

Planting the seeds for the 70:20:10 learning model

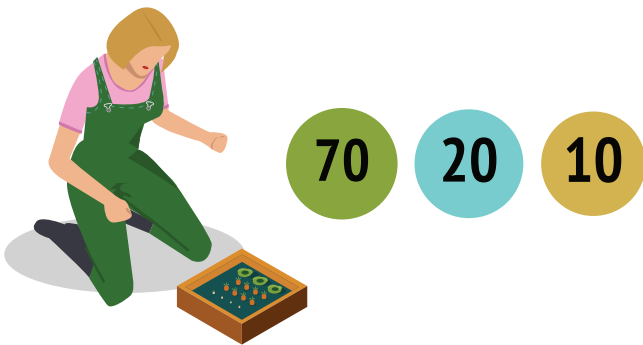


What is the 70:20:10 concept?

The 70:20:10 concept of learning has become widely known because it offers a simple way to explain how learning really happens at work. It emphasises the need for learning programs to focus on more than just formal learning. It provides learning and development professionals with a way to quickly communicate that professional development is not just about formal learning.

The research they did showed that:

- 70% of learning occurs as people engage in informal learning processes such as watching others, participating in workplace routines and undertaking challenging tasks
- 20% arises from mentoring and coaching (mostly from a manager or supervisor)
- 10% is the result of formal courses and reading (Lombardo & Eichinger, 1996).



Learning and development is not considered an evidence-based field, and learning and development professionals are not known for making decisions based on research. The 70:20:10 model provides learning and development with evidence that learning programs need to be more than just training sessions or online modules.

Beyond the McCall & Eichinger research, not a lot of work has been done to validate or explore the 70:20:10 ratio. There is extensive research that shows that most learning at work is informal. The often-quoted figure is that is 80% of learning is informal (Cross, 2006).

In $70+20+10=100$ – *The evidence behind the numbers*, Charles Jennings, Laura Overton and Dr Genny Dixon used data from the Towards Maturity Benchmark to look at how organisations are using the 70:20:10 model. They found that high-performing organisations are:

- three times more likely to agree that their L&D staff consider the course as only one of the options for building skills and performance
- four times more likely to agree that their approach to learning is shaped by models such as 70:20:10 that support learning directly in the flow of work (Jennings et al, 2016).

The idea that most learning at work is informal presents complexities for learning and development people. For example, if a learning and development team is tasked with introducing a new coaching framework into an organisation, they are unlikely to be able to achieve it with informal learning alone. The result will be an integrated blended solution that is a combination of formal courses, social learning and workplace tasks. A 70:20:10 solution becomes a complex blend of approaches and is not just a one-off event.

It's been said hundreds of times that change is the core activity of modern workplaces. The very nature of work is changing constantly. This implies that employees and organisations need to be more flexible and open to learning new practices or generating new ways of doing their work faster. Embedding a 70:20:10 learning model into the fabric of an organisation means individuals and therefore organisations may be in a constant cycle of learning, improvement and change. A mature approach to the 70:20:10 model can help to embed a sophisticated learning culture at an individual, team and organisation level.

The 70:20:10 model is a recipe not a formula

The 70:20:10 model and other research is showing that learning is more than formal experiences. A mixture of activities is needed to make it happen. It's not about the numbers, it's about the mix (Jenning et al, 2013). In actual practice, the mix might be more like 40: formal, 20: social, and 40: workplace – or 90: workplace and 10: social. One of the great things about the 70:20:10 model is that it is not a doctrine and it can be flexible. As a model, it's sometimes equated with 100% learner-driven approaches. This is just one way that it can be used.

What is wrong with the 70:20:10 concept?

The 70:20:10 learning model's flexibility is both its strength and its weakness. The model needs to be explained and often learners and managers need to be provided with examples of how it works to be able to fully understand it. As a learning and development professional you need a collection of stories ready to be able to tell how 70:20:10 could work for your managers and employees. The 70:20:10 model means radical changes are coming. Often, stakeholders are defensive when learning and development people first introduce the idea of 70:20:10. The first reaction from managers is typically, 'So now you expect me to do the L&D job?'

Learners' reaction is often, 'Are you cutting my training?'

Many learning and development areas first see the 70:20:10 model as a way to save money; focusing on informal learning sounds cheaper, to start with. 70:20:10 learning models are actually more complex than traditional event learning models. A learning program designed around the 70:20:10 model will always have more components, which are more complex to organise than just a simple training course.

When learning and development teams are introducing 70:20:10, it's better to focus on its effectiveness rather than its cost. An example is a superannuation fund who was introducing 70:20:10 development plans. One of the lawyers who worked in their compliance area reacted to the new model, stating that conferences were really important for him to keep up with what's happening. He was worried about what they were going to lose. The learning and development manager then explained that the 70:20:10 model didn't mean not going to conferences but that it was more about what they did after the conference. She suggested the lawyer could run post-conference activities such as running a session for the rest of the team that summarised the learning and the trends he saw, or planning a change project based on one thing that he learned at the conference.

The difficulty with 70:20:10 is that it's a **concept** for how learning at work happens. It's not a framework. A **framework** needs to have a process and often requires considerable guidance. At Sprout Labs we transform the 70:20:10 concept into what we call the Learning While Working Framework.

