

Learning Philosophies: Then and Now

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Profile: James Mitnick, Senior Vice President, Turner Construction

Then: "Training is for babies and puppies. A learning platform is about performance, where learning, knowledge and collaboration intersect."

Now: "Learning continues to evolve as technology allows us to push useful information and knowledge to our colleagues. Although instructor-led courses continue to be an important part of practicing and testing for understanding, it is impossible to provide just-in-time learning to all staff members at the right time of their careers with consistent quality. Retention of knowledge is very difficult, unless it can be practiced in the real world almost immediately. As we have all learned, the cost of instructor-led training is very expensive — our world has evolved to become a virtual place in space and time, where information and knowledge can be accessed anytime, from any computer or hand-held device, to support collaboration and professional development. In the future, it might not be possible to distinguish between formal and informal learning, between the classroom and Web-based courses, between relevant and irrelevant. It becomes the responsibility of those of us who have been entrusted to lead our organizations to make sure it is relevant and appropriate. When learning happens, people enjoy their work, are more productive, increase value to customers and are happier overall. If 'training' is for babies and puppies, then 'learning' is for those of us who understand the importance of codifying and sharing knowledge within our organization. Understanding the difference between training and learning is the first step to becoming a world-class learning organization."