reportOUT

Higher Education
Needs New Models

The quarterly review of innovative applications in alternative education

reportOUT

A Raison d'être for ReportOUT:

SynED was formed by individuals from business, corporate training, and higher education who were concerned about the state of education and committed to its reformation.

Together they envisioned a nonprofit that would serve as a catalyst to promote positive change in education from within and from without. SynED's founders saw the importance of getting cutting edge, well-informed information out to the public, and thus, ReportOUT was born.

Recognizing that real change is necessary, ReportOUT focuses on the non-traditional, and the notion that effective educational practices can be found in some unlikely places. When searching around the edges, exploring techniques and technologies outside of traditional education, and looking within the ancillary realms of corporate training, for profit schools, and independent learning systems, it helps to have a guidebook. That is our hope for ReportOUT.

SynED recognizes that traditional education is challenged by multiple forces: an accelerating pace of change, rapidly evolving educational technologies, and a web of cultural/sociological developments that confront existing models of education. Formal education has evolved into a complex, multi-faceted, life-long activity no longer delivered in a monolithic block during one's first twenty years. SynED's intent is to help transition learning from a finite, institutional activity, to a life-long journey for every person.

By anticipating these dynamics, SynED initiates and delivers programs which embrace rapid technological changes to spur transformations in institutional education and independent learning. Recognizing that lifespan learning is the norm for almost every career, SynED seeks to implement non-traditional and experiential solutions to realize the best possible outcome for learners.

This is achieved through its four primary divisions:
ReportOUT, Initiatives, Solutions, and Masters.

SynEd's ReportOUT serves as a conduit not only for new
ideas, but ideas which are iconoclastic, that challenge
traditional thinking, pedagogies, and institutions. SynED's
express purpose of sharing the vision of educational innovators
is to provide a forum for best practices, new ideas, and
teaching and learning in the 21st Century.

SynED is helping transition learning from a finite, institutional activity to a life-long journey for every person.

SynED seeks to implement non-traditional and experiential solutions to realize the best possible outcome for learners. This is achieved through its four primary divisions:

ReportOUT,
Awareness of current and future trends arms educators, employers, and citizens with key knowledge to make relevant decisions and create effective organizations to support those evolving needs. At the heart of synED's charter and passion is the investigation and discussions of our evolving world with those who are acutely impacted by it.

Initiatives,
Answers the need for a non-profit managed collaboration of public and private entities where independence from bias and effective management is essential to achieving common goals.

Solutions,
Non-profit solutions and contract management for educational grants needing professional business expertise and pooling multi-college funds to support innovative and pilot projects.

Masters,
A non-profit host and support network for innovative and experienced professionals to initiate and direct independent grant proposals.

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solutions | masters
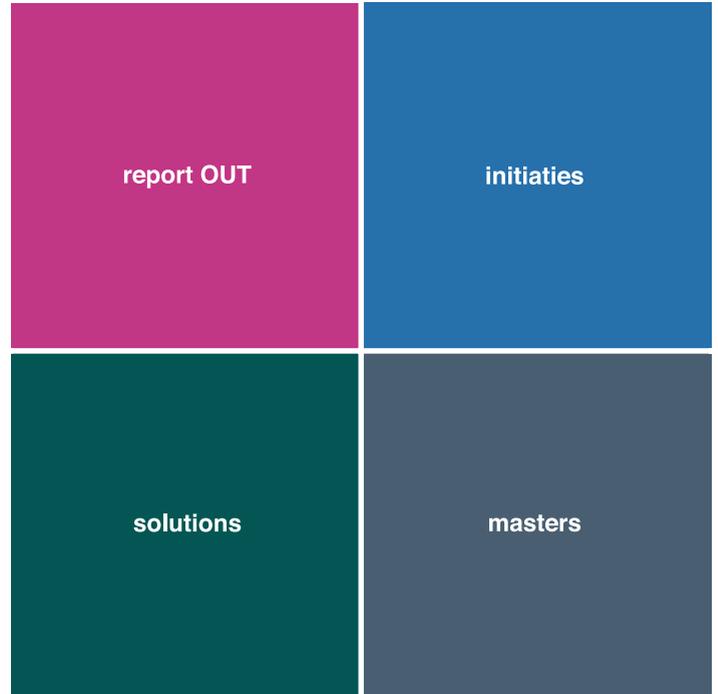
What is digital stoytelling?

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At its most basic core, digital storytelling is the practice of using computer-based tools to tell stories. This practice includes digital documentaries, computer-based narratives, digital essays, electronic memoirs, interactive storytelling, etc. In general, they all revolve around the idea of combining the art of telling stories with a variety of multimedia, including graphics, audio, video, and Web publishing.

As with traditional storytelling, most digital stories focus on a specific topic and include a particular point of view. However, as the name implies, digital stories usually contain some mixture of computer-based images, text, recorded audio narration, video clips, and/or music. Digital stories can vary in length, but most of the stories used in education typically last between two and ten minutes. The topics range from personal tales, to the recounting of historical events, from exploring life in one's own community, to the search for life in other corners of the universe, and everything in between.

Despite its emphasis on computer technology, digital storytelling is not a new practice. One of the field's most noted pioneers is Joe Lambert, the co-founder of the Center for Digital Storytelling (CDS), a nonprofit, community arts organization in Berkeley, California. The CDS has been assisting young people and adults in the creation and sharing of personal narratives, through the combination of thoughtful writing and digital media tools, since the early 1990s.

Another pioneer in the field, British photographer, author, and educator Daniel Meadows, defined digital stories as "short, personal, multimedia tales told from the heart."

The beauty of this form of digital expression, he maintained, is that these stories can be created by people everywhere, on any subject, and shared electronically all over the world. Meadows added that digital stories are "multimedia sonnets from the people" in which "photographs discover the talkies, and the stories told assemble in the ether as pieces of a jigsaw puzzle, a gaggle of invisible histories which, when viewed together, tell the bigger story of our time, the story that defines who we are."

Researcher and digital culture consultant, John Seely Brown, described digital storytelling saying, "I'm particularly interested in digital storytelling, in new ways to use multiple media to tell stories, and in the ability of kids, who are now growing up in a digital world, to figure out new ways to tell stories. They have the ability to build interpretive movies very simply and to lay sound tracks around the content. They condition or 'sculpture' the context around the content. The serious interplay between context and content is key to what film—and rich media in general—is about."

Today, the use of digital storytelling is being practiced in neighborhood community centers, schools, libraries, and businesses, by novice technology users as well as those with advanced skills. In the field of education, teachers and their students, from early childhood classrooms through graduate school, are using digital storytelling in many different content areas and across a wide range of grade levels.

Educational Uses:
Digital Storytelling as an Effective Instructional Tool for Teachers

There are numerous ways that digital storytelling can be used in education. One of the first decisions to be made when using this tool is whether an instructor will create the digital stories or have their students do it. Some educators may decide to create their own stories and show them to their students as a way to present new material. An engaging, multimedia-rich digital story can serve as an anticipatory set or hook to capture the attention of students and increase their interest in exploring new ideas.

Research has shown that the use of multimedia in teaching helps students retain new information, and aids in the comprehension of difficult material.

Digital Storytelling as an Effective Learning Tool for Students

Digital storytelling can also be a potent tool for students who are taught to create their own stories. After viewing example digital stories created by their teachers or other story developers, students may be given assignments in which they are first asked to research a topic and then choose a particular point of view. The process can capitalize on the creative talents of students as they begin to research and tell stories of their own, while learning to use the library and the Internet to research rich, deep subject matter, and analyzing and synthesizing a wide range of content. In addition, students who participate in the creation of digital stories may develop enhanced communication skills by learning to organize their ideas, ask questions, express opinions, and construct narratives. It can also help students as they learn to craft stories for an audience, and present their ideas and knowledge in an individual and meaningful way. In addition, when digital stories are published online, students have the opportunity to share their work with their peers and gain valuable experience in critiquing their own and other students' work. This can promote gains in emotional intelligence and social learning. Digital storytelling appeals to students with diverse learning styles and fosters collaboration when students are able to work in groups. It's also valuable in enhancing the student experience through personal ownership and accomplishment.

