



Learning Updates from COLLABORATIVE Members August 26, 2021

Elliott Masie and Brooke Thomas-Record have interviewed senior leaders from over 70 Learning COLLABORATIVE organizations in the past few months. Our conversations have focused on changes, shifts, and key issues/opportunities their learning organizations are facing.

We then polled the COLLABORATIVE to rank order the topics that emerged from those conversations in terms of member interest. For each one, we are providing a range of examples, approaches, and challenges reported by COLLABORATIVE organizations.

Elliott Masie's views of shifts and disruptions follow each topic's summary of examples and member perspectives.

Thanks to our Learning COLLABORATIVE members for your time and sharing!

Hybrid – Work & Learning

Examples of comments from member organizations about Hybrid Work and Learning:

- Pro-Hybrid Learning: We will experiment with hybrid learning (some people in the classroom and some people remote) because our learning team is highly skilled and loves change and experimenting with new things.
- Anti-Hybrid Learning: There are no plans for hybrid training because it won't be a great experience for either the in-person or remote groups.
- Hybrid vs. Blended: "Hybrid" is sometimes being used as a synonym for "blended".
- Remote Teams: Learning teams were either full- or part-time remote pre-pandemic and will remain so now. Hybrid has not been a huge shift for these team and individual work styles.
- In-Person Collaboration: We only come into the office for collaboration and all other work is done remotely.

Spectrum of Member Perspectives: The word "hybrid" is being used in two very different ways in the learning field.

- "Hybrid Work" refers to different blends of working from home and working in the office. The term hybrid work may apply to all employees who work just a few days in the office and the rest of the time at home, while in other organizations it reflects a percentage of people continuing to work from home full time, with a percentage back at the office full time.

- “Hybrid Learning” refers to the mixing of learning formats to allow face-to-face and virtual sessions to occur either simultaneously or in a blended way.

Most member organizations are *not* willing to try hybrid learning (when defined as some learners in person while others are simultaneously remote) because they don’t believe they can create an equally consistent and valuable experience. They will largely continue with virtual learning. Although many companies had plans to bring back more and more staff to the office (many in the mid-September timeframe), the surge in COVID cases is causing many of those plans to change. Even if some employees are in the office some of the time, most organizations are holding off making plans for in-person learning, mainly due to budget cuts, COVID concerns, and travel restrictions. Whenever the return-to-office plans do come to fruition, most member organizations report that they will have a variety of worker categories, ranging from full-time in the office to no time in the office, and several variations in between. Those categories are often decided by role and department leader preferences. Most learning teams will stay either fully or partially remote.

***Elliott Masie:** The word “hybrid” reflects the desire of organizations to be agile in the locations and formats of employees and learning resources. In August 2021, there is significant confusion about how, when, and in what format employees will be located. The current rise of the COVID Delta variant and increased cases of COVID are disrupting the major “back to the office” plans of organizations. The reality and/or fear of significant talent resignations is also shaking up the schedule. I anticipate that we will see innovation in how organizations locate, support, and develop their workers in the coming 12 months.*

Hybrid learning is a nice idea, but we do not have evidence-based designs that illustrate how to optimize the outcomes for face-to-face classroom learners and virtual learners who are participating in the same event at the same time. It is exciting to imagine how we can mix, blend, and personalize learning across simultaneous in-person and virtual formats, but much design experimentation will be needed to get this right.

Leadership Development

Examples of comments from member organizations about Leadership Development:

- Virtual Cohorts: We are asking how to handle cohort-based leadership learning that’s virtual or hybrid (because there are so many varying levels of comfort, and nothing will be mandated to be done in person).
- Mentorship & Sponsorship: Our focus is on mentorship and sponsorship programs for leaders, and on making these more formal and equitable.
- Leadership = Priority: Leadership development is our #1 L&D focus due to a great deal of organizational growth in recent years. Most of this development will continue to be virtual/online because travel for training won’t ever be as big as it was pre-pandemic.
- Design Challenges: We have a new team leader experience, which is an 18-month program for all new managers. It’s blended: some parts are meant to be live, others on-demand, etc. When it was originally designed pre-COVID, there were supposed to be in-person parts, but due to the pandemic those were changed to be 5 three-hour, online, live sessions over a two-week period. We are asking if, once everyone is back in the office, we should design those parts to be in-person, online, or both.