Is 70:20:10 a Utopian idea?

Just in the same way that 70:20:10 is not a doctrine, there is no perfect 70:20:10 model. What 70:20:10 can help to do is build a culture of continuous learning, where employees are continuously learning and the organisation is continuously transforming itself (Pedler et al, 1997). It's an enabler for the learning organisation that Peter Senge talks about in his writing (Senge, 2010). Modern workplaces are forever changing, the complexity of the challenges we are facing is increasing, and new forms of collaboration and continuous learning are needed to keep up. A mature approach to 70:20:10 means placing learning at the core of what an organisation does. It means focusing learning on the client's needs and how to better meet those needs. It means when an employee, manager or learning and development professional needs to solve a learning problem, they search for informal and social ways to solve it first, instead of a course. In an organisation with a mature approach to learning employees are self directed in their learning and their managers support them. Reflection and continuous improvement are embedded into everyday workflows.

The value proposition of 70:20:10

At the start, the 70:20:10 learning concept looks like it's a way to reduce formal learning training and the costs associated with a course. If your learning programs are focused 100% on sharing internal knowledge then formal learning might not be needed at all. But if the goal of the program is to bring new knowledge into the organisation then you will more than likely need some formal learning, and using the 70:20:10 model will guide you towards a more integrated, effective model. Often overlooked is that building a 70:20:10 model is more complex than simply organising a training course or commissioning an eLearning module to be made. They require more project management skills from learning and development teams and often expand the range of activities they perform. Learning and development teams are becoming involved in activities like intranet design, and in projects such as designing the interface for new software, to reduce the need for training. In this way a 70:20:10 learning model might reduce the amount of direct costs associated with training but leads to an increase in indirect costs.

It's a reality that most learning and development areas need to reduce their budget. But instead of focusing just on 70:20:10 as a way of reducing cost, a better long-term solution is to focus on how it increases the type of learning that leads to better employee performance.

The risk of focusing too much on cost saving instead of performance improvement is that the easiest way to save money on training is to stop doing learning and development activities completely. Focusing on performance improvement places learning and development at the core of the future of an organisation instead of being seen as a cost centre. Senior leaders in organisations are often quick to support the 70:20:10 learning model when it's explained to them that most learning in an organisation is currently focused on formal learning, and that the 70:20:10 model provides a more integrated and effective approach. They quickly see the value in taking a more productive approach to learning and development. What is more difficult is engaging the leaders to role model learning while working.

For most line managers, the 70:20:10 learning model has a huge effect. This is discussed more below. Some managers see these changes as negative and perceive that learning and development are cutting training and moving the responsibility for learning onto them. Most are already extremely busy and don't want to take on more work. The single most important thing a line manager cares about is the performance of their team. The most successful way to engage managers with supporting workplace learning and the 70:20:10 model is therefore to focus on how the 70:20:10 model can improve team performance.

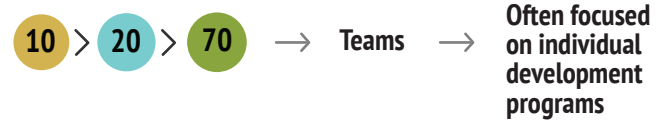
Overall, the risk with focusing the value proposition for the 70:20:10 learning model on cost saving is that this reduces stakeholder engagement. The more successful way to engage stakeholders is to focus on the performance benefits of a 70:20:10 learning model.

Planting the seeds of your 70:20:10 model

Questions to ask

- Who are your stakeholders?
- What is the value proposition for the organisation? For the stakeholders?

The 70:20:10 journey



A mature approach to 70:20:10 doesn't just happen. It's a journey. Like many journeys, as you get close to what you thought was the destination, the goal moves. Learning and development professionals often hear organisations talking about how 70:20:10 is embedded into the way they work with individual programs and attempt to use this as a starting point. Both managers and employees often feel lost when this happens. They don't have good models or a good understanding of how 70:20:10 can really work. I've seen learning and development people attempt to solve this problem by running a course for their managers in how to develop a 70:20:10 learning plan, but I'm not sure they realise that through focusing on such a program they are reinforcing to managers that formal learning is the only way to learn. An alternative to this would be to give managers their own 70:20:10-based learning experience.

Below I outline a staged approach to how to get started with the 70:20:10 learning model.

Stage 1 – 10 > 20 > 70

As I mentioned above, individual development plans are perhaps the hardest way to get started with 70:20:10. Another way would be with what I've called the 10 > 20 > 70 approach. This approach starts with a traditional formal learning course and uses the methods of learning transfer to build social learning experiences and workplace learning tasks. The program could include an online or face-to-face community of practice, peer mentoring and coaching. Managers can be shown how to design informal learning through workplace learning guides that give them a range of tasks that team members can do in the workplace. During a program such as this, the 70:20:10 approach is introduced to the managers and employees in a structured way. They are given an experience that they can then copy.

Stage 2 – Increasing social learning at a team level

The next stepping stone on the path to a mature 70:20:10 is to embed peer and social learning. When you first read this, you might think I'm talking about an introduction to an online social learning network. That could be part of this approach. There are some fast gains to be had for peer and social learning at a team level.

