

3 Predictions for Self-Guided Learning in 2022

Self-guided learning is on the rise as more learners and learning professionals alike become comfortable in a digital world. Whereas before the coronavirus pandemic disrupted the workforce only office workers had access to reliable internet and smart devices, now almost every employee is equipped with technology to make remote, touchless communication possible. On top of that, more people than ever are comfortable working from home, even if that is only for a portion of their weekly work hours.

Because more learners have access to devices and internet connections, and because more corporate L&D teams have been forced to deliver training outside of face-to-face classrooms, self guided learning is becoming more popular. Across soft skills and hard skill training, internal learning populations and external licensed content, self directed learning is a rising channel in L&D practitioners' toolkits. With that in mind, here are our three predictions for how self directed learning will change in 2022.

Prediction #1: Even Learners are Going to Know What Self Guided Learning Means

A few years ago, the average learning practitioner might not have been able to define self guided learning, much less the average learner. Now, though you might get multiple self guided learning definitions from different people, they are all going to verge towards the same concept:

What is self-guided learning?

Self-guided learning is a delivery method that allows the learner to set their own pace and/or choose their own content.

Learners are more accustomed to self directed learning than ever because of the major disruptions to work environments - and their lasting impacts - since 2020. For corporate office workers, their routines changed drastically from commuting into the office to work between regular hours. Now, they are accustomed to working from home, getting work done on more flexible schedules, and exchanging ideas digitally.

For employees like retail associates, restaurant workers, or frontline healthcare professionals, their routines may not have changed as much, but the technology enabling it did. [As JD Dillon shares in this article], employers needed better ways to communicate with this population of employees, and they also needed to enable those employees to interact with customers remotely or without touch. That means those employees are more comfortable with devices - and have more access to devices with internet - than ever.

That access to devices addresses one of the disadvantages of self guided learning, which is ensuring that everyone has equal access to L&D resources.

The proof is in the pudding: more employees are asking to be self directed learners. Cornerstone LMS peeled back the curtain on some internal data to share that at BNP Paribas, self-requested training increased by 235% between 2019 and 2020. Clearly, the benefits of self guided learning are so obvious that learners themselves are speaking up and asking for it. That's why no matter who you ask, they'll be able to answer the question: "what is self-guided learning, anyway?"



Self-guided learning is a delivery method that allows the learner to set their own pace and/or choose their own content. Clearly, the benefits of self guided learning are so obvious that learners themselves are speaking up and asking for it.

Prediction #2: L&D Teams are Going to Invest in Content Curation

One key aspect of self-directed learning is that learning is no longer facilitated in one place at one time by one person. Instead, L&D professionals offer an array of resources - such as virtual synchronous sessions, elearning modules, and podcasts - for learners to venture through at their own pace and on their own time.

That means that L&D teams are going to need to invest in people and technology that are good at indexing, categorizing, and linking content to make it easy for a self directed learner to find it at any given time.

The good news is there is more technology than ever supporting self-guided learning. That includes learning libraries like Coursera or LinkedIn Learning, which offer fully deployed courses. There are also microlearning platforms that allow learners to set their own schedule for receiving and completing learning check-ins. Video and audio hosting is easier than ever. Content libraries like LMS platforms or secure external digital delivery apps like Mimeo Digital make it easy for learners to access content on their own time and on any device.

However, that technology is only useful if learners know how to find the content they need - and if your system is smart enough to recommend the right content at the right time. While budding artificial intelligence technology will help with this, L&D teams need to make sure there is a self learning guide available to shepherd learners through all their amazing content.

mimeo

L&D professionals offer an array of resources for learners to venture through at their own pace and on their own time.

Prediction #3: Instructional Design is Going to Focus More on Supplemental Materials

Traditionally, instructional designers focused on crafting multi-day workshops or contemplating the best framing for elearning modules. As self-guided learning grows in popularity, instructional design will have more freedom to deliver the right content in the right format, rather than being forced to optimize any given format. However, that also means content will need to be delivered across multiple formats to make sure self directed learners achieve the learning objectives, no matter which adventure they choose.

That means instructional design will shift to ensuring that for each learning objective, there is content delivered in multiple formats, including videos, podcasts, interactive elearning modules, augmented or virtual reality, and also more tried-and-true materials like reference course books, and printed worksheets. With that, instructional design principles that have traditionally been applied to elearning modules or classroom activities will extend to making sure each piece of content - even training handouts - drive successful learning outcomes. (Check out our complimentary webinar with Brian Washburn on achieving better training with improved handouts.)

Now that more employees than ever have access to devices and wifi, learning and development teams are seeing an increase in demand for training that learners can consume on their own schedules, at their own paces. For L&D professionals, this is a great challenge to change focus from delivering training in-person to curating effective content. If you're looking for help administering printed training materials or sending secure licensed content to clients, Mimeo can help! Reach out to schedule a call with one of our experts.

As self-guided learning grows in popularity, instructional design will have more freedom to deliver the right content in the right format, rather than being forced to optimize any given format. However, that also means content will need to be delivered across multiple formats to make sure self directed learners achieve the learning objectives, no matter which adventure they choose.