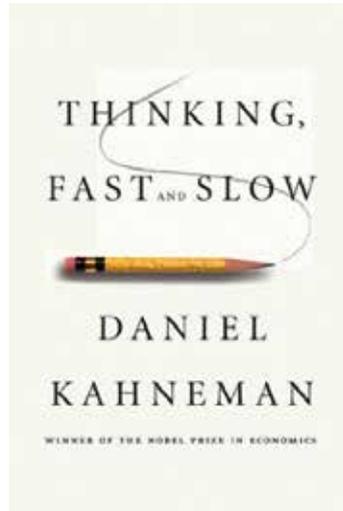*Bernard Robin, Ph.D.*
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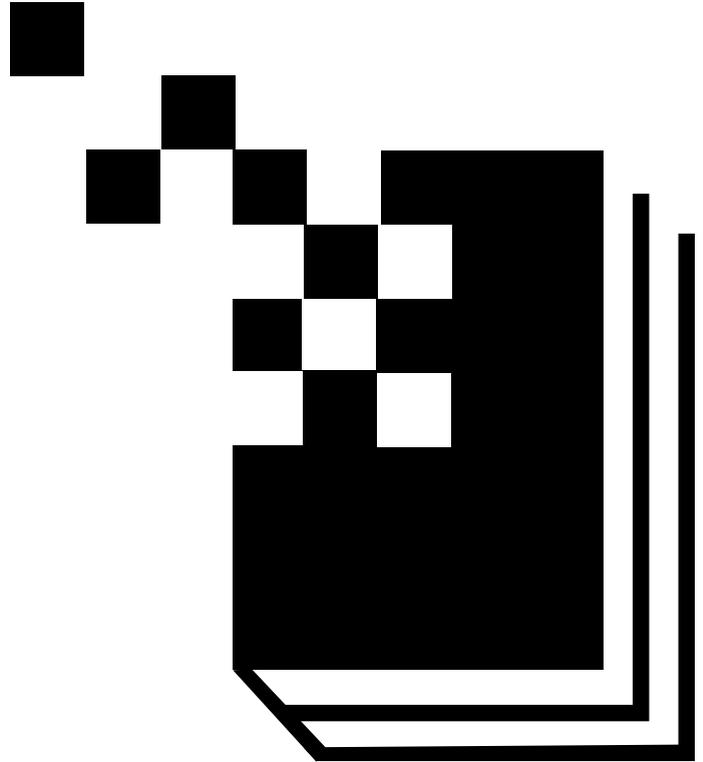
Book Review

Thinking Fast and Slow
By Jim Holt, New York Times

THINKING,
FAST and SLOW

DANIEL
KAHNEMAN

WINNER OF THE NOBEL PRIZE IN ECONOMICS

In 2002, Daniel Kahneman won the Nobel in economic science. This was unusual because Kahneman is a psychologist. Specifically, he is one half of a pair of psychologists who, beginning in the early 1970s, set out to dismantle an entity long dear to economic theorists: that arch-rational decision maker known as Homo economicus. The other half of the dismantling duo, Amos Tversky, died in 1996 at the age of 59. Had Tversky lived, he would certainly have shared the Nobel with Kahneman, his longtime collaborator and dear friend.

Human irrationality is Kahneman's great theme. There are essentially three phases to his career. In the first, he and Tversky did a series of ingenious experiments that revealed twenty or so "cognitive biases" — unconscious errors of reasoning that distort our judgment of the world. Typical of these is the "anchoring effect," our tendency to be influenced by irrelevant numbers that we happen to be exposed to. (In one experiment, for instance, experienced German judges were inclined to give a shoplifter a longer sentence if they had just rolled a pair of dice loaded to give a high number.) In the second phase, Kahneman and Tversky showed that people making decisions under uncertain conditions do not behave in the way that economic models have traditionally assumed; they do not "maximize utility." The two then developed an alternative account of decision making, one more faithful to human psychology, which they called "prospect theory." (It was for this achievement that Kahneman was awarded the Nobel.) Now in the third phase of his career, after the death of Tversky, Kahneman has delved into "hedonic psychology," the science of happiness, its nature and its causes. His findings in this area have proved disquieting—and not just because one of the key experiments involved a deliberately prolonged colonoscopy.

"Thinking, Fast and Slow" spans all three of these phases. It is an astonishingly rich book: lucid, profound, full of intellectual surprises and self-help value. It is consistently entertaining and frequently touching, especially when Kahneman is recounting his collaboration with Tversky ("The pleasure we found in working together made us exceptionally patient; it is much easier to strive for perfection when you are never bored."). So impressive is its vision of flawed human reason, that New York Times columnist David Brooks recently declared that Kahneman and Tversky's work "will be remembered hundreds of years from now," and that it is "a crucial pivot point in the way we see ourselves." "They are," Brooks said, "like the Lewis and Clark of the mind." Now, this worries me a bit. A leitmotif of this book is overconfidence. All of us, and especially experts, are prone to an exaggerated sense of how well we understand the world, as Kahneman reminds us. Surely, he himself is alert to the perils of overconfidence. Despite all the cognitive biases, fallacies, and illusions that he and Tversky (along with other researchers) purport to have discovered in the last few decades, he fights shy of the bold claim that humans are fundamentally irrational.

Or does he? "Most of us are healthy most of the time, and most of our judgments and actions are appropriate most of the time," Kahneman writes in his introduction. Yet, just a few pages later, he observes that the work he did with Tversky "challenged" the idea, orthodox among social scientists in the 1970s, that "people are generally rational." The two psychologists discovered "systematic errors in the thinking of normal people," errors arising not from the corrupting effects of emotion but built into our evolved cognitive machinery.

Although Kahneman draws only modest policy implications (e.g., contracts should be stated in clearer language), others-perhaps overconfidently?—go much further. Brooks, for example, has argued that Kahneman and Tversky's work illustrates "the limits of social policy"; in particular, the folly of government action to fight joblessness and turn the economy around.

To see how, consider what Kahneman calls the "best-known and most controversial" of the experiments he and Tversky did together: "the Linda problem." Participants in the experiment were told about an imaginary young woman named Linda, who is single, outspoken, and very bright, and who, as a student, is deeply concerned with issues of discrimination and social justice. The participants were then asked which was more probable: (1) Linda is a bank teller, or (2) Linda is a bank teller and is active in the feminist movement. The overwhelming response was that (2) was more probable; in other words, given the background information furnished, "feminist bank teller" was more likely than "bank teller." This is, of course, a blatant violation of the laws of probability. Every feminist bank teller is a bank teller; adding a detail can only lower the probability. Yet even among students in Stanford's Graduate School of Business, who had extensive training in probability, 85 percent flunked the Linda problem. One student, informed that she had committed an elementary logical blunder, responded, "I thought you just asked for my opinion."

What went wrong here? An easy question (how coherent is the narrative?) is substituted for a more difficult one (how probable is it?). And this, according to Kahneman, is the source of many of the biases that infect our thinking. System 1 jumps to an intuitive conclusion based on a "heuristic"—an easy but imperfect way of answering hard questions—and System 2 lazily endorses this heuristic answer without bothering to scrutinize whether it is logical.

Are we really so hopeless? Think again of the Linda problem. Even the great evolutionary biologist Stephen Jay Gould was troubled by it. As an expert in probability he knew the right answer, yet he wrote that "a little homunculus in my head continues to jump up and down, shouting at me, 'But she can't just be a bank teller; read the description.'" It was Gould's System 1, Kahneman assures us, that kept shouting the wrong answer at him. But perhaps something subtler is going on. Our everyday conversation takes place against a rich background of unstated expectations, what linguists call "implicatures." Such implicatures can seep into psychological experiments. Given the expectations that facilitate our conversation, it may have been quite reasonable for the participants in the experiment to take "Linda is a bank clerk" to imply that she was not, in addition, a feminist. If so, their answers weren't really fallacious.

The planning fallacy is "only one of the manifestations of a pervasive optimistic bias," Kahneman writes, which "may well be the most significant of the cognitive biases." Now, in one sense, a bias toward optimism is obviously bad, since it generates false beliefs, such as the belief that we are in control, and not the playthings of luck. But without this "illusion of control," would we even be able to get out of bed in the morning? Optimists are more psychologically resilient, have stronger immune systems, and live longer on average than their more reality-based counterparts. Moreover, as Kahneman notes, exaggerated optimism serves to protect both individuals and organizations from the paralyzing effects of another bias, "loss aversion," our tendency to fear losses more than we value gains. It was exaggerated optimism that John Maynard Keynes had in mind when he talked of the "animal spirits" that drive capitalism.