Two approaches are:

1. Group learning

Medical education has a sophisticated, mature approach to workplace learning. An important part of their model is the group learning session, one format for which involves peer teaching. This is where a team member develops a short presentation or workshop on a particular topic for the rest of the team. Another variation is the blog club, where the group members read certain blog posts and then come together to discuss them.

2. Retrospectives

Retrospectives are part of agile project methodology. They normally come after a section of work has been completed, and then it's a process of looking back at the stage and reflecting on what could have been done differently. Retrospectives offer a powerful way to embed continuous learning at a team level. They don't need to happen only at the end of a project phase, but could instead be held each month to reflect on recent work.

If your members are dispersed, then virtual classrooms and virtual meeting technology can be used to embed these types of learning activities.

Stage 3 – Development plans

When managers and employees begin to see 70:20:10 learning in context and they have models that they can copy, then is a good time to introduce 70:20:10 to individual development plans.

Planting the seeds of your 70:20:10 model

Questions to ask

- What learning projects are you going to start with?
- How can we implement the model in a staged way?
- What does the end state look like?

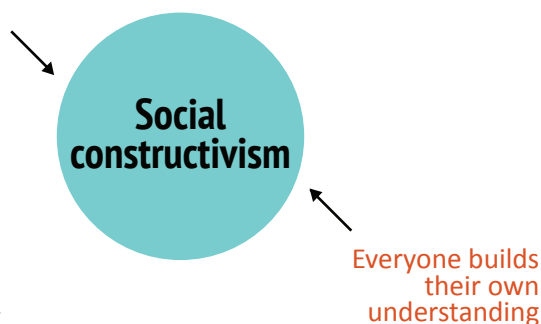
Some useful learning theories

Often 70:20:10 is seen as a learning theory, but it's actually more of a learning model that is supported by a number of learning theories.

I've included this section on learning theories because I think it's important for learning and development people to develop a richer understanding of how people learn.

Social constructivism

We build understanding together



Lev Vygotsky

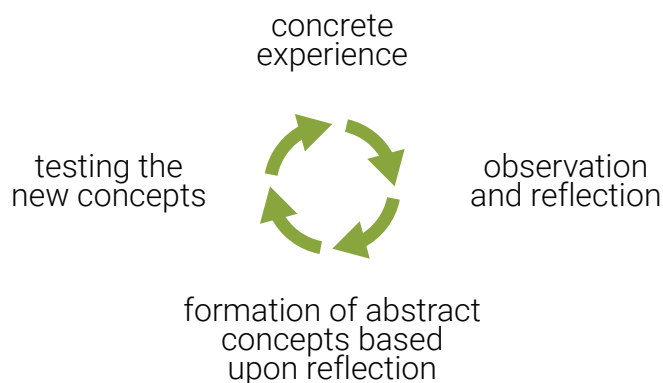
Social constructivism is a version of constructivism learning theory (Vygotsky, 1978). The basics of constructivism are that everyone builds their own understanding of the world. Indeed learning is not someone absorbing facts, but instead happens when someone builds their own insights. At a neurological level, neuroscientists have used brain scanning technology to visually map which parts of the brain are active while doing different tasks. What they have discovered is that each person's maps are different. At a neurological level, each person's brain is literally wiring learning together in different ways.

Social constructivism was developed by Lev Vygotsky. It emphasises the social and collaborative nature of learning. Vygotsky sees that for humans to learn they need to be doing it with other people; learning is a social process not a solo process. For Vygotsky, learning needs to involve social processes such as debating and sharing ideas.

Social constructivist theory is a great underpinning for the 70:20:10 learning model. It supports the integration of experiential-based learning (the 70) with social and collaborative learning (the 20). A few examples of social constructivism are:

- communities of practice
- retrospectives
- coaching.

Kolb experiential learning theories



David Kolb developed his theories of experiential learning in the 1970s (Kolb et al, 1974). For Kolb, learning is a process that has its roots in the concrete experience (the 70) and the learner needs to observe and reflect on those experiences to form an understanding of the activity. At this stage the learner forms a conceptual, often abstract understanding of the experience. Then the learner needs to practise and test these new concepts. During this practice phase the whole process can restart.

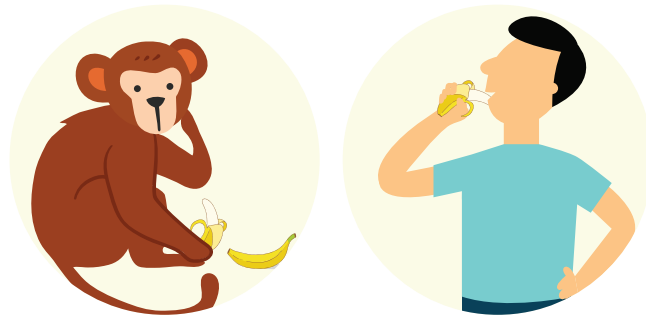
What is useful about Kolb's process is that it's not just about learners having new experiences, it includes reflection and practice. Learning happens during the combination of all the phases.

Often when learning and development people move to more experiential ways of learning they focus on just giving the learner an experience and forget about the reflective phases of the process. The process can be applied to simulated experiences as well.

Putting this into practice means that work and learning need to be integrated. Employees need time and guidance on how to reflect on and articulate what they have learned. Some example activities:

- Regular conversations between learner and manager about what has been learned lately.
- Adding an agenda item to a team meeting, where each team member talks about what they have been learning.
- Personal learning logs, where learners write notes on what they are learning.

