

Glossary of Learning Terms

A

Accelerated Learning – An approach to learning that recognises different people have different natural learning styles (sometimes called learning intelligences): some learn best by listening or singing, others by moving or doing, others by reading, writing or drawing. Accelerated learning incorporates a variety of different activities into the training, which stimulate different senses. In this way it is hoped that the whole group will be helped to understand the content in their most natural style. Despite the inference from its name, accelerated learning is not necessarily faster, however it does make the learning 'stick' (often known as 'retention' in the learning world).

Action Learning - An learning process whereby the participants study their own actions and experience in order to improve performance. This is done in conjunction with others, in small groups called Action Learning Sets. It is particularly suitable for adults, as it enables each person to reflect on and review the action they have taken and the learning points arising. This should then guide future action and improve performance.

ADDIE – Analyse Design Develop Implement Evaluate. The ADDIE model is a well-known generic sequence of activity used by instructional designers and training developers when creating training courses. Analyse includes the assessment of training need; Design is the stage where the high level shape and form of the training is decided; Develop is the creation of the training materials. Implement is the delivery of the training and Evaluate is the post-training evaluation of the training (though the evaluation should be planned at the analysis stage).

Alignment of Learning to Business Goals – This is the process of ensuring that all learning is consciously targeted at the achievement of business goals, strategy or objectives. Now widely recognised as a vital attribute of any top quality learning function. Also known as Business Interlock.

Assessment Centre - Assessment centres assist the recruitment process by giving candidates experience of a microcosm of the job while testing them on work-related activities as individuals and in groups. Interviewers can assess existing performance and predict future job performance.

ASTD (American Society for Training & Development) - The world's largest association dedicated to workplace learning and performance professionals. ASTD's members come from more than 100 countries and connect locally in almost 140 U.S. chapters and 25 Global Networks.

Asynchronous learning – Learning that takes place with no live communication between people. Examples include taking a self-paced course, exchanging e-mail messages with a mentor, or posting messages to a discussion group. The advantages of asynchronous learning are convenience, accessibility, and the fact that this type of training is self-paced. The disadvantages are that the learner may feel isolated or be less motivated without real-time human interaction.

B

BILD (British Institute for Learning & Development) – An independent forum for professionals in the learning and education sector, offering impartial information, advice and research. BILD fosters best practice, use of technology in learning and promotes continuous improvement. It embraces corporate, work based and lifelong learning and vocational training.

Blended Learning – Learning that is delivered through a combination of two or more learning methods such as: e-learning, face-to-face instruction, group study, individual study and coaching.

C

CBT (Computer-Based Training) – One of a number of terms used at different times to describe learning delivered through a computer. CBT used to be associated with learning stored on CD-ROM, but is now more commonly referred to as e-learning.

CIPD (Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development) – the largest professional learning, development and HR community in the UK, with 133,000 members. CIPD leads in the development and promotion of good practice in the field of management and People Development. Its magazine 'People Management' is issued monthly to all members, CIPD also produce an annual Learning and Development research report.

Coaching - A method of directing, instructing and training a person or group of people, with the aim to achieve some goal or develop specific skills. Coaching is usually conducted in very small groups, usually 1-to-1 basis.

Competency Framework – A means of categorising the knowledge, skills, attitudes and experience of people in an organisation. A competency framework allows the definition of job roles – individuals can be compared against those job roles for the purposes of performance management and career planning. There are standard competency frameworks but many organisations define their own.

Counselling – Helping an individual to improve performance by resolving situations from the past.

CPD (Continuing Professional Development) – A systematic approach to ongoing learning, which recognises the need for individuals to constantly update and renew their professional knowledge. CPD is prevalent in certain professions (e.g. legal) where practitioners must undertake a certain minimum amount of recognised training each year, in order to retain their professional accreditation or membership.

D

Development Centre - Provides coaching to an individual or a group of individuals on a specific learning requirement or skill.