Even if we could rid ourselves of the biases and illusions identified in this book (and Kahneman, citing his own lack of progress in overcoming them, doubts that we can), it is by no means clear that this would make our lives go better. And that raises a fundamental question: What is the point of rationality? We are, after all, Darwinian survivors. Our everyday reasoning abilities have evolved to cope efficiently with a complex and dynamic environment. They are thus likely to be adaptive in this environment, even if they can be tripped up in the psychologist's somewhat artificial experiments. Where do the norms of rationality come from, if they are not an idealization of the way humans actually reason in their ordinary lives? As a species, we can no more be pervasively biased in our judgments than we can be pervasively ungrammatical in our use of language—or so critics of research like Kahneman and Tversky's contend.

Kahneman never grapples philosophically with the nature of rationality. He does, however, supply a fascinating account of what might be taken to be its goal: happiness. What does it mean to be happy? When Kahneman first took up this question, in the mid 1990s, most happiness research relied on asking

people how satisfied they were with their life as a whole. But such retrospective assessments depend on memory, which is notoriously unreliable. What if, instead, a person's actual experience of pleasure or pain could be sampled from moment to moment, and then summed up over time? Kahneman calls this "experienced" well-being, as opposed to the "remembered" well-being that researchers have relied upon. He found that these two measures of happiness diverge in surprising ways. What makes the "experiencing self" happy is not the same as what makes the "remembering self" happy.

Kahneman's conclusion, radical as it sounds, may not go far enough. There may be no experiencing self at all. Brain-scanning experiments by Rafael Malach and his colleagues at the Weizmann Institute in Israel, for instance, have shown that when subjects are absorbed in an experience, like watching the "The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly," the parts of the brain associated with self-consciousness are not merely quiet, they're actually shut down ("inhibited") by the rest of the brain. The self seems to simply disappear. Then who exactly is enjoying the film? And why should such egoless pleasures enter into the decision calculus of the remembering self?

Clearly, much remains to be done in hedonic psychology, but Kahneman's conceptual innovations have laid the foundation for many of the empirical findings he reports in this book. To name a handful, he finds that while French mothers spend less time with their children than American mothers, they enjoy it more; that headaches are hedonically harder on the poor; that women who live alone seem to enjoy the same level of well-being as women who live with a mate; and that a household income of about $75,000 in high-cost areas of the country is

sufficient to maximize happiness. Policy makers interested in lowering the misery index of society will find much to ponder here. By the time I got to the end of "Thinking, Fast and Slow," my skeptical frown had long since given way to a grin of intellectual satisfaction. Appraising the book by the peak-end rule, I overconfidently urge everyone to buy and read it. But for those who are merely interested in Kahneman's takeaway on the Malcolm Gladwell question, it is this: If you've had 10,000 hours of training in a predictable, rapid-feedback environment—chess, firefighting, anesthesiology—then blink. In all other cases, think.

New York Times columnist David Brooks recently declared that Kahneman and Tversky's work "will be remembered hundreds of years from now," and that it is "a crucial pivot point in the way we see ourselves."

A Culture of Learning: A Case Study in Learning and Professional Development

Few companies have gone through as much transformation as Hewlett-Packard Enterprise (HPE) over the last few years.

The company itself was born out of change. In 2015, Hewlett-Packard split into HP Inc. (HP) and Hewlett Packard Enterprise (HPE). Post separation, HP continued with its enterprise and consumer-focused PC and printing business, while HPE focused on solving the challenges of enterprise customers with technology solutions and services that spanned the evolving world of hybrid IT and the intelligent edge. Since launching in 2015, HPE has continued to transform, completing two divestitures, as well as eight acquisitions and cycles of program, process, and organizational reinvention. While these actions have created a welcomed return to growth, the continuous change has been disruptive, creating unease for employees-something the L&D team at HPE is acutely aware of.

"During times of significant change and uncertainty, we have to think about what we can do to better support our people, to take the right actions to create an environment that enables them to succeed, and to demonstrate through the right investments, that our people matter," HPE VP of Learning & Professional Development Adrian Stevens said. "We have to clearly communicate to our people, 'You are important to us.'"

To show that "investment in people," HPE enhanced learning offerings to include Lynda.com from LinkedIn Learning. An additional benefit was that it served the strategic business imperative of increasing innovation, leadership excellence, and the development of future skills across HPE."We had to pivot from a mindset of fix and turn around to one of growth and innovation," Stevens said. "Everyone was incredibly focused on getting work done and we needed to cultivate a desire and a thirst to seek out new ideas and knowledge to help us succeed."

One Year and One Million Videos Viewed
It worked. Since November 2017, HPE employees have watched more than 1 million Lynda.com videos, completed 20,000 courses, and consumed 67,000 hours of content. This has reflected the upskilling of employees at scale and helped set the foundations for a culture of learning at HPE. Importantly, feedback from employees has been overwhelmingly positive, as Lynda.com helps keep them engaged and supported.

For Stevens, HPE's investment in Lynda.com is part of a broader strategy to "democratize learning and create a recognized culture of learning. While the roots of HPE reach back some 80 years, we had to think once again like an agile startup. We wanted to provide inspiration to our people, cultivate a sense of purpose, and allow them to think about their future, to build their capabilities, create value and be valued. I believe we are well on our way."

The Top Reasons Why HPE Invested in Lynda.com
"Our past (learning) investments had been expensive and underutilized," Stevens said. "Our sole dependence on an LMS resulted in content being hard to find with curriculums quickly losing relevance and becoming dated." HPE partnered with Lynda.com as part of their learning ecosystem enhancement for the following reasons:

The variety and quality of content.
With 13,000+ courses, Lynda.com had the breadth and depth of content HPE needed. Today, Lynda courses are included in more than 100 different learning channels and paths that the company offers employees.

Ease-of-use.
With online courses split into short video segments, and courses clearly marked 'beginner,' 'intermediate,' and 'advanced,' Stevens and his team were assured that the right content would reach the right individuals. The HPE learning teams could focus on the big picture, take advantage of Lynda.com playlists, and avoid sweating the small stuff. Consequently, Lynda courses have been integrated into employee onboarding, professional development planning and management, and leadership training.

Brand familiarity.
"It turned out that a good number of HPE employees already had Lynda.com personal accounts," said Kevin Metsers, who is responsible for HPE's digital learning strategy and corporate university user experience in the L&D department. For those with personal accounts, "we were giving them their money back by offering Lynda through the company," he said. "They

already knew Lynda, and they already liked it. We actually heard reactions like, 'This is like a gift from HPE.'"

Data-driven learning.
The analytics Lynda provides gives Stevens and his team the ability to "understand what is working and where the demand for new knowledge and capabilities are" by seeing exactly what content learners at HPE are searching for and consuming.

How HPE Marketed Lynda.com and 'Accelerating U'
The results of this new offering were immediate. Four months after Lynda.com was launched, "our activation rates, video consumption, and the number of certifications achieved was on par with what had been possible across 12 months previously," Stevens said. "There had been a perception that no one had the time to learn or the appetite to learn, but our numbers told us a different story."

Stevens' response to the early success was to "ratchet up the marketing" of Lynda.com and to integrate it with HPE's learning experience platform (LXP), branded internally as "Accelerating U."

The team created and released a video filled with inspirational quotes, soaring music, and images of Earth from outer space to welcome HPE's people and people leaders to "the new Accelerating U." The messaging emphasized in-demand skills needed in the "idea economy", modernization of programs, personalization, collaboration and variability. HPE offers more than 180 different learning channels on its learning experience platform, utilizing content from Lynda.com across the majority of them.

Banners that went to 20 company locations around the world stressed the ease of use, the breadth and depth of the content, and the social features of the platform. "An interactive, social learning experience," the banners touted. "Create learning groups and share knowledge, best practices, and insight with colleagues."

