How authenticity improves employee learning

For upskilling employees, authentic learning experiences offer great value – and great results. An authentic learning experience is one where the learner practices a skill by doing real tasks in the real environment where the skill is needed.1

It’s efficient

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<th>Classroom-based training</th>
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<tr>
<td>Learn by studying concepts and rules</td>
<td>Learn by solving problems complete a task</td>
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Use new skills to improve work

It’s hard to transfer knowledge from a classroom environment to the real world.2 Authentic learning addresses this transfer problem by closing the gap between the learning environment and the real one.

After 7 months of authentic learning, a group of doctors-in-training was able to give more accurate explanations for medical problems than a group that received traditional instruction.6


It’s value for money

Authentic learning means employees can be completing useful projects for the company at the same time as improving their skills. Most real-world workplace projects:

- are complex
- have many possible solutions
- require working with others

Studies have shown that learning by tackling problems with these same qualities improves knowledge transfer.3 This problem-based learning is an important element of authentic learning.


It produces highly skilled and engaged employees

With authentic learning, learners can easily tell how the knowledge they’re learning is relevant to their real life. Studies show that when this is the case, learners:

- become more engaged and motivated to learn
- learn more and better4

4. Eccles et al., 1983; Eccles & Wigfield, 2020; Hulleman & Harackiewicz; Wigfield, Rosenzweig & Eccles, 2017

1. Herrington et al., 2003; Jonassen, 1991