



The Age of Analytics, the New Learning Currency

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- A good learning and development environment serves the needs of the organisation as well as those of individual learners, while analytical tools offer new ways for organisations to arrange and develop training and measure employee engagement and outcomes.
- As organisations strive to positively impact employee learning and development experiences, learning analytics enable employers to see the different levels to which employees are engaging and which have the highest training needs in specific areas.

We are living in a highly complex world that is more connected than ever before. Today, we have approximately 5.2 billion users on the global mobile phone network. At the same time, there is

rapid digital transformation cutting across societies and economies with the result that the traditional nature of work is changing at a rapid pace. As global cross-border bandwidth grows exponentially, flows of information, searches,

communication, video, transactions and intra-company web-traffic continue to increase. Automation and intelligent robots are starting to replace human labour and jobs are under threat of being replaced at a faster rate than anticipated.

Today, information and data are the new currency, talent and ideas the new form of capital, and artificial intelligence (AI), data analytics and 3D printing are the areas where new understanding and skills are required. As work becomes more agile and responsive, the HR function needs to move from managing talent to organising talent through the use of data analytics. As the HR function becomes more analytical, it will also need to make full use of analytics to manage the learning and development function within organisations. The era of big data promises to make employee learning faster, better and cheaper and consequently make learning analytics more important, for example to track and measure digital learning efficiency.

So what exactly is learning analytics? When put under the spotlight, learning analytics is the measurement, collection, analysis and reporting of data about learners for the purposes of understanding and optimising their learning experiences as well as tracking the effectiveness of “learning” programmes.

Analytics for predicting learners’ performance

One of the most significant benefits of analytics is that the data analysed can be used to provide insights into not only how a learner is performing today, but also about his or her likely future performance throughout the duration of a course or programme. For example, online learning facilitators may identify that an individual is unlikely to pass an eLearning course, but could pass if additional support was to be provided, such as additional reading or tutoring sessions. Furthermore, through learning analytics, learning professionals and online instructors gain the ability to customise learning experiences for individual learners. Learners, for example, can be provided with links to sites that may help them to effectively comprehend a topic, or videos that allow them to learn through a more auditory or visual approach.

Increase the retention rate of learners

Given that more learners have the opportunity to enhance their performance thanks to learning analytics data, which allows for timely intervention, fewer learners are likely to drop out or fail the programmes they study. For instance, without the use of analytics, if a learner is not progressing well through an eLearning programme, then he or she is less likely to be motivated to remain enrolled, and simply stop participating. Not only can learning analytics help current learners, but analytics can also help future learners as well. For instance, if the data shows that a vast majority of learners are finding one particular aspect of the eLearning course too challenging, then the developers can change the difficulty level of that specific eLearning module. This will lead to more powerful and impactful eLearning environments in the future, based on data that has been collected today.

Analytics can help to boost cost efficiencies

Learners expect great content and, from the simple to the most ambitious eLearning programme, the outcomes need to be positive and cost efficient. If through analytics, however, a particular section of the eLearning course simply isn’t helping learners to achieve their learning goals, the programme facilitator can direct resources to either improving it or focus on another area that may be a more worthwhile investment. In an economy where resources are particularly constrained, learning and development (L&D) professionals are under constant pressure to demonstrate their value and often required to answer searching questions from their peers such as: Which training need is likely to yield the best return on investment? Which digital delivery channel produces the quickest results? Which media works best with specific workforce segments such as new hires, sales force or senior leaders? By applying statistical methods to find the correlations, analytics can help to answer these questions.



Getting started

Whether it's designing and delivering eLearning courses, digital performance support resources, need to define clear objectives by making sure that there is an alignment with the organisation's mission, goals and culture. A good starting point also includes identifying the workplace cultural factors that will affect the implementation. For example, try to predict the barriers or pain-points likely to be encountered and identify potential "allies" from within the organisation that will support the programme. At the same time, identify stakeholders, including those who will benefit the most from the programme. Next, decide which stakeholders have the most influence, such as department heads and start developing an approach to involve, inform, support and train personnel associated with these allies.

Stages to develop learning analytics programmes

It is important to align the purposes for using learning analytics to stakeholders needs, and to prioritise them. Some examples include learner awareness, monitoring and tracking, research, evaluation and planning, and reporting and communication. Develop a strategic plan that includes each step needed to meet identified goals. Develop a timeline, and review and (if needed) update the strategy throughout the process. Determine resource capacity. To deliver meaningful results requires the input of expertise in data science, project management and evaluation, learning technologies administration, IT support, reporting, and business intelligence. At the same time, develop an evaluation system. Monitor progress continually and revisit the original objectives and vision to make sure they are still heading in the right direction. Finally, after implementation, conduct a review of the overall process and make notes for future efforts.



Choosing the appropriate system

It is important to invest in a solution or software that has the capabilities to analyse data using algorithms to predict learners' behaviour for eLearning platforms. A good learning analytics programme ensures that the learning is effective and aligned with business goals. Making data-driven decisions, based on everything from individual learner goals to strategic organisational goals, will, ultimately, increase the chances of developing a successful training programme. Organisations that focus on achieving this strategic alignment can expect to realise higher performance outputs.

It is equally important to link the training strategy to the business strategy so that learning and development initiatives show a direct impact on the bottom line. To measure effectiveness, training scorecards can be developed and used to link individual programmes to the business needs of the organisation. From there,

analytics can be used to track individual learners to see if the programmes they are attending are impacting the organisation. Learning measurements can come in the form of job effectiveness, job impact and business results. Other examples can include average change in performance appraisal ratings, customer satisfaction ratings, employee engagement scores, turnover and productivity. The potential benefits for individual learners, and the benefits they can add to the organisations they work for, is what makes learning analytics such an important asset. [JURM](#)