After the first year of the new LXP and Lynda.com, Stevens put together an in-house committee with representatives from different divisions to create a "rolling thunder" marketing plan with a goal of fueling the emerging culture of learning and realizing even higher activation and return across investments like Lynda.com.

Eileen Flaherty is a learning program manager and was appointed to the marketing committee by Stevens. The first thing she did, Flaherty noted, was head straight to Lynda.com. "Now, I've done some marketing, but I thought the best thing would be to go to Lynda.com," Flaherty said. "I searched marketing strategy and found a great class. It got us organized and, on a path, to create a plan."

An Additional Bonus – A More Strategic L&D Team at HPE
While Lynda.com has helped engage and upskill thousands of employees at HPE, Stevens and his team are seeing an added benefit: it has helped lighten the "learning burden" for HR. Specifically, rather than spending the majority of their time working on designing, developing, and launching individual programs, Lynda.com empowers department heads to create and curate programs faster.

"We have close to 180 different learning channels, and 140 of those are business-led, not HR-led," he said. "The business understands they need to be involved, they are the consumers of the content and have the autonomy to directly influence the relevance and prioritization of content."

That means more business leaders and teams are prioritizing and helping to personalize learning. This has empowered the L&D team to focus on consulting with the business to help set them up to succeed, while remaining focused on the bigger picture of learning and its vital role in improving performance and helping HPE build momentum.

"We are adding more value to the company and are better able to focus our experience and capacity on the learning priorities that will help drive HPE's sustained growth into the future," Stevens said. "And that is what the right mix of partnership, innovation, and action is all about."

The analytics Lynda.com provides give the ability to "understand what is working and where the demand for new knowledge and capabilities are" by seeing exactly what content learners at HPE are searching for and consuming.
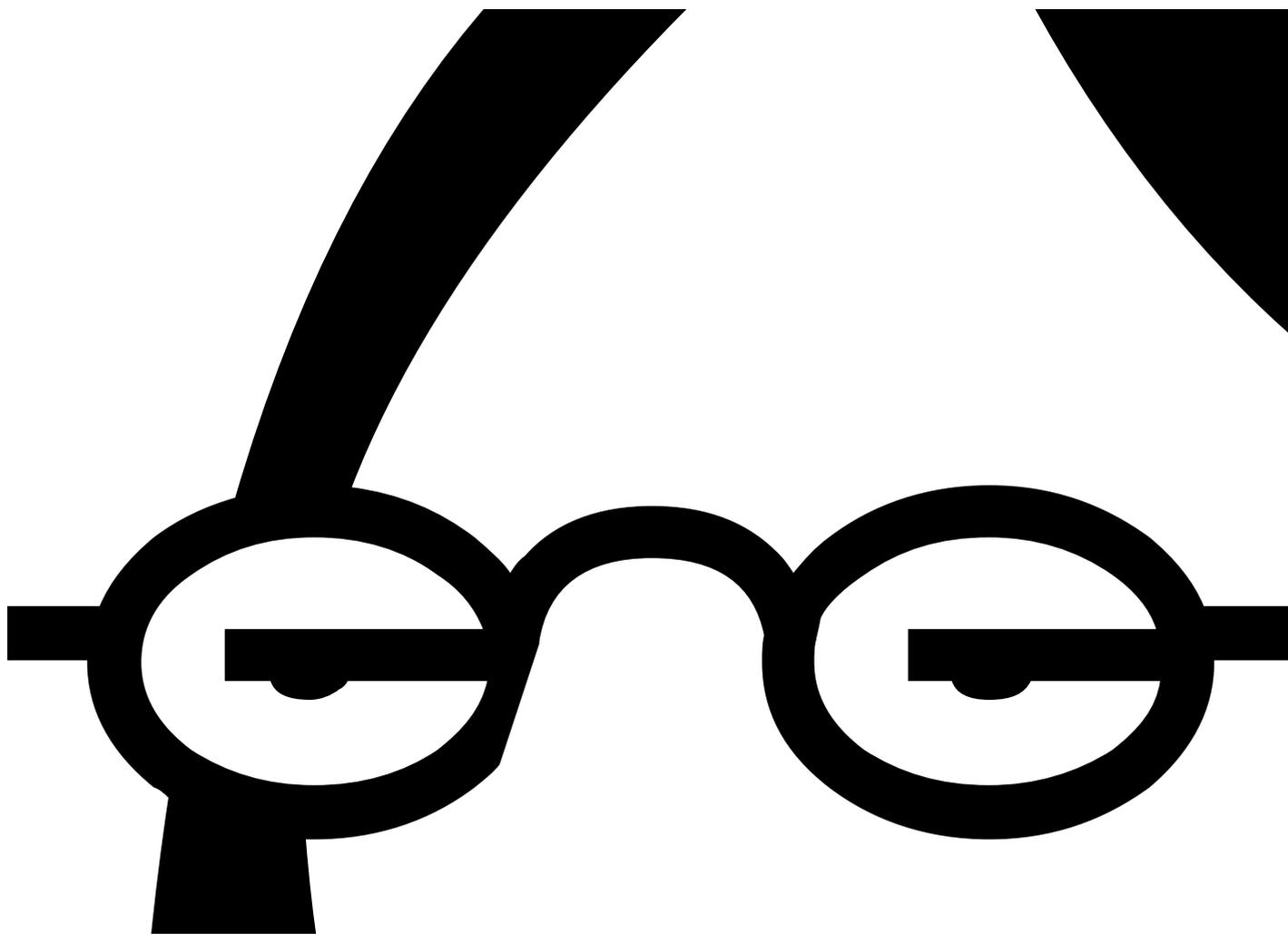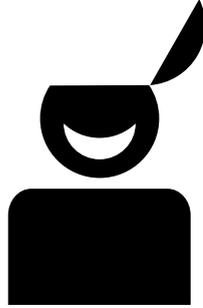
Benefits of Using Humor for Learning
by Connie Malamed

Having a sense of humor is described as the appreciation of things that are amusing. It is also the ability to make humorous comments or have humorous perceptions. You can recognize humor because it brings a smile, amusement, joy, or laughter to others. It can occur in verbal and nonverbal communications.

Humor and Laughter Have a Purpose

Humans are predisposed to humor. Babies as young as three months develop the capacity to appreciate humor, particularly from unexpected stimuli that occur in a safe setting (think peek-a-boo). Humor can also improve social influence by enhancing how much a person is liked. Psychologists point out that humor is often a coping mechanism to help us get through difficult situations.

As to its effects on instruction, appropriate humor can enhance a learning experience, but it must be used correctly so that it is not a distraction. In a classroom environment, positive humor can increase group cohesion. Laughter releases endorphins that promote bonding. Humor can also reduce tension, such as before a test or when the individuals in a group don't know each other.

What makes you laugh?

Although it may vary by country and culture, there seems to be some agreement that the things we find funny stem from incongruity and surprise. The person who is amused perceives an inconsistency between what he or she expects and what is delivered. This incongruity is the basis for a wide range of funny antics, including satire, parody, jokes, puns, and slapstick.

Benefits of Using Humor for Learning
The beneficial effects in formal instruction result from using humor in a positive way. Aggressive or disparaging humor is not effective. A review of the research demonstrates that the use of humor in formal instruction can potentially enhance learning. Below is a summary of benefits from a research review.

Creates a positive learning environment.
Humor elicits a positive effect in learners, which in turn creates a pleasant and enjoyable learning environment. This can reduce anxiety about studying difficult subjects. It can also make learners feel more comfortable communicating in an online or in-person class. Yet, humor that is used too frequently or inappropriately might cause learners to think that an important topic is trivial. Therefore, humor must be accompanied by good judgement.

Ensure the humor will not overshadow or distract from the instructional message and that it is appropriate for the target audience.

In his review of 40 years of humor research, Banas (2011) sums it up well, "The clearest findings regarding humor and education concern the use of humor to create a learning environment. The use of positive, nonaggressive humor has been associated with a more interesting and relaxed learning environment, higher instructor evaluations, greater perceived motivation to learn, and enjoyment of the course."

Increases attention and interest.
Humor has been shown to increase attention and interest. According to research by Berlyne (1972), anything that disrupts expectations or surprises a person, such as humor, can result in psychological arousal. This can transform an inattentive learner into a moderately attentive learner, which facilitates performance.