- Managing Remote Teams: There is strong commitment to helping leaders continue to navigate managing hybrid/remote teams. Many leaders are still not used to managing in this way and readiness is an issue.

Spectrum of Member Perspectives: There is a strong sense that leadership skills will make or break a company's ability to survive changes resulting from the continued pandemic. With that in mind, leadership development has commonly been reported as a main priority. Many organizations are focused on continuing to equip leaders with resources for navigating change (e.g., leading hybrid teams and conducting difficult conversations with staff about social and health/well-being issues). Design decisions about leaders' learning opportunities are almost exclusively leaning toward virtual.

***Elliott Masie**: Leadership development needs a significant redesign. Many organizations are using the same old approaches in leadership programs, ranging from mini-MBA programs to 360 feedback/coaching models to case study retreats and stretch assignments. Yet, the culture of leadership skills and development is demanding more innovation. Many leadership programs are mostly about "induction" of the rising leader into the executive ranks, but few begin when employees are starting their careers. And several organizations are concerned that leadership programs are providing more theory than skill readiness for their participants. The Learning COLLABORATIVE will be focusing on leadership development innovation brainstorming and design in the coming months.*

Learning = Business Partner

Examples of comments from member organizations about Learning as a Business Partner:

- Culture & Change: We see L&D as the custodian of culture and change for the business.
- Critical Partner: L&D is viewed as a critical partner to the business. As such, there is high demand for our services now.
- Enabling Change: More learning functions are enabling change (sometimes radical change) in the business.
- Cross-Training: Every function of our business has been going through a lot of change and L&D has helped provide a great deal of cross-training to fill in gaps that COVID caused.
- CEO Support: Our Corporate Learning Advisory Council was started 2 years ago and is backed by the CEO. Learning leaders have monthly meetings with other business leaders and provide a quarterly dashboard to the CEO.

Spectrum of Member Perspectives: Although many member organizations expressed having a strong partnership with the business, in some cases reinforced and even improved by circumstances of the pandemic, a lesser number are still in the position of order-taker and not brought into projects early enough.

***Elliott Masie**: Here are three questions to ask about learning/business partnerships in your organization:*

1. *How would business leaders, from unit heads to the CEO, describe the role and outcomes of the Learning organization?*
2. *How much business data is used to shape, design, and alter the programs offered by the Learning function(s)?*
3. *How are learning professionals learning about the real needs, challenges, and realities of the business units they are supporting?*

Ideally, we would see a merger of the language used by both business leaders and learning leaders to describe learning impacts in your organization.

Diversity/Equity/Inclusion

Examples of comments from member organizations about Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion:

- Anti-Racism Work: We focus on anti-racism work and find that virtual is great for this because we're reaching a broader audience. Approaches include mentoring to promote equity, using hi-po programs to grow black leaders, using some training on unconscious bias and radical inclusion, and more.
- Training Challenges: There is a broad spectrum of how people feel about this kind of training. The learning team is on the lookout for great DEI training to release to the whole organization, and just not finding it.
- Leadership Objective: Making the workplace inclusive is now an official objective for all leaders.
- Difficult Conversations: Most DEI work has focused on directors and above, with the goal of helping managers lead difficult conversations among their teams.
- Leadership Tools: Our focus is on foundational learning for leaders that extends all the way up to morphing the tools they use (to make those tools more inclusive and equitable) because they're not "one size fits all".

