

## The 30-Year View

Looking at all the things *USA Today* predicts for the next 30 years with respect to learning, it seems they are all here, right now, in the corporate world. It's up to us to apply them. **BY BOB PIKE CSP, CPAE**



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**U***SA Today* recently celebrated its 30<sup>th</sup> birthday. That edition of the newspaper contained both a backward view for 30 years and a forward view. I read with a great deal of interest the forward view—especially when it started talking about education.

In a nutshell, the predictions are:

1. Grades will be left behind.
2. Learning will be tailored.
3. Learning will be high tech.
4. Learning will be fun.
5. Learning will never stop.
6. The human element will remain important.

With the exception of grades being left behind, the predictions parallel what I’ve been teaching with “Creative Training Techniques” for more than 40 years—which is that we need to be instructor led, but participant centered. (By the way, I would agree that grades could be left behind if we started to measure retention and application of what was learned in real life. In other words, learning for living—rather than learning in order to pass.)

Training is a process, not an event. And the purpose of training—especially in organizations—is to get results.

### LEARNING WILL BE TAILORED

I agree that we need to tailor the learning. However, the learning must be tailored to both the needs of the organization and how each person learns best.

Time and time again, we see that very little corporate training is based on analyzing the five other faster, cheaper performance solutions first:

1. Making sure the systems involved support the results we want.
2. Making sure our policies and procedures support the results we want, rather than punishing the desired behaviors.
3. Making sure we have the right recruiting measures in place.
4. Making sure we are putting the right people in the right jobs.

5. Making sure we make just-in-time coaching available.

We also know from our own research that more than 75 percent of participants learn better with other people than by themselves. They learn better when they are interacting with other participants and the content to be learned, whether in the classroom or online, than when listening to another lecture—no matter how well delivered.

### LEARNING WILL BE HIGH TECH

The corporate training I do has always been high tech. In the 1970s, we used videotape feedback as soon as it became available. At some of the earliest Training Director’s Forums I hosted, we used responder technology (OK, so it was wired—but at the time, it was state of the art!). In the 1980s, I was an early adopter of Videoshow, which created and displayed PowerPoint-like animated presentations before personal computers were even available. In the ’80s and ’90s, I was an early adopter of GameShow Pro, and we used games to help learning in the classroom. At my presentations at Training 2013 (including this year’s edition of the Training Director’s Forum), you will experience the latest responder technology from Turning Point and the use of QR codes to enhance learning—both during and after the live sessions. Our e-learning programs and Webinars maximize interaction with both the content and with other participants. In corporate training, the future is now—if you want it to be. I’m not the only one saying this: Training gurus have been talking about this and organizing conferences and other events around the topic for decades. *Training* magazine hosted Learning 3.0 in Chicago in October, where the latest and greatest in learning technology was showcased. But it cannot be technology for the sake of technology. Rather it has to be because it enhances the learning process—and accelerates getting results on the job.

### LEARNING WILL BE FUN

This is actually Pike's third law of adult learning: Learning is directly proportional to the amount of fun you have. Today we live in the world of entertainment. When I was growing up in the 1950s, we had three TV channels. Today, we have dozens, if not hundreds, and access to all kinds of entertainment through the Internet. This has led to shorter attention spans and the demand that we keep people involved and engaged—or they simply will change channels. The average high school student in the U.S. graduates from high school having spent 14,000 hours in class but more than 19,000 hours watching television. But it doesn't have to be fun *or* learning—it can be fun *and* learning. At Training 2013, I will co-lead a three-day session with two of my colleagues, Thiagi and Sharon Bowman. I guarantee there will be fun and learning each and every day!

### LEARNING WILL NEVER STOP

In the 1980s, Buckminster Fuller was one of the first to talk about something called "The Knowledge Doubling Curve." Basically, it measures recorded human information. All of mankind's recorded information up until 1800 represents one unit of knowledge. From 1800 to 1900, two units of knowledge; from 1900 to 1950, three units of knowledge; from 1950 to 1975, four units of knowledge; from 1975 to 1987, five units of knowledge; from 1987 to 1993, six units of knowledge. Today, various experts claim knowledge doubles every 18 months. IBM says knowledge doubles every 11 hours if you include everything posted on the Internet (although I would suggest that everything posted is not necessarily knowledge and not particularly useful!). In 2010, more than 328,000 books were published in the U.S. alone. How many did you read? The point is that just as learning is never going to stop, the need to be selective in what we learn is more important than ever. Just because a subject matter expert (SME) knows it doesn't mean every participant needs to know it. We need to pay more attention to dividing content into Need to Know, Nice to Know, and Where to Go.

### THE HUMAN ELEMENT WILL REMAIN IMPORTANT

John Naisbitt was talking about this in the 1980s in his "Megatrends" book when he wrote about the need for high tech, high touch. The more technology we have and the more we rely on it, the more important it is for people to feel connected with one another. We all need to feel important and to believe we matter to each other. William James, often called the "Father of American Psychology," said the greatest need of every human being is the need for appreciation. Think about it for a minute. Are you over appreciated? At home, work, and in your community, do you get too much recognition and

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appreciation? Do you just want it to stop? Probably not. But then look at it this way: Would the people around you say you give too much recognition and appreciation to others? Again, the answer is "Probably not." Why not spend just the next 30 days giving more deliberate, well-considered recognition and appreciation to those around you?

When I look at all the things *USA Today* predicts for the next 30 years with respect to learning, I have to say they are all here, right now, in the corporate world. It's up to us to apply them. Until next time—add value and make a difference. See you February 18-20 in Orlando at the Training 2013 Conference & Expo. 