Mirror neurons



Neuroscience is the study of how the brain works. One of its most useful discoveries is ‘mirror neurons’ (Rizzolatti & Craighero, 2004). Neuroscientists have discovered that as we observe an act, the same neurons fire in our brain as those in the brain of the person performing the act. Most of the actual research has been done with monkeys but there is evidence that the process works in the same way in humans. Another way to think about this is that humans copy what we see others doing.

Mirror neurons are a great way of explaining what is happening in the 70:20:10 learning model, especially when they are focused on sharing knowledge. Employees often say they learned more on the job than during courses. One way of thinking about this is that on the job, employees see how the organisation is working and their mirror neurons are triggered. Many workplace learning strategies such as job shadowing and mirroring are based on this approach of the employee witnessing best practice. Innovation in an organisation can also be triggered by seeing examples of different practice and approaches that might be outside how one’s own organisation works.

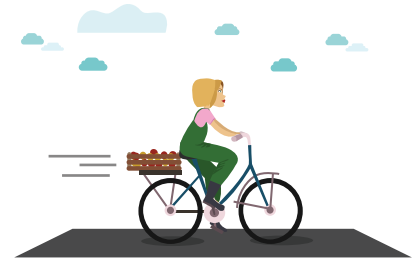
Mirror neurons explain why change is often so hard, as we seem wired to copy the people around us. Change often means breaking those patterns or not being like them to start with. As more people become involved in change the process becomes easier because we are no longer fighting our mirror neurons.

Planting the seeds of your 70:20:10 model

Questions to ask

- How are you going to increase collaboration in learning?
- How will you enable employees to reflect on and articulate what they learn?
- How will you enable employees to practise new skills and possibly fail?
- How will you enable employees to see new approaches to work?

New roles

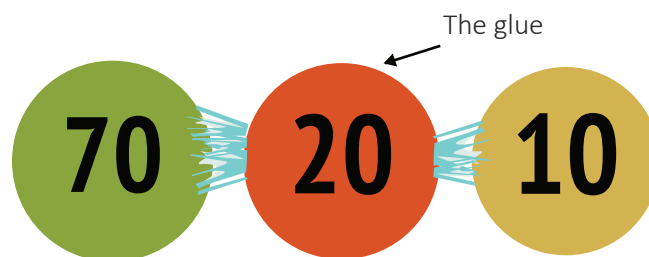


The 70:20:10 learning model does mean new roles for managers, employees and learning and development people.

New role for managers – the learning leader

It's challenging being a manager in a modern workplace. You are responsible for your team's performance as well as an often complex and full workload.

The manager is the glue that holds together workplace learning. One way to think about this is that the 20 is in the middle of the 70:20:10 model. It sits snugly between formal and informal learning.



Recently a number of organisations including Accenture and Adobe announced that they are getting rid of annual performance reviews. PwC research is showing 'two-thirds of large companies are making changes to their end-of-year performance reviews, with 5% of organisations considering dropping performance ratings altogether' (PwC, 2015). The examples described are processes that are often disliked by managers and employees alike. In most of these organisations, performance reviews are being replaced with the idea of performance conversations being a constant part of day-to-day activity. What this means is that managers are constantly asking questions such as:

- What have you learned recently?
- How has that changed the way that you are working?
- What is getting in the way of your learning?
- What do you plan on learning next?

There is often resistance from managers to take more responsibility for learning. They don't feel like they are experts in that field, and 'that's what learning and development is supposed to do'. So learning and development must think about the value proposition for managers, to take more responsibility for their team's learning. We know they will not get excited about taking on new responsibilities. They generally care about the performance of their teams, which means learning needs to be presented and communicated as a solution to improving team performance.

Learning and development teams can help managers to become learning leaders by improving coaching skills at all levels of the organisation.

Planting the seeds of your 70:20:10 model

Questions to ask

- In your organisation, what is the value proposition of the 70:20:10 learning model for managers?
- How are you going to assist your managers with coaching skills?
- How will you help managers to manage their time to enable them to focus more on coaching their team?
- How are you going to involve your managers more in the implementation of learning programs?

New role for employees – self-guided learners



Often when people talk about the 70:20:10 learning model one of the core concepts is the employee as a self-directed learner.

Malcolm Knowles, an adult learning guru, defines self guided learning:

In its broadest meaning, 'self-directed learning' describes a process by which individuals take the initiative, without the assistance of others, in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating learning goals, identifying human and material resources for learning, choosing and implement appropriate learning strategies, and evaluating learning outcomes (Knowles, 1975).

This is complete opposite of what most learning at work looks like. Employees are told they have to complete a corporate induction when they start, they are told they need to complete certain courses to make sure the organisation is compliant. Many of the actions of human resources and learning and development go against fostering a culture of self-directed learning. This is one of the reasons why the introduction of a 70:20:10 approach needs to be staged.

It's not just our workplaces that work against self-directed learning. Most learning in schools and universities is directed by Lecturers or teachers. 70:20:10 learning models can be challenging for employees. One of the core ideas of the 70:20:10 model means employees need to take more responsibility for their learning.

The first barrier that appears when the 70:20:10 model is being introduced to employees (and some learning and development people) is that it is seen as the removal of training.