Spectrum of Member Perspectives: The racial justice issues of the past 2 years have made Diversity and Inclusion a key priority for many COLLABORATIVE members. There is an increased focus on DEI work and learning and, in some organizations, efforts have been focused on middle and senior leaders to help them lead and navigate complex conversations with their teams. In others, there is a desire for learning to be shared with all employees but finding the right training has been difficult. The range of emotions and perspectives held by any organization's workforce about DEI issues adds complexity to L&D's efforts, especially in locations and employee populations where long-running prejudice and misinformation is continuing to be voiced. Some members report that L&D is working hand-in-hand with their DEI teams while others say there isn't a strong partnership between the two groups.

***Elliott Masie**: Every senior learning leader that I have spoken with in the past 12 months has reported a strong imperative to increase the visibility and impact of their DEI efforts. We do not have a strong history of racial diversity in the learning field. There is a significant majority of L&D colleagues that are female; yet colleagues of color in the leadership ranks of the learning field are more difficult to locate.*

DEI efforts have also been challenging in the "work from home" environment of the pandemic. Many organizations confess that mentoring is more complex when contact is primarily virtual.

Focus on Skills/Upskilling

Examples of comments from member organizations about Skills and Upskilling:

- Reframing Development: We are considering reframing development around skills. It seems simple to make this shift, but there are a lot of talent process implications to consider.
- Diverse Audiences: Increased organizational attention to diversity, equity, and inclusion has resulted in a major focus on reskilling and upskilling, especially for diverse audiences.

- **Skills Economy:** We are building a skills economy foundation, figuring out how to identify and rate skills through both formal and informal means, and enabling employees to self-evaluate skills. The idea is to find skills gaps across the organization and work with Talent Management, HR, etc. to fill them based on who has what skills.
- **Future State of Skills:** We are thinking about how skills play into everything and asking if we are focusing on the right skills and offering the right development for those skills. The future state of skills and how to build those, close gaps, etc. is a big focus.
- **Career Frameworks:** We are building career frameworks by globalizing job families (identifying down to skill level and proficiencies) and opening career paths, even to other jobs. We are developing a tool employees can use to take an assessment of where they stand and where they can go.

Spectrum of Member Perspectives: Across industries, the topic of skills and upskilling across the organization has come up repeatedly. Many L&D groups are still in the beginning phases of identifying critical skills and determining how they will assess employees' skills. The goal is to find and close gaps, prepare for organizational growth, and keep pace with clients. Many questions are being asked about whether the right development opportunities exist to build skills now and in the future. Partnerships with HR and Talent teams are being formed around these efforts.

Elliott Masie: *Upskilling, reskilling, and skilling are words that are so key to the effectiveness of our organizations. Every Talent Director that I have spoken with is focused on the need to provide upskilling as an assumed dimension of each employee's learning and development. The half-life of content, the half-life of job descriptions, and the change rate of skills mandate a continual process of skilling.*

I was impressed with several of our COLLABORATIVE members that have been deeply funding and supporting upskilling programs and offers for their employees – with free tuition for continuing education and apprenticeship opportunities to prepare staff for their next career moves. Watch for new federal and state funding for reskilling efforts that will be part of private/public partnerships in the coming 12 months.

Learning Tech/Systems:

Examples of comments from member organizations about Learning Technology and Systems:

- **Sophisticated Videoconferencing:** We are experimenting with Pando™, a very expensive platform that is "Zoom on steroids". We are considering it for a high-level leadership event or something with global participation.
- **Machine Learning:** We've been trying to build our own machine learning tool – without success – and are now turning to an LXP instead.
- **AI/360 Video/Simulation:** Because budget is challenging, we are seeking grants and other funding for more AI, 360 video, and simulation types of training.
- **Content Collections:** We are doing a two-month sandbox pilot of Degreed and have looked at HowNow, edCast, and LinkedIn. We are also working with Microsoft to provide thought leader feedback to them about Viva Learning (specifically about adding a skills layer on top).
- **Technology Burnout:** We are implementing Microsoft Viva, which is exciting, but employees are burned out, both in L&D and across the organization. IT is especially burned out since it's become the new norm to turn on a dime with new technology.