E

E-learning – A term used to describe learning that is delivered using electronic media. E-learning content is typically delivered via a computer screen, across a network, intranet or internet, it is less commonly used to describe content that is delivered via CD-ROM. Increasingly, e-learning is being delivered via mobile/wireless devices. Also known as Web Based Training (WBT) or Computer Based Training (CBT)

Evaluation – The process of assessing the value or worth of training. There are various approaches to training evaluation, the most commonly recognised one is the Kirkpatrick model.

Experiential Learning – Derived from a theory by David Kolb, this is a method of teaching which uses active participation and the applied use of new skills through role playing, recreation (or simulation) of real-life situations and on-the-job experience.

G

Gardner's Multiple Intelligences – Howard Gardner's model of seven Multiple Intelligences: Linguistic, Logical-Mathematical, Musical, Body-Kinesthetic, Spatial-Visual, Interpersonal, and Intrapersonal. Related to accelerated learning techniques.

Guiding – Process of directing an individual or a group along the path leading from present stage to a desired state.

H

Honey and Mumford – Authors of a learning styles model based on (but different from) Kolb's Learning Cycle. Honey and Mumford's model identifies four learning styles: Activist, Reflector, Theorist, Pragmatist.

I

IfL (Institute for Learning) – Professional body for teachers, trainers and assessors across further education (FE), including adult and community learning, emergency and public services, FE colleges, the armed services, the voluntary sector and work-based learning. IfL provides the mechanism by which teachers register and progress through to Licensed Practitioners. All Registered Teachers are members of IfL. IfL have developed a model of teacher professionalism which is used to develop policies and tools which support a teacher's CPD planning.

IIP (Investors in People) – The UK's leading people management standard, which helps organisations transform their business performance. IIP provides a simple and flexible framework for thousands of organisations of all sizes and sectors.

IITT (Institute of IT Training) – UK professional body for those involved in IT training.

ISO 9001/2000 - The internationally recognised standard for an organisation's internal Quality Management. The term 'quality' refers to all those features of a product or service which are required by the customer. An organisation's 'Quality Management' refers to an organisation's actions to ensure that its products or services satisfy its customers' quality requirements and complies with any regulations applicable to those products or services.

ISO 14000 – A series of standards which form a guide to environmental management principles, systems and supporting techniques. Certification is voluntary and training is available to help organisations comply. Certification to ISO14001 typically takes 6-12 months.

K

Kirkpatrick model – A near-universally recognised model for training evaluation. Devised by Donald Kirkpatrick in 1950s, a 4 level model for evaluating training programmes:

1. **Reaction.** Usually a questionnaire (happy sheet), to record learners' reactions to the training.
2. **Learning.** A test or other assessment of whether the learners learned what they were supposed to have learned.
3. **Behaviour.** A post training assessment of the extent to which learners' behaviour has changed as a result of the learning.
4. **Business Benefit.** A measure of how much the training has benefited the business.

Kirkpatrick's model has been criticised because it tells you 'what' to evaluate but not 'how'. The higher levels are notoriously difficult to measure, since it is hard to isolate the effects of training from other influences.

Other contributors have added additional levels. Jack Phillips added a Level 5 (Return on Investment or ROI). Some people talk about a Level 0 (Activity) which is a measure of how much training was delivered.

L

LCMS (Learning Content Management System) – A system which manages e-learning content, in particular allows assembly of E-Learning courses from individually stored content modules.

Learning Cycle – A widely recognised model, devised by David Kolb, to explain the learning process as a four-stage cycle which the learner continually progresses around, the four stages being:

1. Concrete Experience (CE)
2. Reflective Observation (RO)
3. Abstract Conceptualisation (AC)
4. Active Experimentation (AE)

This leads to people having one of four learning styles, each represents a combination of two adjacent stages of the cycle:

- **Diverging (CE/RO)**. People who can look at things from different perspectives. They are sensitive. They prefer to watch rather than do, tending to gather information and use imagination to solve problems.
- **Assimilating (RO/AC)**. People whose preference is for a concise, logical approach. Ideas and concepts are more important than people. These people require good clear explanation rather than practical opportunity. They excel at understanding wide-ranging information and organising it a clear logical format.
- **Converging (AC/AE)**. People who can solve problems and will use their learning to find solutions to practical issues. They prefer technical tasks, and are less concerned with people and interpersonal aspects. People with a Converging learning style are best at finding practical uses for ideas and theories. They can solve problems and make decisions by finding solutions to questions and problems.
- **Accommodating (AE/CE)**. 'Hands-on' people, who rely on intuition rather than logic. These people use other people's analysis, and prefer to take a practical, experiential approach. They are attracted to new challenges and experiences, and to carrying out plans. They commonly act on 'gut' instinct rather than logical analysis.