Improves instructor-student relationships.
Humor has the ability to reduce the psychological distance between an instructor and a learner. Aylor and Opplinger (2003) found that humor contributes to the sense that an instructor is approachable.The resulting increase in interactions leads to a more meaningful relationship.

Enhances recall and aids learning.
Adding humor to instruction has the potential to aid recall. For example, in lab experiments, learners were able to recall humorous information more easily than non-humorous information (Schmidt, 2002). Also, lectures that had a humor treatment increased test scores compared to those without a humor treatment (Ziv, 1988).

In the latter experiments, Ziv used these criteria:
• Humor was relevant to the lessons
• There were three or four jokes per lesson
• Tests contained questions about the topics
  humorously presented
• Concepts were first taught with no humor but illustrated
  with a joke. Then, the concepts were paraphrased at the
  end without humor.

Increases divergent thinking skills.
This fascinating finding relates to the potential for humor
to enhance creativity. During the creative process, we use
divergent thinking to produce a variety of unique responses
that may seem illogical, adventurous, or incompatible.

In two studies by Ziv (1983), the use of humor (reading
cartoons and watching humorous films) resulted in enhanced
divergent thinking. He theorized this was due to the fact that
humor creates a fun mood and environment, which encourages
unusual responses. Also, by viewing humorous materials, study
subjects were more likely to model "humorous logic." Finally,
participants were explicitly instructed to use humor, which may
have triggered original thinking.

Guidance for Using Humor in Instruction
Ensure that your humor will be correctly understood by the
audience. According to the instructional humor processing
theory (IHPT), learners need to perceive and then resolve the
incongruity in a humorous instructional message. If the humor
is understood, it increases attention. If the learner cannot
resolve the incongruity, he or she may experience confusion
instead of humor (Wanzer et al., 2010). Confusion is not an
optimal state for learning.

Consider the placement of humor.
Some researchers believe that the placement of humor has a
significant impact on learning. Contiguous humor is not tightly
tied to the content of the instructional message. An example
is the use of a humorous theme or context that occurs before
and at the end of an eLearning lesson. Conversely, integrated
humor is embedded in instructional lessons or activities.
If content recall is a goal, there is evidence to support the use
of contiguous humor over integrated. Use humor for increased
interest and motivation at the start and end, but avoid its use
for key instructional points. It is possible that humor could
interfere with processing instructional content. Note that
most of the research was done in educational rather than
workplace settings.

*Reflect on how using humor can help to achieve the
instructional goal.*
As with all design strategies, think through the purpose of
using humor for your learning experience. Determine the type
you will use: satire, irony, farce, jokes, etc. Ensure the humor
will not overshadow or distract from the instructional message
and that it is appropriate for the target audience.

Humor can also improve social influence by enhancing how much a person is liked.

Metacognition And Learning: Strategies For Instructional Design

by Connie Malamed

Do you know how to learn? Many people don't. Specifically, they don't know how to look inward to examine how they learn and to judge which methods are effective.
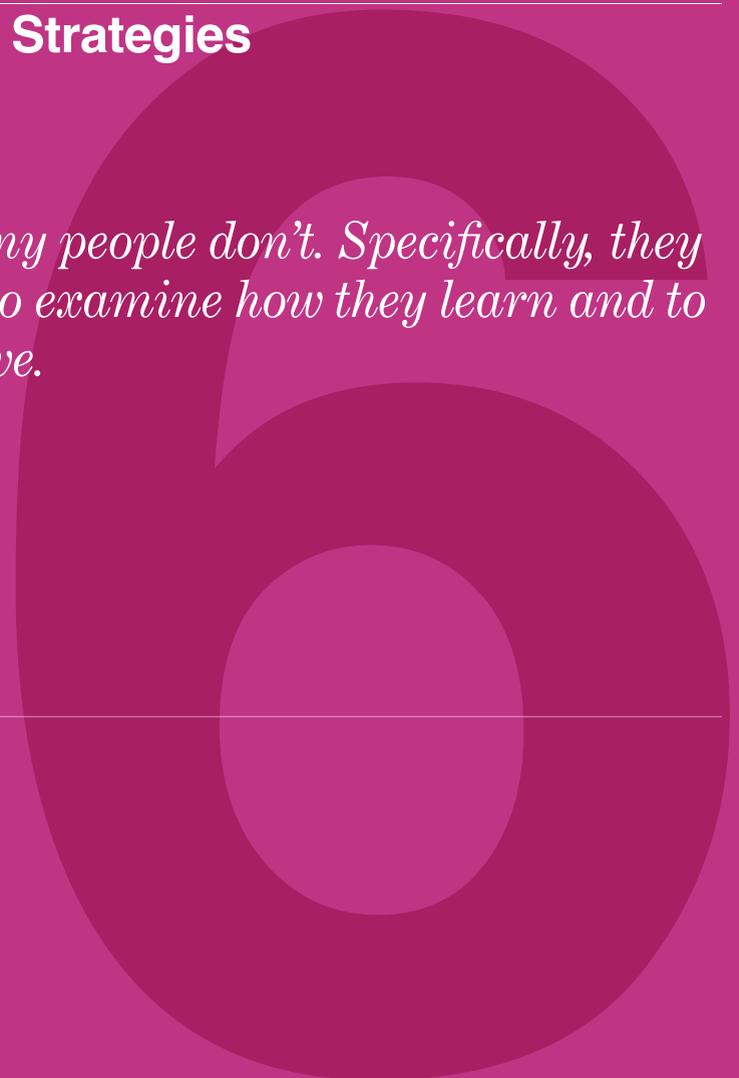
Improved metacognition can facilitate both formal and informal learning. It can improve the performance of new tasks on the job and help teams problem solve more effectively.

Let's start at the beginning. Here are some things learning professionals should know about metacognition. Metacognition is often referred to as "thinking about thinking," but that's just a quick definition. Metacognition is a regulatory system that helps a person understand and control his or her own cognitive performance.

Metacognition allows people to take charge of their own learning. It involves awareness of how they learn, an evaluation of their learning needs, generating strategies to meet these needs, and then implementing the strategies. (Hacker, 2009)

Learners often show an increase in self-confidence when they build metacognitive skills. Self-efficacy improves motivation as well as learning success.

Metacognitive skills are generally learned during a later stage of development. Metacognitive strategies can often (but not always) be recognized and stated by the individual who is using them.

For all age groups, metacognitive knowledge is crucial for efficient independent learning because it fosters forethought and self-reflection.

The Two Processes of Metacognition
Many theorists organize the skills of metacognition into two complementary processes that make it easier to understand

and remember. According to theory, metacognition consists of (1) the knowledge of cognition, and (2) the regulation of cognition.

Knowledge of cognition has three components: knowledge of the factors that influence one's own performance; knowing different types of strategies to use for learning; knowing what strategy to use for a specific learning situation.
Regulation of cognition involves setting goals and planning; monitoring and controlling learning, and evaluating one's own regulation (assessing results and strategies used).

Metacognition and Expertise
Many experts cannot explain the skills they use to elicit expert performance. This is considered tacit knowledge. (See Strategies for Tacit Knowledge Transfer.)

Metacognitive strategies often separate an expert from a novice. For example, experts are able to plan effectively on a global level at the start of a task, whereas a novice won't see the big picture.

Some adults with expertise in one domain can transfer their metacognitive skills to learn more rapidly in another domain. On the other hand, some adults do not spontaneously transfer metacognitive skills to new settings and thus, will need help doing so.

Examples of Metacognition Skills You May Use
Successful learners typically use metacognitive strategies whenever they learn, but they may fail to use the best strategy for each type of learning situation. Here are some metacognitive strategies that will sound familiar to you:

1. Know the limits of your own memory for a particular task and create a means of external support.
2. Self-monitor your learning strategy, such as concept mapping, and then adapt the strategy if it isn't effective.
3. Notice whether you comprehend something you just read and then modify your approach if you did not comprehend it.
4. Choose to skim subheadings of unimportant information to get to the information you need.
5. Repeatedly rehearse a skill in order to gain proficiency.
6. Periodically do self-tests to see how well you learned something.

Metacognitive Strategies
Metacognitive strategies facilitate learning how to learn. You can incorporate these, as appropriate, into eLearning courses, social learning experiences, pre- and post-training activities, and other formal or informal learning experiences.