Spectrum of Member Perspectives: Several members have recently implemented an LXP (most commonly Degreed) or are evaluating different LXPs with the hope of implementing one soon. Microsoft Viva was the next most talked about new technology, followed by some one-offs like LCMSs, Oracle Cloud, Brainshark Coaching, and Pando™. Although this kind of experimentation is exciting, there is a sense of fatigue and burnout when it comes to new learning technologies, especially when an organization expects a new tool to be implemented very quickly. That has been the norm throughout the pandemic, and both IT and L&D are feeling somewhat spent.

Elliott Masie: *As one of the early proponents of eLearning in the 1990's, I was asked many times in the past 15 months about how eLearning was evolving. We went from just a handful of eLearning programs to hundreds of millions of people around the world learning online. Yes, we have expanded the ability to leverage "EdTech" – educational technology – to deliver content, instruction, and performance support with greater ease.*

There is an anticipation from COLLABORATIVE members that learning technology would be able to more deeply personalize the learning content and activities for individual employees. Currently, we are not seeing that as a full reality. In fact, many employees are overwhelmed with the number of options and massive collections that are offered. Sending an employee to a "curated" vault with thousands of courses is rarely appreciated. In fact, many employees want support rather than a course.

The funding for EdTech investment is overwhelming. My hope is that the next waves of innovation will provide efficiency and independence for the learner, to optimize their moments of learning.

Also, watch for several large mergers and disruptions in the LMS and content collection space in the coming year. We anticipate that AI and machine learning will be on the lips of learning systems vendors as they promote their next wave of products.

Measurement/Data

Examples of comments from member organizations about Measurement and Data:

- More Experimentation & Analysis: The pandemic has provided more opportunity to experiment with and collect relevant data. Our learning team is digging into whether we need full-time trainers, if we're managing vendors the best way, if our tech stack is what's optimal, etc. We have had time and opportunity to dig into that kind of analysis.
- It Takes a Village: We are focused on tying learning to business impact and results, largely to keep getting approvals for things we need to mature the learning function. It takes lots of work to get the numbers we need, so we're using data analysts, HR professionals, and other business leaders for a variety of perspectives. We are also considering using vendors and other outside groups to help pull the data together.
- Operations vs. People: Our focus is more on operations metrics than people metrics.
- Investing in Big Data: We are all about big data, so there is a recognized need for the right technology and cloud computing, which is tied to talent wars. The organization is making massive investments in tech skills, capabilities, and digitization.
- Storytelling with Data: We want to use data to "tell stories" and are in the middle of switching providers and integrations with the hope of having better capability for consulting and decision making.

- No Traditional ROI: Measurement is a huge topic for us, partly for succession planning and performance measurement via a yet-to-be-chosen-or-developed single talent management system. We are focused on surveys and other metrics for all learning offerings across the board and have abandoned traditional ROI in favor of other impact measures.

Spectrum of Member Perspectives: One silver lining of the pandemic has been that some organizations have had more time and opportunity to collect relevant data and analyze it for a variety of L&D purposes. Having said that, data still lives in multiple systems and functions, and pulling it all together remains a cross-functional challenge. More data analytics skills are needed on most L&D teams, although a few have already hired designated analysts. Some members are abandoning traditional ROI in favor of other models/impact measures and considering using 3rd parties to help pull together and make sense of data. There is also a desire to provide managers with dashboards so they can see where their teams stand in terms of attrition, promotions, development plan completion, lateral changes, etc.

Elliott Masie: *As the reports from our members indicate above, there is a deep desire to increase the targeting and utilization of REAL measurement in the learning function. We continue to struggle with two very different sets of measurements:*

1. *Data that we can collect during or at the learning activity/event.*
2. *Data that we can only collect back at work.*

While we have never had more data awareness in our organizations, getting data and measurement from the workplace is still challenging. We must build dashboards or scorecards that can illuminate shifts in sales, customer satisfaction, production, timelines, and even retention – as truer learning impact measures.