The second challenge is that, anecdotally, we have heard that employees complain that the process of workplace learning doesn't feel like they are learning. It's harder to measure for both the employee and the organisation.

The general stages of self-directed

1. Identification of learning needs

Employees often find the identification of learning needs challenging. Self reflection is not an easy skill to learn. It's one that newer generations of employees just starting to enter the workforce are more likely to have than our current generation of employees. The right questions and feedback from managers is useful for employees to be able to identify learning needs that are aligned with team and organisational needs.

Learning and development can help with the identification of learning needs by providing self-assessment and benchmarking tools.

2. Learning

The actual process of self-directed learning is different for each employee and each task. Common steps might be:

Resources

Employees need access to new information and resources as part of the first stage of learning. These might be information resources such as books or websites, but might also be time spent with experts who possess knowledge that the learner needs.

Time

Learning means doing something differently. In day-to-day work this means that for an employee to learn something in a self-guided manner they need time to learn to do things differently. Time to work on a project, time to work alongside someone else, time to perform new processes a little slower.

Practice

Employees need to be able to practise and sometimes fail at new skills. Allowing them to make mistakes does not sit comfortably with many organisations. In most cases the perception is that employees shouldn't make mistakes.

Articulation and reflection

Managers can assist this process by having learning conversations with their team members. These learning conversations should be helping employees to articulate and reflect on what they are learning.

3. Evaluation of learning

Just like the identification of learning needs, the evaluation of learning is not easy. It's the process of asking questions that is important. Useful questions might include:

- Have I gained the skills and knowledge that I set out to gain?
- How am I applying these skills and knowledge?
- Has my performance changed?

Evaluation of learning is a process that managers should foster.

Learning and development can help solve the challenge of self reflection and evaluation through providing learners with self-assessment tools that enable them to self diagnose and benchmark skills and knowledge.

Planting the seeds of your 70:20:10 model

The most important question that you need to ask yourself when planning your 70:20:10 model is, 'How are you going to support your employees to become self-directed learners?'

What the 70:20:10 learning model means for learning and development teams



Moving to a 70:20:10 learning model requires a shift on the part of the learning and development team. Traditionally, learning and development teams have been involved in:

1. the direct facilitation and delivery of training, or
2. organisation and development of face-to-face programs.

But moving towards a 70:20:10 model often means the team needs to change the way they work.

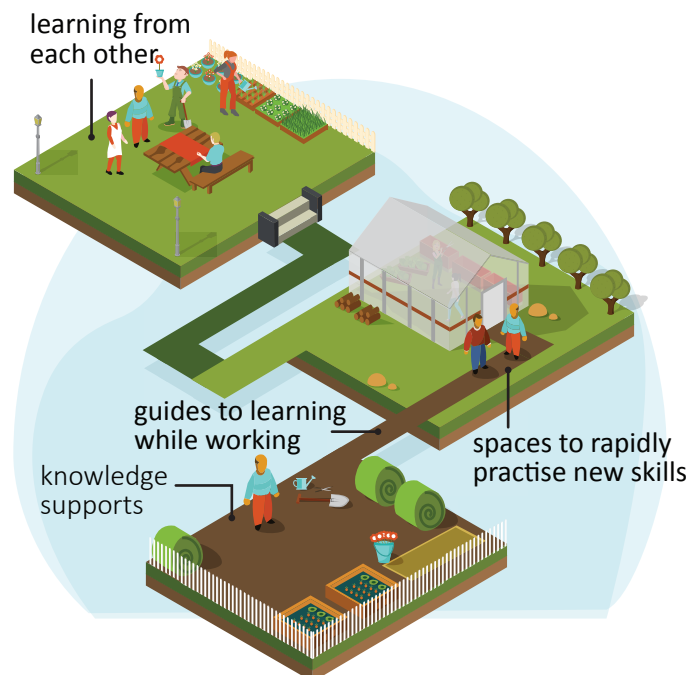
From training needs analysis to performance needs analysis

One of the core activities of traditional learning and development teams is training needs analysis. Understanding the business problem and context becomes even more important with the move to an integrated 70:20:10 solution. The process shifts from training needs to performance needs. A performance needs analysis is focused on what the employee needs to do and what are the barriers to their achieving that. It's about looking for barriers that might be more than just a lack of skills or knowledge. Asking broader questions at the analysis stage means better integrated solutions can be designed.

From service centres to consultants

Learning and development teams who focus on organising learning programs are typically seen by organisations as service centres. Moving to a 70:20:10 learning model often requires that when a section of an organisation requests training (the 10) the learning and development team needs to challenge them, working more like a consultant to identify what is really needed. Making this transition is not easy, and takes radically different influencing skills plus a shift in mindset.

Learning ecosystems



70:20:10 learning models often mean learning and development professionals move towards designing a 'learning ecosystem'. A learning ecosystem will look different in each organisation, but it is always more than just a series of face-to-face or online courses.

My working definition of a learning ecosystem is that it is an entity made up of components that work together to create a whole learning experience. The relationship between the components means that the overall experience becomes more than the sum of its parts.

Pathways – guides to learning while working

The central tenet of a learning ecosystem is that learners need some way to navigate through it. A challenge of the 70:20:10 learning model is that the learners need to become more self directed in their approach to learning.