Learning Portal – A web site that offers learners consolidated access to learning and training resources from multiple sources.

LMS (Learning Management System) – An IT solution which allows an organisation to manage access to and record the completion of learning. Originally this term tended to describe applications which launched and tracked e-learning content only, but modern LMSs can also manage classroom-based learning as well.

M

Managed Learning Service – Outsourced delivery of a service which meets any or all of an organisation's L&D needs, managing the ongoing day-to-day service delivery (planning, monitoring, resolving issues and introducing innovations) and managing the other suppliers involved in delivering that service.

Mentoring – Helping to shape an individual's beliefs and values in a positive way; often a longer term career relationship from someone who has 'done it before'.

N

National Training Awards – The UK's largest and most prestigious training awards scheme, sponsored by the government.

NLP – Neuro-Linguistic Programming. Encompasses the three most influential components involved in producing human experience: neurology, language and programming. The neurological system regulates how our bodies function, language determines how we interface and communicate with other people and our programming determines the kinds of models of the world we create.

O

Outsourcing – The delegation of responsibility for part of an organisation's operation from internal to external provision, on an ongoing (not temporary) basis. Outsourcing utilises experts from a particular field to perform a specific task that was once performed internally. There are many examples of outsourcing and training is just one. Outsourcing of training is typically undertaken to reduce costs, improve efficiency and achieve better service quality.

R

ROI (Return on Investment) – In the context of learning, this is the process of comparing the cost of a learning intervention with the benefits gained afterwards because the learners are more productive than they were before. Usually expressed either as a percentage (e.g. 200% = your benefits over a period of time are double what it cost to deliver) or a time period (e.g. 3 months = the time it takes for the benefits to deliver value equivalent to the cost of the training). Benefits are hard to measure and monetarise reliably, which is why ROI studies are not often carried out.

ROI Institute – A US-based organisation, specialising in measuring the benefits of HR interventions and training in particular.

S

Skill Gap Analysis – A skill gap analysis compares a person's skills to the skills required for the job to which they have been, or will be, assigned. The purpose is to identify clearly the skills employees need in order to succeed in their current or planned position and to compare employee skills against those requirements.

Synchronous e-Learning - Synchronous, or live e-learning, means that communication occurs at the same time between individuals, and information is accessed instantly. Examples include real-time chat and video/audio conferencing and webinars. Synchronous e-Learning can provide instant feedback on a delegate's performance and allows the training to be adjusted immediately, if needed. The disadvantages of synchronous e-Learning are that the training is not self-paced and logistics of scheduling, time zones and available need to be managed.

T

TNA (Training Needs Analysis) – A process to analyse the learning and development needs of staff in an organisation. Typically, TNA may be conducted at an individual level, at a role or departmental level, or at an organisational level, with corresponding different levels of detail. A classic TNA approach is to assess the 'gap' between the current levels of knowledge and skill in the target population, and the desired future levels after the training is complete. Once the training need (gap) is assessed, it is possible to devise the training programme necessary to meet that need.

V

VAK (Visual-Auditory-Kinaesthetic) - Learning Style model, based upon NLP principles.

VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) – Technology whereby the internet is used to transmit voice conversations, a technique increasingly used within virtual classroom systems.

W

WBT (Web based training) – Self paced training (e-learning) that is delivered through an Internet browser.

Webinar – A seminar delivered to delegates across the internet. The webinar leader presents to a video camera - participants can see the video, also the leader's presentation slides on their computer screen. Participants can also make comments and ask questions of the leader.

WLP (Workplace Learning and Performance) – Phrase used by the ASTD, synonymous with 'L&D' in the UK, but acknowledges the importance of 'performance' as the aim of learning.