One specific challenge to note comes from conversations we had with actor Leslie Odom, Jr. at one of our learning conferences a few years ago. He stressed the need to create SAFE FAILURE opportunities for learners. If we really want to measure readiness, we have to allow our learners to stretch and fail, as part of adding or shifting skills.

Learning data analytics continues to be a key competency that our COLLABORATIVE members are adding to their teams.

Outsourcing Learning

Examples of comments from member organizations about Outsourcing Learning:

- Regulatory Learning: As of this spring, we have outsourced all regulatory design and development to a 3rd party, but an agreement was put in place so the affected learning staff could take on new roles with that 3rd party.
- Ideation & Strategy: L&D went from creating most of the learning content to partnering with a 3rd party to create it. We now focus on ideation and strategy, and share that with the 3rd party, which works with organizational SMEs. This change naturally led to a smaller L&D department.
- Leadership Learning: Our leadership learning team is outsourcing a lot of content and facilitation as it redesigns its strategy, so programs are on hold.

- **Non-Traditional Learning Roles:** For the last 10 years, we have outsourced all design/development. Our lean learning team manages all the outsourced work, which means team members have very non-traditional learning roles.

Spectrum of Member Perspectives: Whether it's for a specific focus area or across the board, outsourcing learning design and development is freeing up L&D teams to focus on strategy and be better consultants to the business. Sometimes this results in a smaller team, but in other cases new roles are created.

Elliott Masie: *The total number of full-time learning and development employees (that are not vendors) working in organizations continues to drop. COLLABORATIVE members are developing fewer courses internally. Instead, they are outsourcing to suppliers or licensing content collections.*

The pandemic has also "democratized" the role of learning facilitation and content creation. Business units have learned how to host their own virtual sessions. Executives have learned to create their own video briefings from their tablets at home. In some organizations, fully structured courses have been chopped into more "nudges" and "support bursts".

We are also watching the massive investments in K-12 and Higher Education EdTech for creating innovations that will be adapted for the corporate learning marketplace. Tech companies like Microsoft, Salesforce, Oracle, Google, and Amazon will be part of a larger outsourcing trend in the next 24 months.

Scaling Coaching

Examples of comments from member organizations about Scaling Coaching:

- **Virtual Customer Coaching Pilot:** We are pursuing a virtual coaching pilot (for customers). An instructor came up with the idea to have hours available that customers could book to address specific problems they're having. This is in pilot phase now, but the idea is that the instructor would recreate the problem the customer is having and then show them how to fix it. This could be a huge help to the sales group if it proves out.
- **Scaling Coaching:** We are focused on accelerating the scaling of coaching across the organization.
- **Leader as Coach:** We are implementing a "Leader as Coach" program. This is focused on developing experienced leaders' coaching skills (through gap learning and story sharing in small groups). It is virtual and we are now looking at what can be asynchronous eLearning vs. live virtual.

Spectrum of Member Perspectives: Coaching is increasingly seen as an effective way to develop employees, and there is growing desire to offer it to broader workforce audiences (beyond select leader populations). Virtual coaching is being explored by many companies, as is partnering with 3rd party providers and establishing certifications for internal coaches. Scaling coaching is a challenge that many organizations are still working through.

Elliott Masie: *The week the pandemic began in the U.S., I collaborated with leading business coach Marshall Goldsmith to apply virtual meetings and communities to the coaching process. We met almost every morning for several months with dozens of CEOs and talent leaders from around the world to discuss, process, and cross-coach each other in this unique time.*

It became clear to me that scaling coaching would be a requirement as we worked and learned virtually. The coaching model must extend beyond the top leadership levels. Coaching is not therapy and does not have to fit our traditional model of “external expert meets weekly with a rising executive”. Coaching can be individualized, scaled, and peer-based if organizations can accept it into their culture.