They often need guidance in how the ecosystem works so that they can easily see the pathways that will lead to the learning goals. Heidi Grant Halvorson has found that people are more likely to achieve goals that are focused on learning than goals that are based on achieving a certain level of performance (Halvorson, 2011).

Gardeners – learning from each other

Learning ecosystems are not just about goals and resources – the driving force behind a learning ecosystem is the people involved. Repeatedly it's been found that the employee's manager is the key to their learning experience (Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, 2005). In 70:20:10 learning models managers have a dual role: providing feedback to their team members about their performance, and leading conversations that encourage reflective thinking and continuous learning.

Jay Cross wrote extensively about informal learning as being the 'natural way to learn' (Cross, 2006). Informal learning is often a process of looking at what peers are doing inside and outside of an organisation and literally copying them. In many '70' learning approaches involving job rotations or mentoring, this type of reproducing is just what peers are doing. One of the refreshing things about the 70:20:10 learning model is that organisations are focusing more on these types of approaches.

Hothouses – spaces to rapidly practise new skills

When I got started in training, I focused on providing learners with real experiential learning experiences. I quickly realised that learners often needed time to be able to practise new skills and get feedback before they start on real tasks. The idea of a flipped classroom is not new. The flipped classroom approach focuses on using face-to-face or online virtual classrooms for peer-to-peer learning, an approach that removes the provision of information from the learning experience. A similar way of thinking is that formal learning becomes a learning 'hothouse', where learners are provided with somewhere to practise the decision making that they will be doing on the job and gain rapid feedback. Providing these opportunities for practice is often left out of 70:20:10-based learning approaches because of the focus on experiential learning.

Foundations – knowledge supports

Repeatedly, one of the root causes of performance problems I've found has been the organisation's intranet and knowledge bases. In these same organisations there is typically confusion between knowledge management and learning. Often, the only way to access an organisation's practices is through their training programs, though learners often seek more flexible ways to access this knowledge. A good learning ecosystem ensures learners have access to a range of job aids and support resources.

The idea of a learning ecosystem provides learning and development professionals with a framework and approach for making the 70:20:10 model a reality. As a framework it provides a way to move beyond designing courses and instead design more holistic, strategic approaches to learning.

Learning and development team members who once focused on organising training programs shift to being learning designers. Team members who were involved in direct delivery shift to roles of community manager or content curator. These shifts are often natural progressions and happen quite easily because many of the core skills of being a great face-to-face facilitator are the same as those needed to be a great community manager. But the move to becoming a learning designer is more difficult. It used to be that the external provider (who might be responsible for face-to-face delivery or developing an online module) did all the learning design. The 70:20:10 approach often means that the learning and development team designs the overall architecture and what the blend of mediums might be. They therefore need a richer understanding of how people learn.

Designing the ecosystem

Learning and development has traditionally worked with the analysis, design, development, implementation, evaluation (ADDIE) model for the design of programs. ADDIE is perfect for designing courses but doesn't allow for the design of a holistic ecosystem. What learning and development needs is a holistic process that takes in the complexity of the multiple elements and their coordination. The solution lies in 'design thinking'.

Design thinking is about taking hybrid creative and analytical approaches that designers (e.g. product designers) use and applying them to any problem. It is a process that enables learning professionals to rethink, redesign and rebuild how learning works in their organisation. Sprout Labs has put together a Learning While Working Framework that is a combination of principles for designing 70:20:10-based learning programs and a guide to using design thinking in learning programs.

70:20:10 learning programs are all about implementation

Project managing a learning program that is based on the 70:20:10 model is more complex than just running a course. They have more moving parts, are more than just one-off events, and learning and development operational people often find the increased complexity difficult, at least in the beginning. Running a 70:20:10 learning program is more like running an advertising campaign than running an event. Detailed plans about the program need to be part of the overall design process.

Be the change you want to see in the world

Learning and development teams can create a hothouse for new ways of working and learning. Since the shift to a 70:20:10 learning model and the increased use of technologies in learning means that members of the team often need to reskill, the performance gap provides an opportunity to role model how the 70:20:10 model works. It's often hard for managers and employees to grasp exactly what continuous learning looks like. They need examples. If a learning and development team reduces the number of courses and conferences they go to and increases the amount of informal learning they do, this provides a powerful reference model for the rest of the organisation.

Useful questions to ask are:

- How could you use peer learning in your learning and development team?
- What happens if we stop going to conferences?
- How could your team embed and role model the practice of working out loud?

Planting the seeds of your 70:20:10 model

Questions to ask

- How does the culture of your learning and development team need to change?
- What new skills does learning and development need?
- How is your learning and development team going to move to designing a learning ecosystem?

Digital learning and 70:20:10



Digital learning technologies hold many possibilities for supporting and enabling 70:20:10 learning models. There are a range of technologies and tools that can be used for enhancing and increasing sharing and reflection in the workplace and tracking learning activity.

One approach Sprout Labs has seen work well in transforming learning in highly-technical organisations is to do the exact opposite to what most learning and development professionals would naturally do, and that is to focus on technologies and then embed new learning approaches as part of those projects. Employees in these types of technical cultures are often drawn to new technologies but are resistant to changing learning practice. Focusing on technology changes is a powerful way to realign learning in a manner technical employees find engaging.

Let's look at a few of the ways digital learning technologies can be used in a 70:20:10 learning model.

