able to train others (‘viral’ and applied training model)
- Demand-driven (as use increases so do collaborative processes and new ideas for use)
Divergent knowledge sharing

Convergent knowledge sharing
Virtuous circle of collaboration and learning

Organisation, Group or Individual

2) Unified e-learning knowledge flow — anywhere, anytime anyhow

- Terrestrial/ Wireline
- TV/Cable
- Satellite & Wireless
- Mobile
- Work/School
- Home
- Physical
M-learning – Unified knowledge access

- E-health
- E-government
- Emergency Services
- Hospitality/Tourism
- Farms/Mines
- Schools
- Businesses
- Telephone (mobile & fixed)
- Wireless Devices
- Computers/Laptops
- High-Speed Hub
- Server
- VSAT
- Internet
- Integrated mobile network(s)

3) Unified knowledge exchanges

- E-learning Exchange

- LCMS/LMS
- HR Systems
- Knowledge Management
- National Reporting
- Internal and External Web Sites
- Virtual Communities

- Learning Delivery and Assessment
- Provider Integration & Services agnents
- Online Analytical Processing and BI Tools
- E-Commerce
- Collaboration Tools & Messaging
- Library, indexing, Content mg, Portal and Exchange services
- Capability Mapping and Tracking Engine, Processes and Reporting
- Individual Profiles
- Work & Career Profiles
- Learning & Knowledge Profiles
- Administration Profiles
- System Management, Security, Reporting