D2L

The Essential Guide to Learning Strategy, Design, and Support

Empower your organization to deliver and
sustain transformational learning experiences

Your Journey to Better Learning Outcomes Begins Now

In a fast-paced world that continues to evolve, organizations across all industries must constantly optimize their business processes to keep pace with customer needs and expectations. This is especially true when it comes to learning—from the elementary level all the way through higher education and professional training. Regardless of the audience, planning, designing, and supporting engaging learning experiences are all part of an ongoing journey that requires a unique blend of art and science. Organizations need to look beyond their existing strategies, delivery methods, and support systems to provide compelling online offerings that resonate with learners and trainers and improve organizational outcomes.

The urgency to transform learning is particularly evident according to Harvard Business Review, "although organizations spend more than $350 billion globally on employee training and education (2015), they are not spending their money effectively." [1] Organizations need to rethink their investments so that they can better measure and analyze the impact on learning, particularly employee skills development.

Learning and development (L&D) initiatives today are not hitting the mark, as **75%** of 1,500 managers surveyed from across 50 organizations were dissatisfied with their company's L&D function.[2] Even with significant investment, L&D strategies are falling short in their current efforts, as **70%** of employees report that they don't have mastery of the skills needed to do their jobs.[3] This is a major challenge for organizations today that need to attract and retain their talent in order to remain competitive in the marketplace.

Organizations need to respond to this challenge with a learning strategy that is employee-centric and that includes offering online training and learning delivery designed to align employee skills development with strategic business outcomes. This approach should include modern and flexible online educational opportunities that help support competency development and skills acquisition so that employees can develop and refine the skills they need in order to thrive.

1   Derek Schrader, Magnus Finnstrom, Michael Beer, "Why Leadership Training Fails – and What to Do About it," Harvard Business Review. 2016.

2   Steve Glaveski, "Where Companies Go Wrong with Learning and Development," Harvard Business Review, 2019.
3   ibid

At the same time, many organizations are dealing with significant changes in how they do business. Technological innovation and automation are moving faster than ever and are increasing learners' and trainers' expectations over time. A growing number of complex systems and information sources are overwhelming leaders and decision makers. And declining budgets and stretched resources are forcing organizations to do more with less. Organizations need to face off against these challenges—all while finding new ways to bring value to learners, drive organizational growth, and remain competitive.

When it comes to identifying opportunities to improve online learning offerings, each organization has its own set of obstacles to overcome. While some organizations need to reevaluate their core online learning strategy, others are looking to optimize the design and execution of their existing online programs. For those with a solid foundation in place already, a key priority will be to streamline the day-to-day administration and support of their learning technology. Whatever the challenge may be, it's crucial that organizations recognize these gaps and quickly implement solutions to address them.

Developed by D2L's learning experts, the **Essential Guide to Learning Strategy, Design, and Support** is designed to help you deliver transformational online learning experiences with a well-defined strategy, an innovative approach to course and program design, and a highly responsive support network. Aligned with a complete set of online learning services, this guide will help you answer key questions about your organizational processes to improve productivity, boost efficiency, and enhance outcomes.

1. Sharpen Your Strategy

Refine your strategy to better inform learning initiatives

Identifying your online learning goals and determining how to achieve them can be a challenging process. If your organization's approach to learning has traditionally relied on in-person delivery models and face-to-face learner interactions, the idea of introducing new technology and processes may seem overwhelming. Even organizations that have been comfortably using technology for years continue to search for solutions to expand upon their core initiatives. The truth is that whether you're looking to establish a more complete online learning strategy or to optimize the plan you have already, making widespread organizational changes is often difficult. But it doesn't have to be.

When you're launching new online learning initiatives, a good first step is to consider the impact that your revised approach will have on you, your trainers, your advisors, and your learners. This will help you identify the potential obstacles you need to address and the stakeholders you need to involve before you jump into implementing strategic changes. Throughout the process, it's critical that you have a clear change management plan in place that effectively communicates your goals, assesses your organization's readiness, outlines your adoption strategy, and prepares you for resistance from key stakeholders. By establishing a roadmap for change ahead of time, your organization will be well positioned for long-term success.

HERE ARE SOME IMPORTANT QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN LAUNCHING A NEW ONLINE LEARNING INITIATIVE:

1. Are you confident in your leadership team's ability to execute and sustain this initiative?

2. How will you engage the necessary stakeholders and explain the changes you're making?

3. What will you do to capture interest and drive adoption among instructors and end users?

4. How will you manage resistance, objections, and roadblocks—initially and along the way?

5. What does a successful strategy look like? How will you know that it's successful?

How D2L Can Help

We have proven expertise in building roadmaps that enable effective online learning experiences. Our **Learning Strategy and Consulting** offerings can help you guide your organization's vision, plan your approach, and execute your strategy as you uncover new capabilities in the Brightspace platform.

CHANGE MANAGEMENT

Whether you're just starting to transition to Brightspace or planning to roll out a new online learning program, our team can help set you up for success with a complete change management and communication strategy. Together, we'll navigate the facets of your change process such as defining your organization's priorities and aligning leaders, trainers, and learners to achieve program objectives.