Personal learning environments

The idea of a personal learning environment (PLE) is not new, but hasn't been talked about much in learning and development over the last few years.

A personal learning environment is often a cluster of technologies and online services that an employee uses to:

1. Bring information together into a centralised place to make it easier to digest information quickly. An example of this is Feedly, which enables users to read the feeds from many blogs in one place.
2. Publish and reflect on what they have been learning and how they are putting that into practice. This process of sharing and publishing can also be a platform where other employees comment as well. This might be internal within an organisation or can be public. Blogging platforms are perfect for this process of self publishing.

3. Track progress on learning goals.

PLEs are powerful in that a single system doesn't have to do it all. Different systems can be used for each component. PLEs are not so much about technology as they are about processes that can be used to enhance and deepen learning.

LinkedIn can be used as a PLE. An individual can follow people and read what that person is sharing and writing about as well as publish comments, share and write posts. The challenge is that most people will read and share content, but many don't feel confident in publishing posts. They feel like they need to be experts to write and publish. It's actually at this stage – when people are having to reflect and articulate on learning and ideas – that really deep learning occurs and expertise develops. One way learning and development professionals can help encourage learners to publish is to show examples of bloggers who are writing in reflective ways. Learning and development professionals should be role modeling using PLEs for learning as well.

Performance supports

Often a performance problem doesn't need a training solution. It is an information problem and not a skills problem. Training is often used for information delivery but training is not a great way to communicate information. The use of training as an information dump is one of the reasons that learners forget so much of the course and the reason why knowledge is not transferred into workplace practice. A performance support is a resource that can be integrated into the work task and can be accessed at the moment of need. Examples of performance supports are checklists, cheat sheets and flowcharts.

A couple of useful questions to ask during the early stages of learning program design are:

1. Does this problem really need to be solved by a learning program?
2. How can performance supports that could be used after a learning program is completed be integrated into the training program?

The second question can be useful for learning complex tasks and processes. The training program switches to focusing on how to use the performance support. This approach of thinking about different ways a performance support can be used in the learning program is called the 'Five Moments of Need' (Gottfredson & Mosher, 2014).

Five moments of need

New	More	Apply	Solve	Change
When people are learning how to do something for the first time	When people are expanding the breadth and depth of what they have learned	When they need to act upon what they have learned, which includes planning what they will do, remembering what they may have forgotten, or adapting their performance to a unique situation	When problems arise, or things break or don't work the way they were intended	When people need to learn a new way of doing something, which requires them to change skills that are deeply ingrained in their performance practice

Working out loud

Another simple but powerful way digital technologies can be used to increased performance has come to be known as 'working out loud'. John Stepper describes it this way:

Working out loud starts with making your work visible in such a way that it might help others. When you do that – when you work in a more open, connected way – you can build a purposeful network that makes you more effective and provides access to more opportunities (Stepper, 2014).

This can start with simple daily or weekly status update by employees on an internal social network about what they are currently working on. The Stepper definition also focuses on building networks with peers inside and outside that can help an employee to complete their job faster. Working out loud is a simple, fast way to increase knowledge sharing in an organisation.

Planting the seeds of your 70:20:10 model

Questions to ask

- What existing platforms do you have that could be used to enhance learning e.g. internal social media platforms?
- How can learning technologies be used to enhance collaboration in a learning program?
- How can digital technologies be used in a performance support approach?
- How can learning technologies be used to enable employees to have a personal learning environment?

Evaluation and the 70:20:10 learning concept



The 70:20:10 learning model shifts how measurement and evaluation of learning and development programs occur. There is a subtle distinction between the process of measurement and that of evaluation. Measurement is the process of collecting data about whether or not a program has been successful. Evaluation is the process of analysing data and exploring if the program has been successful by using the data to make decisions about the continuous improvement of the program. The shift is that currently most measurement and evaluation focuses on gaining employee feedback on events or resources and is not focused on measuring business outcomes.

Most 70:20:10 learning programs use integrated blended learning that might not even include formal learning. This makes it harder to collect data using one dimensional measurement tools such as surveys. Kirkpatrick's four levels of learning evaluation has become a shared language that most learning and development people understand.[#] The problem with the model is that most learning evaluation and measurement focuses on level 1 reactions only. Kirkpatrick's model can still be used for 70:20:10 learning models but if formal learner events are not part of the model then the focus needs to be on higher-level outcomes. When planning an evaluation program, do not start with designing how to measure the results but instead start with the reactions.

Part of the analysis stage of any learning program should be looking at what business metrics the program can affect. This does two things:

1. It provides a metric to measure the program with what is already being recorded and monitored.
2. It moves the discussion away from just being about formal training solutions as an approach to performance improvement. When a metric is chosen it often becomes clear that just adding a learning program isn't going to affect the metric, and what is really needed is a more complex, integrated solution.

Experience API (xAPI) is a new standard for reporting digital learning interactions. It has a flexible structure that means learning activities beyond a learning management system can be recorded. For the measurement of 70:20:10 learning models it has huge potential. Most of the time it is measuring learning activities and not business or organisational outcomes. xAPI can develop rich, detailed datasets of how employees are accessing and interacting with learning activities and other online resources.