This is the arena in which COLLABORATIVE members are reporting high levels of interest and experimentation. We will continue our dialogues and develop several case studies on scaled coaching in the months ahead.

Retention & Talent

Examples of comments from member organizations about Retention and Talent:

- Recruiting Changes: We are changing the recruiting process and looking for traits rather than skills. We only want to hire fresh-out-of-college applicants who are malleable and easier to train than those experienced hires who must unlearn and relearn ways of working.
- Greener New Hires: We are having a hard time finding hourly craft workers, so we are bringing on greener and greener new hires.
- Talent Supports Training: The Talent team is working closely with L&D as we develop a more centralized training curriculum. The Talent team is focused on where things like coaching, mentorship, and more can work to support the training. There is also focus on what tools leaders use with new hires and how data can drive decision making and help develop people.
- Money Talks: Compensation benchmarking is taking place to retain and attract new talent.
- Faster Onboarding for the Masses: The pandemic has forced us to hire massive amounts of people all at once, which requires new approaches to onboarding (abbreviated, quick start, etc.) in an effort to share just enough information with new hires for them to be valuable.

Spectrum of Member Perspectives: For those organizations in industries hard hit by the pandemic, where many workers were furloughed or let go, there is now intense focus on hiring and onboarding. Talent and L&D are forming stronger partnerships to address that and other issues across industries, like high turnover in parts of businesses where travel is considered a big part of the job, role changes caused by the pandemic, younger employees exiting organizations citing reasons like wanting to be closer to and spend more time with their families – and more. There is a growing willingness and, in some cases, desire to hire less experienced workers who are eager to learn and who have certain traits the organization is seeking. Competitive pay and work-from-home benefits are central to the current talent wars, so many companies continue navigating those factors.

Elliott Masie: *Retention, Retention, Retention & Talent!!! Our organizations MUST look at the talent realities and futures with fresh eyes. The pandemic altered and rattled many employees’ career models and expectations. Our colleagues have had time to reflect on the balance of work, family, commuting, location, and pressure. At the same time, technology is altering and even replacing many roles.*

The assumptions about careers, retention, and where to find talent are being widely challenged by COLLABORATIVE members. I have had the honor of recently talking with a dozen CEOs and retention is a mysterious formula to many of them. Learning leaders must dive deeply into retention issues to map the innovations required in the months ahead.

Learning Skills Futures

Examples of comments from member organizations about Future Skills for Learning Professionals:

- New Skills Needed: Unless L&D can focus on the critical workforce skilling needs of the organization (rather than paying so much attention to new hire training, compliance, etc.), it will be made obsolete. We are feeling the talent shortage, and if we can't buy the talent we need, we have to build it. New L&D skills are needed for this.
- Developing Learning Professionals: In partnership with a vendor, we created a 5-6-month program for all learning staff about what it means to be a learning professional today. The focus was on modern learning techniques, tools, design, etc. Now, we're focused on how to keep the momentum of that program going and formalized.
- Consulting & Relationship Management: We are focused on consulting and relationship management, and how L&D will integrate more with Talent.
- Upskilling & Cross-Training: Some of our upskilling is due to losing learning team members and having to fill their shoes. There is also significant cross-training among disparate learning teams.
- Cross-Functional Teamwork: Our decentralized learning teams are thinking about what to share with each other and how to invest in technology together. We're also standing up cross-functional committees in areas like Marketing of L&D Offerings/Services, Technology, Data/Analytics, and Peer Review/QA.

Spectrum of Member Perspectives: There are 3 main ideas that members expressed on this topic. The first is that they're not sure what exact skills learning professionals will need going forward, but they are keenly aware that "the way we've always done it" won't suffice in this new age of work and learning. The second is around retaining and developing new L&D talent, especially as many capable and high performing learning leaders are rethinking life and exiting their organizations (or even the workforce at large). This is kicking organizations into high gear on the development side to replace them. The third is around working together, especially if there are multiple learning teams, to cross-train, to invest in technology, and to aim for continuous improvement in what L&D provides the business.