COMPETENCY-BASED LEARNING

If you're looking to add flexibility to your online learning programs and better track learner competencies, we can work with you to develop an effective competency-based learning model. We'll help you drive adoption with a strategic roadmap and communication plan, manage resistance by providing content and assessment recommendations, and increase readiness by detailing program architecture and configurations within Brightspace.

WORKFORCE PARTNERSHIP

As the skills gap continues to grow, you may be looking to partner with other organizations to inspire a continuous learning mindset among students and employees. Our consultants can help you design, develop, and implement innovative online programs to support workforce partnerships that cultivate and grow a community of lifelong learners.

D2L

2. Develop Your Design

Evolve your program design to improve learning interactions

Once you've defined your online learning goals and developed a strategy to communicate your planned process changes to key stakeholders, the next step is to determine how your organization's online experience will look, feel, and perform. Building beautiful, high-quality, and effective online courses and programs is neither an easy nor an inexpensive undertaking. There are also plenty of considerations for you to factor in along the way about the tools you'll need, the content delivery methods you'll use, and the speed of execution you'll require from your organization's learning design team.

When you're reimagining your online course design, it's critical that you proactively evaluate your design team's ability and capacity to execute your vision so that you can avoid bottlenecks along the way. First, take inventory of the current design resources you have in place and the projects they're working on. Then assess how well-aligned these resources are to trainers' needs and your desired learning outcomes. This approach will allow you to tactfully position your design efforts to advance your strategic priorities and help you identify any knowledge or resource gaps that you need to address.

HERE ARE SOME OF THE MAIN ROLES TO ASSIGN WHEN DESIGNING YOUR ONLINE COURSES AND PROGRAMS:

- A **project manager** who oversees the time, scope, and budget of each of your online initiatives

- An i**nstructional designer** who aligns your content strategy, assessment approach, and desired learning outcomes to enable an engaging online experience

- A **course developer** who assembles materials, creates videos, builds activities, and confirms that courses are responsive, accessible, and functional in the broader learning platform

- A **graphic designer** who brings your online courses to life with effective visuals and a strong focus on user interface and user experience elements

How D2L Can Help

We know what it takes to build engaging online learning environments. Our **Learning and Creative Services** team includes instructional designers, courseware developers, graphic designers, and multimedia developers who can work with you to design and develop courses that help elevate learner success.

COURSEWARE DEVELOPMENT

Whether you want to create highly customized online courses or need to get up and running quickly, our instructional designers and courseware developers can help make your vision a reality. We'll work together to implement engaging content templates, refresh existing resources, or build entirely new courses from the ground up—either through single project engagements or an ongoing partnership.

MULTIMEDIA DEVELOPMENT

If you're looking to make your online course design even more compelling, our graphic designers and multimedia developers can help your ideas shine on screen. We'll assist you in implementing pre-built or custom widgets as well as designing beautiful homepages, activities, and badges to create fun and immersive learning experiences.

CONSULTING

As you continue to evolve the form and function of your online courses, our design and development consultants can help you identify even more opportunities to optimize your learning content. We offer one-day consulting workshops, accessibility audits, third-party content enhancements, and custom consulting engagements that can help tailor your content to meet your organization's unique needs.

"With our initial plan, I was hesitant to engage Learning and Creative Services, because we have great designers in our own team. But the two-week runway changed my mind! Once we started working with the D2L designers, it was so seamless and so amazing. Together, we came up with a launch plan, working out what we needed to get off the ground and what we could roll out in later iterations."

Dr. Jenelle Hodges, Director of Digital Learning, CHIME

3. Strengthen Your Support

Enhance your technical resources to address user needs

As the saying goes, the best defense is a good offense. But if you ask any championship team, they'll say you need a balance of each to be truly successful. The same rule applies when delivering and sustaining online learning experiences. Despite your organization's best efforts, even your most strategically informed and well-designed learning programs will require both responsive support and proactive maintenance from time to time. As you execute your online programs, your team's ability to react to existing end user challenges and to predict potential obstacles is just as important as the work that goes into building each program in the first place.

When you're establishing support options for your learning technology, it's important to think about the common technical challenges that your end users are likely to face and the optimal information channels to assist them. While some users will be comfortable finding answers in support documents or videos, other users will prefer working with dedicated support staff. You may choose to go one step further by analyzing patterns in support requests and refining your learning platform to mitigate future issues. Whether your current approach to providing support is more responsive or proactive, having the right resources in place is crucial to keep your online programs running smoothly.

HERE ARE SOME KEY SUPPORT TYPES TO CONSIDER WHEN ESTABLISHING YOUR ONLINE LEARNING OFFERINGS:

RESPONSIVE SUPPORT

- What are your current end user support channels? Are they manual, automated, or self-serve?
- Do you have support resources for instructors who need guidance running their courses?
- Do instructors and students know where to go for assistance? Is support available 24x7x365?
- How will you measure, analyze, and report on support requests to improve your offerings?