1. Ask Questions. During formal courses and in post-training activities, ask questions that allow learners to reflect on their own learning processes and strategies. In collaborative learning, ask them to reflect on the role they play when problem solving in teams.

2. Foster Self-reflection. Emphasize the importance of personal reflection during and after learning experiences. Encourage learners to critically analyze their own assumptions and how this may have influenced their learning.

3. Encourage Self-questioning. Foster independent learning by asking learners to generate their own questions and answer them to enhance comprehension. The questions can be related to meeting their personal goals.

4. Teach Strategies Directly. Teach appropriate metacognitive strategies as part of a training course.

5. Promote Autonomous Learning. When learners have some domain knowledge, encourage participation in challenging learning experiences. They will then be forced to construct their own metacognitive strategies.

6. Provide Access to Mentors. Many people learn best by interacting with peers who are slightly more advanced. Promote experiences where novices can observe the proficient use of a skill and then gain access to the metacognitive strategies of their mentors.

7. Solve Problems with a Team. Cooperative problem solving can enhance metacognitive strategies by discussing possible approaches with team members and learning from each other.

8. Think Aloud. Teach learners how to think aloud and report their thoughts while performing a difficult task. A knowledgeable partner can then point out errors in thinking, or the individual can use this approach for increased self-awareness during learning. Another approach to thinking aloud is the working out loud approach. Listen to this interview with Jane Bozarth about working out loud.

9. Self-explanation. Self-explanation in writing or speaking can help learners improve their comprehension of a difficult subject.

10. Provide Opportunities for Making Errors. When learners are given the opportunity to make errors while in training, such as during simulations, it stimulates reflection on the causes of their errors.

In summary, metacognition is a set of skills that enable learners to become aware of how they learn and to evaluate and adapt these skills to become increasingly effective at learning. In a world that demands lifelong learning, providing people with new and improved metacognitive strategies is a gift that can last forever.

Metacognitive strategies often separate an expert from a novice.

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Who's Taking Nondegree Courses – and Why?
By Mark Lieberman Iside Digital Learning

Alternative credentials pose an increasing threat to the supremacy of the traditional degree as the key that unlocks a career path. But available options and student preferences haven't solidified, and they're evolving so quickly that it can be difficult to keep track of the increasingly convoluted market.

Alternative credentials pose an increasing threat to the supremacy of the traditional degree as the key that unlocks a career path. But available options and student preferences haven't solidified, and they're evolving so quickly that it can be difficult to keep track of the increasingly convoluted market.

A new report published last month by two researchers from Columbia University's Teachers College aims to ground discussions of the nondegree landscape in numbers rather than the speculation and hyperbole that often surrounds it.

Fiona Hollands, associate director and senior researcher at the college's Center for Benefit-Cost Studies of Education, and Aasiya Kazi, the center's program coordinator and researcher, concentrated their research on collections of massive open online courses packaged into specializations and micromasters programs. More than 3,000 students surveyed last spring were enrolled in six specialization programs offered on the Coursera platform and four micromasters programs on the edX platform between February 2017 and August 2018.

Specialization programs generally cost students between $39 and $79 per month, offering a certificate at the end of completion after a few months, but no academic credit toward a further degree. Micromasters programs on average cost between $900 and $1,000, culminating in the option of a credential that also serves as a ticket to apply for a full master's degree, either at the student's home institution or a different one. Free versions of the courses are also available. Results on student demographics, motivations, and preferences offer a look at the types of students who enroll in nondegree courses and hint at the potential for these offerings to play a

vital role in improving Americans' career prospects. Close to 80 percent of respondents reported already having an undergraduate degree, and 40 percent also had a master's degree. Only 16 percent of enrolled students had no prior degree, suggesting that massive open online courses appeal mainly to students with prior academic credentials-perhaps those looking to acquire new skills or advance their careers in new directions.

Sean Gallagher, executive director of Northeastern University's Center for the Future of Higher Education and Talent Strategy, and a close observer of the MOOC landscape, said the report bolsters his burgeoning theory that this market mainly appeals to students as a vessel for lifelong learning. "It's just more confirmation of the disconnect between a lot of the rhetoric that these alternative credentials are an alternative to college in that they might replace college degrees and diplomas," Gallagher said.

The report's findings around motivation lend credence to those theories. From a provided list of possible benefits, surveyed students most frequently indicated they're looking to improve performance in their current job. Other oft-cited motivations included needing help to start a new business, seeking new knowledge, and wanting to improve applications for new jobs.

The report shows that students enroll in MOOCs hoping that the substance of the courses will make them better at their jobs, and not purely as a resume item that could lead to a promotion or a new job, "which takes perhaps more investment in something like a degree," Gallagher said.

Only 30 percent of the micromasters students, and 40 percent of the specialization students, said they planned to earn the alternative credential at the end of the course or program. One quarter of respondents said they would enroll in all of the courses in the series without earning the credential. Students in these programs on average tend to be in their mid-30s, though the survey respondents included at least one specialization student who identified as eight years old, and one micromasters student who was 83. Nearly half of specializations students were white, a much larger share than in the micromasters program, wherein only 30 percent of surveyed students identified as white. Students in both programs hailed from more than 100 countries.

Slightly more than half of the surveyed students were paying for the courses themselves, while 21 percent were enrolled in free versions. Seven percent of learners received financial aid from either Coursera or edX, and five percent of students had half or all of the course fees paid for by their employer. A vast majority of surveyed students (more than 80 percent) said they gave up leisure time to work on courses, while the remainder said the courses ate up time that would otherwise be reserved for paid work, studying, and family care. Nina Huntemann, senior director of academics and research at edX, told Inside Digital Learning that the report reinforces the company's plan to provide "modular, flexible credentials that provide career advancement." "What is encouraging from this report is that students are finding educational opportunities that are relevant to their current careers or desired career trajectory," Huntsman said in an email.

Inside Digital Learning also reached out to Coursera for comment, but they declined to comment because they weren't involved in the report.

Hollands and Kazi plan to continue their research with a follow-up survey upon students' completion of the credential program, and then another survey a year later to assess job performance. At the time of publication, most students hadn't yet responded to the post-completion survey, either because they hadn't yet finished the cycle of courses, or because they had no plans to do so.

Gallagher believes future reports could shed more light on the stackability of credentials into degrees, a phenomenon that only started taking off after the initial round of surveys began. "These microcredentials that stack into degrees are slowly beginning to remake the online degree market," he said. "A lot of these motivations-certainly the [return on investment] and the outcomes that students have-could potentially shift."

Most students enrolled in nondegree online programs already have degrees, and a minority actually want acredential, new data shows.

The Cognitive Advantages of Growing Older
By Alison Gopnik

If, like me, you're on the wrong side of sixty, you've probably noticed those increasingly frequent and sinister "senior moments." What was I looking for when I came into the kitchen? Did I already take out the trash? What's old what's-his-name's name again?

One possible reaction to aging is resignation: you're just past your expiration date. You may have heard that centuries ago the average life expectancy was only around 40 years. So, you might think that modern medicine and nutrition are keeping us going past our evolutionary limit. No wonder the machine starts to break down.

In fact, recent research suggests a very different picture. The shorter average life expectancy of the past mainly reflects the fact that many more children died young. If you made it past childhood, however, you might well live into your 60s or beyond. In today's hunter-gatherer cultures, whose way of life is closer to that of our prehistoric ancestors, it's fairly common for people to live into their 70s. That is in striking contrast to our closest primate relatives, chimpanzees, who very rarely live past their 50s.

There seem to be uniquely human genetic adaptations that keep us going into old age and help to guard against cognitive decline. This suggests that the later decades of our lives are there for a reason. Human beings are uniquely cultural animals; we crucially depend on the discoveries of earlier generations. Older people are well-suited to passing on their accumulated knowledge and wisdom to the next generation.