Elliott Masie: *Ironically, learning professionals spend very little time learning new skills in our field. Here is my wish list of skill development areas for COLLABORATIVE learning colleagues:*

1. *User Experience Models*
2. *Learning Data Analytics*
3. *Cognitive Science*
4. *Workflow Support*
5. *AI and Machine Learning for Performance*
6. *Globalization of Content*
7. *Curation*
8. *Empathy Approaches*
9. *Feedback and Reinforcement*
10. *Virtual and Augmented Reality*
11. *Facilitation*
12. *Production and Storytelling*

And that is just the first wave of skills. In a different world, almost all learning colleagues would spend stints in the world of learning and stints in the world of business. Our Chief Learning Officers would be

ideal candidates for the role of Chief Executive Officer. And our learning skills would bring the worlds of evidence, science, and research into our innovative processes.

Learning Professional Burnout

Examples of comments from member organizations about Learning Professional Burnout:

- High Expectations: Even though we are under-resourced and burnt out, the organization has built up very high expectations about what L&D can do – on a dime and “yesterday”. This is very stressful.
- Managing Burnout: As a learning leader, I know that many organizations are on the lookout for great L&D talent (I am getting hit up almost daily), so managing the L&D team members’ level of burnout is critical to keep them!
- Virtual Fatigue: Some burnout is from the continued virtual working environment (we want time together in person) and some is from sheer workload.
- Change Fatigue: There is a level of burnout in L&D after a harrowing year of figuring out how to make learning work differently.
- Heavy Workloads: Our team lost several members, leaving heavy workloads for those of us remaining.

Spectrum of Member Perspectives: A high level of burnout was not expressed by every organization, but by many, especially those who lost learning team members in the past 18 months. Very often, those positions were not backfilled, either due to budget constraints or just the inability to find the right replacements, which left very heavy workloads for the remaining team. Some members expressed that a week or two of vacation would not be enough to restore their sense of health and balance and that they were hoping for an actual sabbatical of as much as 8 weeks. A few even have team members who are out on extended sick leave due to the overwhelming stress. In general, it’s been a harrowing year and a half (or more) when many learning teams had to figure out how to support and enable their companies in new ways, essentially overnight, and they rose to that challenge – sometimes at the expense of their own well-being. Some new talent is being brought in now, but in many cases, there will be a longer-than-desirable onboarding period before that talent is fully functioning.

Elliott Masie: *Hey, all of us are a bit weary and tired in these unprecedented times. As Brooke’s summary above indicates, we have not seen huge departures from learning teams, but that does not mean our learning colleagues aren’t a bit toasted. Many of us have not used the skills we love, including teaching in a classroom and working side-by-side with colleagues, and have assumed other key roles in the organization to support the changing workplace.*

The ideas expressed by your fellow COLLABORATIVE members in the topics above are powerful ways to re-energize the learning function and learning teams.

It is also an important time for learning groups to step back and do a deep analysis of changes they are observing:

1. *Changes in Learners: How are they evolving?*
2. *Changes in Learner Expectations: What do they want?*
3. *Changes in Timelines: Are there shifts in the time it takes to develop content or new hires?*
4. *Changes in Workflow: What are we doing differently?*

5. *Changes in My Career as a Learning Professional: What is different about my role and trajectory?*

Summary:

This update reflects over a hundred hours of conversations with members of the Learning COLLABORATIVE.

We hope that these reports from your colleagues at other organizations and my perspectives on these topics yield more dialogue and innovation.

Many thanks to Brooke Thomas-Record for her work on the interviews and curating the content.

We would love your thoughts and comments! Send a note to emasie@masie.com

Yours in learning,

Elliott
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Chair, The Learning COLLABORATIVE