PROACTIVE SUPPORT

- What steps are you taking to identify and mitigate technical issues before they arise?
- Do you have support resources for instructors who are looking to improve their courses?
- Do administrators, instructors, and students know where to go with new technology requests?
- How will you prioritize technology requests to maximize impact across your organization?

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

- Do you have the capacity to independently manage your learning platform?
- Is your team confident in configuring settings, roles, permissions, and enrollment?
- Does your team have knowledge of course creation and content organization best practices?
- Do you have an in-depth understanding of your platform adoption and engagement metrics?

How D2L Can Help

We understand the importance of providing exceptional technology support that boosts the resilience of learning programs. In addition to our responsive support services, we also offer dedicated technical experts who can partner with you to proactively manage and grow your online learning initiatives.

ADMINISTRATOR AND END USER SUPPORT

While our **Brightspace Community** is full of self-help resources, your administrators and end users will also want the reassurance of having a responsive support team on hand. Our **Administrator Support** and **End User Support** services provide everyone at your organization with the day-to-day resources and answers they need to make the most of Brightspace.

TECHNICAL ACCOUNT MANAGEMENT

If you're looking to extend your support capabilities beyond a traditional help desk, we can partner with you to make proactive improvements to your online learning programs. Our **Technical Account Management** service provides your team with a trusted technical champion dedicated to helping you optimize your unique implementation of Brightspace to achieve your strategic learning goals.

LEARNING ADMINISTRATION MANAGEMENT

As you make strategic improvements to your learning programs, we can assist you in the day-to-day administration of your online learning platform. Our **Learning Administration Management** service equips your team with a dedicated expert to manage all aspects of your Brightspace environment, including any D2L-supported add-ons and integrations.

"Any time that we raise an issue, we know that our **D2L** contacts will either solve it or escalate to ensure we receive a quick fix. The **quality** of End User Support has been fantastic. We could easily have been overwhelmed as such a small team, but we never feel alone with the D2L **support** team on our side"

Vanessa Cox, Director of Online Learning, University of Dallas

D2L

Learning Strategy, Design, and Support in Practice

Throughout this guide, we examined the key areas to focus on as you enhance your online learning approach, execution, maintenance, and optimization. Whether you're focused on sharpening your strategy, developing your design, strengthening your support, or improving in all three areas, our expert team is ready to help. We're excited to work with you to make your organization's learning experience even better—both today and in the future.

Here's how some of our customers are transforming their learners' lives for the better with the help of our dedicated learning experts and our Brightspace platform:

HARRISBURG AREA COMMUNITY COLLEGE — FLEXIBLE WORKFORCE LEARNING

HACC is working with D2L to create pathways for learning progression for students enrolled in its workforce development noncredit programs. In collaboration with local businesses, HACC is building stackable credentials that can be delivered online via the Brightspace platform, providing a blend of self-paced and instructor-led programs that help students develop and demonstrate new competencies.

Explore HACC's story

COLLEGE OF HEALTHCARE INFORMATION MANAGEMENT EXECUTIVES — LAUNCHING ONLINE LEARNING IN TWO WEEKS

To extend its reach beyond the top tier of healthcare executives to health workers worldwide, CHIME set out a nine-month implementation plan for a new online education platform. When COVID-19 hit, CHIME worked with D2L to accelerate the launch from nine months to just two weeks, enabling the organization to provide vital support to the healthcare sector from the earliest days of the crisis.

Explore CHIME's story

**UNIVERSITY OF DALLAS — OVERCOMING
THE CHALLENGES OF COVID-19**

When the global COVID-19 pandemic reached Texas, the University of
Dallas needed to find new ways to digitally educate and engage students initially
expecting an on-campus experience. The university is using the Brightspace
platform to deliver and support its online classes, giving students uninterrupted
access to educational content, lectures, and group discussions from home.

Explore University of Dallas' story

**UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA — EMPOWERING INSTRUCTORS
TO TEACH THE WAY THEY WANT TO TEACH**

To support an aggressive expansion into online learning, the University of Arizona
set out to streamline its workflows for course creation, instructor enrollments,
student enrollments, and final semester grades. By working with D2L to boost its
support capabilities, the university has doubled the number of online courses it
services while keeping its core support team the same size.

Explore University of Arizona's story

D2L

ABOUT D2L

D2L is a global learning innovation company, reshaping the future of education and work. We're leading the way into a new era of personalized learning, driven by the belief that everyone deserves access to high-quality education, regardless of their age, ability or location. Our signature technology products—D2L Brightspace and D2L Wave—enhance the learning experience for millions of learners at every stage of life, from the earliest days of school to the working world. Learn more at **D2L.com**.

CONTACT US

Phone:	1-519-772-0325 (Worldwide)
Toll Free:	1-888-772-0325 (North America)
	0-808-234-4235 (United Kingdom and Europe)
	0-800-452-069 (New Zealand)
	1-800-656-210 (Australia)
	0-800-891-4507 (Brazil)

Fax:	1-519-772-0324
Email:	ContactUs@D2L.com
Facebook:	/D2LInc
Twitter:	@D2L
Web:	**D2L.com**