Michael Gurven, an anthropologist at the University of California, Santa Barbara, and his colleagues, have been studying aging among the Tsimane, a group in the Bolivian Amazon. The Tsimane live in a way that is more like the way we all lived in the past, through hunting, gathering, and small-scale farming of local foods, with relatively little schooling or contact with markets and cities. Many Tsimane are in their 60s or 70s, and some even make it to their 80s. In a 2017 paper in the journal, Developmental Psychology, Prof. Gurven and colleagues gave over 900 Tsimane people a battery of cognitive tasks. Older members of the group had a lot of trouble doing things like remembering a list of new words, but the researchers also asked their subjects to quickly name as many different kinds of fish or plants as they could. This ability knowledge improves up to middle age, and then declines much more slowly, if at all.

So when I forget what happened yesterday but can tell my grandchildren and students vivid stories about what happened 40 years ago, I may not be falling apart after all. Instead, I may be doing just what evolution intended.

The later decades of our lives are there for a good evolutionary reason.

Higher Education Needs New Models
By Matthew S. Holland, Inside Higher Education

Over the last few years, we've heard much discussion about the disenfranchisement of the working class and our nation's failure to educate them. The lack of skilled workers is starting to have widespread repercussions. According to a recent survey by Manpower, 46 percent of U.S. employers are struggling to fill job vacancies, and for the seventh consecutive year, employers report that skilled trade vacancies are the hardest to fill. At the same time, many people in the middle class are finding it hard to afford the cost of higher education, leaving behind more and more people who wish to earn a degree but cannot handle the financial burden.
Fortunately, a spirit of reform is in the air when it comes to higher education in general, and vocational education in particular. Lawmakers and higher education professionals are looking for ways to address declining enrollment numbers and skyrocketing tuition, as well as to repair the knowledge gap in today's work force.

For example, in spring of 2018, a group of university system presidents, chancellors, journalists, and others working in higher education gathered at Utah Valley University to discuss alternative models to the traditional four-year institution, which many believe, while still enormously relevant, needs to explore new pathways for students.

Articulation agreements, dual admissions, and co-located degrees are some of the methods higher education has been exploring lately. In Utah, three universities-including Utah Valley, where I previously served as president-use a "dual-mission" model of higher education. That model combines under one roof the advanced training of a teaching university with the openness and vocational programs of a community

college. All three institutions began as vocational schools and gradually expanded into universities while retaining their community college and open-admissions roots. Weber State University pioneered this approach in 1991. UVU followed suit in 2008 and is now the largest public university in the state, with an enrollment of nearly 40,000 students.

Similar models have been cropping up across the country. One manifestation is merging universities with community colleges. Georgia, for example, has been combining some of its universities and community colleges, and Wisconsin began doing the same this fall. Both states saw the need to consolidate in this way when enrollment at rural community colleges started dropping as the population in those areas shrank.

Other states are developing dual-mission institutions through expansion rather than consolidation. Community colleges across the country have added select bachelor's degrees to their programs to answer local industry needs, as well as to provide an easier path for students to obtain a higher degree. Florida was one of the first to begin taking this approach. Some two-year-degree institutions are establishing formal collaborations with four-year ones. Pulaski Technical College, a technical school in north Little Rock, AK that offers classes in construction, collision repair, nursing and other subjects, has struggled with low graduation rates. Recently, it partnered with the University of Arkansas Little Rock to give students better opportunities by allowing them to transition more seamlessly to a baccalaureate program after obtaining a two-year degree. Graduation rates are improving, said Pulaski chancellor Margaret Ellibee, a hopeful sign for the region.

We must provide better and more affordable opportunities for more people, writes Matthew S. Holland, citing a "dual-mission" approach as one example.

Many of these models can help universities save costs and keep tuition low by sharing staff, faculty members, and infrastructure. Meanwhile, the dual-mission model-or "dual function," as Georgia calls it-gives students who start on a vocational or community college track the certificate or two-year degree they desire. It also allows them to continue toward an advanced degree much more smoothly and efficiently than if they were to transfer to a different institution.

This model can also help two-year colleges in rural areas keep young people in their communities by giving them options beyond an associate degree that don't require moving to an urban area. As many of those rural colleges have found, when two-year graduates transfer to a larger university in a more metropolitan area, they are less likely to come back and build a life in the community. This has been the case with Red Deer College in Alberta, Canada, where many of its graduates moved on to obtain degrees in bigger cities like Calgary and

Edmonton and didn't return. As a result, the college recently received approval to begin adding four-year degrees to its program, while retaining its mandate to provide vocational training and two-year degrees.

At the heart of all of these models is the idea that more options in higher education should be available to more people. At the recent gathering on dual-mission institutions, Raymond Cross, president of the University of Wisconsin System, said that one reason the system's 13 community colleges are merging with seven of its four-year universities, is that the state needs to retain access and expand opportunity, particularly as the population in its rural areas declines. "If we leave these communities, they'll fold up and be gone," he warned. Steve Wrigley, chancellor of the University System of Georgia, said that since his state began combining some of its community colleges and universities, students have gotten access to more degrees and are being served better. One college once offered only four bachelor degrees, he said. After the consolidation, that institution now provides 22.
The dual-mission model is not for every institution, and it is not without its challenges.

However, the benefits go beyond even cost and quality preparation options for life and career. Incorporating a community college operation within a university environment also gives students who are less academically-oriented a greater sense of worldliness and self-assurance, while building practical skills and career readiness for those on an academic four-year path.

At the same time, it fosters robust social and academic interaction between both groups. As the nation and the world see more and more polarization between elites and the working class, the significance of this intangible benefit is hard to overstate.


Traditional approaches that strictly separate the functions of a community college and university still have their place, but the evidence already shows that those models alone are insufficient for our times.

50 Dual Enrolled Students Earn a Career Strategist Digital Badge at Cuesta College!
Santa Barbara City College's Career Skills Institute is on the road to delivering a unique one-day career workshop to college students in the South Coast region.
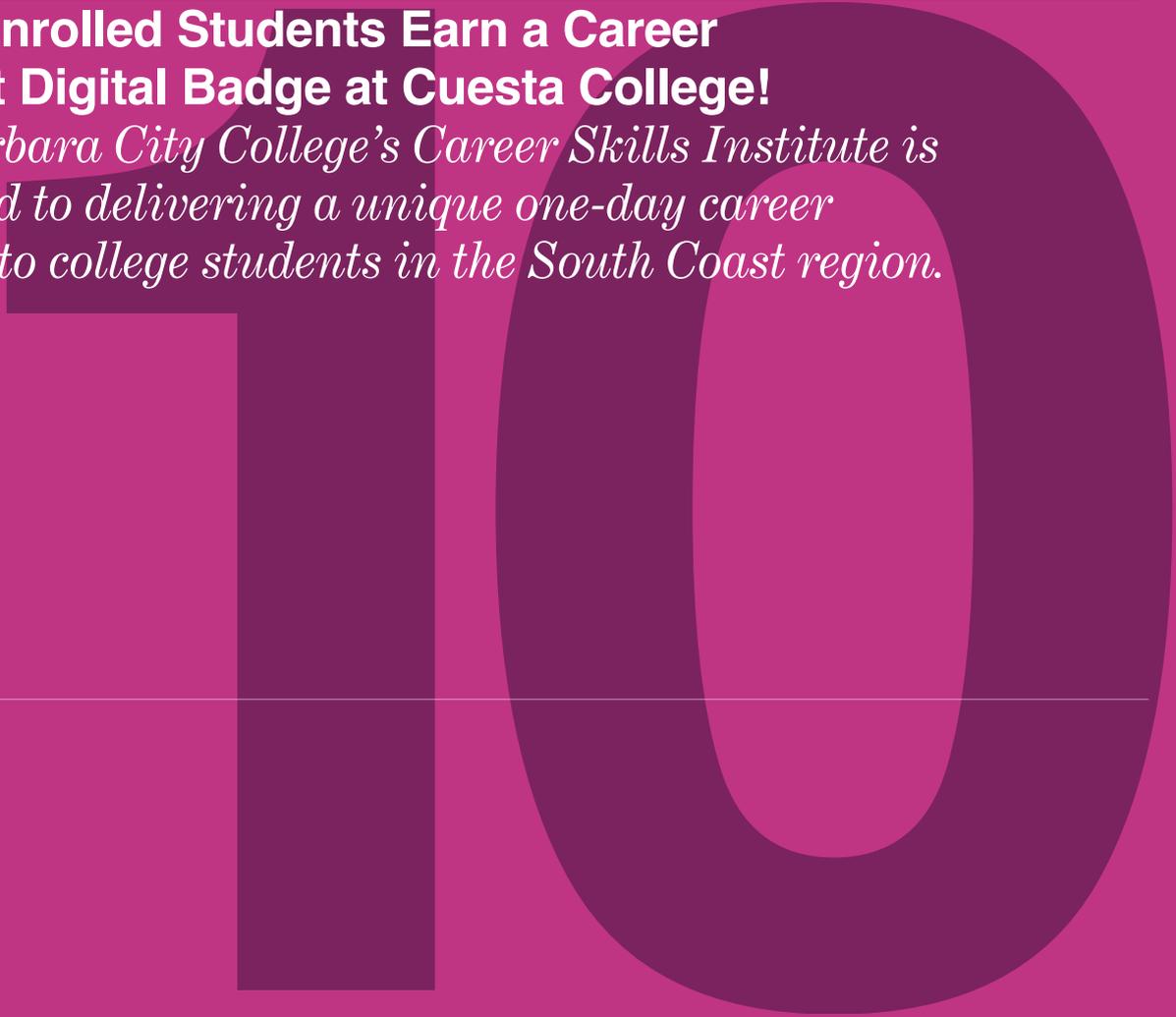
Santa Barbara City College's Career Skills Institute (CSI) is on the road to delivering a unique one-day career workshop to college students in the South Coast region. For the past several months, SBCC has facilitated career workshops in the region to serve students and provide training on three key areas: career planning, strategic job search, and the benefits of LinkedIn. The goals of this project are to promote digital badging, to offer a single, universal and relevant badge to the region, and, most importantly, help guide students through the career planning process.

One of the objectives of this project is that each Career Technical Education (CTE) community college student will create a LinkedIn profile that is connected to their college webpage while they are still a student. This way, a college can continue to track a student's employment after the student has graduated. To prepare the students for the workforce, they receive a targeted one-day training on a strategic job search, how Lynda.com integrates with this process, and the necessary steps to create a professional LinkedIn profile. In addition, students who complete the workshop will receive a one-year subscription to Lynda.com, along with a South Central Coast-branded Career Strategist digital badge.

While SBCC is producing these one-day workshops at community colleges within its region, the long-term goal is for each of the colleges to have their own state-approved, noncredit curriculum focused on preparing students for a successful job and career search process. To that end, SBCC shared its curriculum with the region for the Career Strategist certificate and badge. In addition, should community colleges want to emulate the model set forth by SBCC's Career Skills

Institute (CSI), whereby a student can earn both a noncredit certificate of completion and a digital badge for their LinkedIn profile, each college will receive a digital badge starter kit from the same company that SBCC currently uses. Nearly 420 digital badges have been issued by CSI since its inception in Fall, 2015.

The first one-day Career Strategist workshop at Cuesta College in San Luis Obispo was attended by 50 dual enrollment high school students. The day kicked off with a general session on Career Planning and was followed by smaller break-out sessions on Strategic Job Search and LinkedIn. During the Strategic Job Search breakout, students learned about transferable skills and how the soft and hard skills acquired in current extracurricular activities could help them find a job. After re-framing their activities as job experience, students paired off for invaluable mock interviews.

During the LinkedIn breakout, students became animated once they learned that LinkedIn's mission is to provide their users with economic advancement opportunities, while Lynda.com's mission is to help you learn the skills you need to achieve your full potential. In addition, once students understood the social media piece of LinkedIn and how they could start investing in their professional online presence now, students commented that they would spend less time on other social media platforms and create more time for LinkedIn. By the end of the session, each student had created a LinkedIn profile and was starting to create professional network connections.

The day culminated in mock interviews where three adults interviewed one student at a time for five minutes. The student started by providing each of the interviewers with a copy of their resume and then were asked five to six questions during the allotted time frame. Each student then walked away with an interview score sheet filled out by each interviewer, along with verbal resume and interview tips. SBCC has received numerous thank you emails from the dual enrollment high school teachers saying how useful the day was and how excited everyone (teachers included) is to enhance their LinkedIn profile and connections. Teachers also expressed that the workshop would help them better integrate aspects of career search into their own curriculum.

SBCC has three more of these workshops planned for Spring 2019 (College of the Canyons, Ventura College and Moorpark College).

For more information on this project, or digital badges, please contact: Lee Yarborough, SynED Project Manager at lyarborough@syned.org
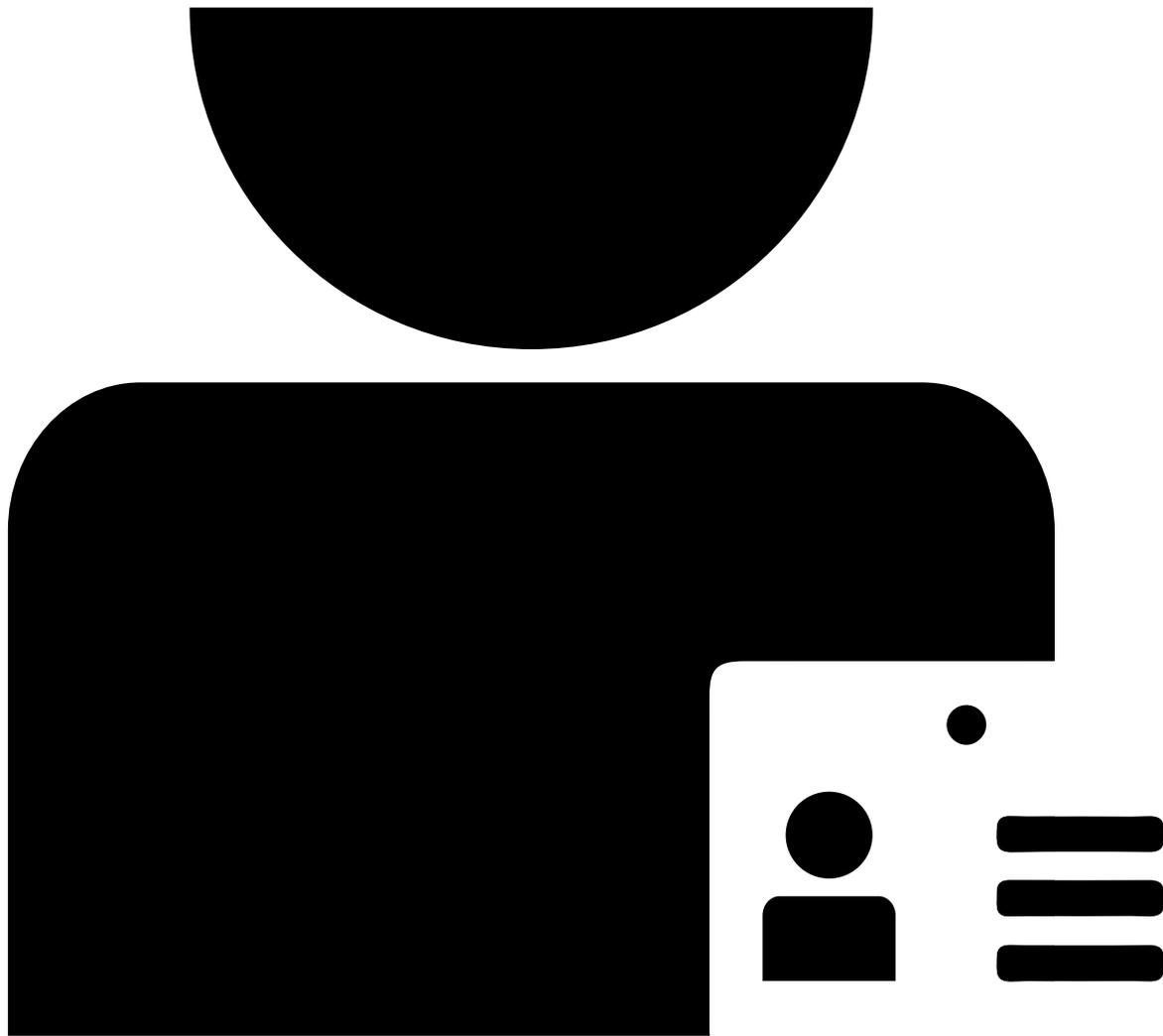
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