[#] In case Kirkpatrick's four levels of evaluation are new to you, they are:

1. **Reaction** – This level focuses on the learner's reactions to programs. Measurement tools are often just end-of-course surveys.
2. **Learning** – Focuses on whether or not the learner has gained new skills and knowledge from the learning experience. This may involve end-of-course assessments.
3. **Behaviour** – Focuses on if the learner's behaviour has changed because of the program. This is often measured over a period of time and is based on peer or manager feedback.
4. **Results** – Focuses on the business or organisational outcomes.

Success Case Method

One evaluation method that can work extremely well with the 70:20:10 learning model is the Success Case Method (SCM) developed by Robert Brinkerhoff. SCM 'combines the ancient craft of storytelling with more current evaluation approaches of naturalistic inquiry and case study' (Brinkerhoff, 2005). The SCM process works in a way that is:

1. based on business metrics where you decide which learners or groups of learners are classed as successful or unsuccessful as a result of the program
2. followed by an interview with a sample of these learners that focuses on finding the factors that contributed to the learners' success or lack of success.

After just a few interviews, the factors that are affecting the program's success start to become extremely clear. 70:20:10 learning models are often multi layered, integrated learning ecosystems and the narrative/storytelling approaches used in SCM are perfect for examining them.

Planting the seeds of your 70:20:10 model

Questions to ask

- How will you evaluate your 70:20:10 learning model?
- Could the success case method work in your context?
- How could you use experience API to help you to evaluate learning?



Some examples of 70:20:10-based learning models

It's sometimes difficult to picture exactly what a 70:20:10 learning model looks like. The challenge with 70:20:10 models is that they change depending on the context of the organisation and its employees. This means that each model really needs to be custom designed for each situation and business problem. Below are a few design ideas.

Sharing knowledge

We're going to start with a program that is based on sharing knowledge because this is where 70:20:10 is really powerful. It's often one of the easiest places to begin. A classic form of knowledge sharing is the technical onboarding program.



Meet Rebecca, a learning and development manager. Rebecca needs to design a blended on-boarding program for new assessors. The processes and guidelines these assessors are working with are complex and involve dealing with a lot of ambiguity. It takes 12 to 18 months for new employees to be competent and for the assessor to be able to write reports without supervision.

Project	On-boarding for new assessors			
70	Starts working on partially real tasks		Developing portfolio of evidence that is measured in a CBT system	
20	Works closely with coach		Is connected to a group of peers	
10	Worked examples simulate real cases			



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The new employee starts with an online learning experience that is based around simulated cases. In the early stages these are worked examples where an expert assessor explains how they go about making the decisions, and then over time the employee begins to make decisions about parts of the simulated cases. While they are doing this work, the coach is physically located close to them. The coach is constantly having learning conversations with the new employee.

The coach is not just focused on the simulated cases, they are also talking with the employee about the work they are currently doing and involving the new employee in parts of the cases that they are able to do. As the employee's capabilities build they begin to do more real work. The employees are connected to a group of peers so that they can debate the ambiguity of the problems they face.

As they start completing more real work they develop a portfolio of evidence that is assessed against a cluster of custom competence. This assessment also includes the measurement of the quality and quantity of their work.

Communities of practice

One of the most common forms of knowledge sharing activity is the community of practice. A community of practice is a group of peers who share knowledge, with some working together to generate new practice.



Meet Jeff. He wants to increase knowledge sharing in his GP practice. Jeff runs weekly group learning sessions where each week one team member runs a training session or discussion about a topic for their peers. Jeff re-organises everyone's patient bookings to make sure this is achievable. The practice includes a nurse and physiotherapist and they are a part of these sessions as well. This arrangement creates cross-discipline learning and sharing.

In terms of effective learning, it's probably the person running the session who is doing the actual learning. What Jeff is doing with these sessions is also saying to his team that learning while working is important. He is also starting to create a culture of learning in his team.

Bring new knowledge into the organisation

Let's get back to Rebecca and how she wants to improve the culture of continuous learning in her organisation. She wants to embed the process of debriefing and retrospectives into the way her team works. (Retrospectives are a process where the team is constantly looking back on recent work and asking how it could be improved and what they have learned.) Rebecca's barrier is that the organisation's managers don't have skills in conducting a retrospective. This means that she is going to need some formal learning experience in the learning design to introduce this new practice into the organisation.

Project	Blended learning program on running retrospectives				
70					
20					
10					

70

20

10

Story-based eLearning module

Over a period of time, managers are sent tips

Planning templates

A peer observes and gives feedback on a session

COP

The program starts with a survey that focuses on managers and teams self assessing their current approaches to team-based, continuous learning. This survey can be used later in the program as an evaluation tool. The learning experience starts with a story-based eLearning module. This provides the managers with an example of how to run a retrospective. The module is based around a number of things that go wrong with retrospectives. After the formal learning experience, managers are sent tips over a period of time on how to run retrospectives. This nudges the managers towards embedding the new approach within their team work culture.

There is also a portal of resources on the organisation's intranet that includes planning templates. A community of practice is then built around the managers sharing what they are doing and how, as a group, they are solving problems.

After a period of time, each manager sits in on another manager running a retrospective and gives feedback. This practice is an opportunity for knowledge sharing and the data can be used as part of the evaluation process. At this stage the self survey is run again to see how the program has affected team-based continuous learning in the organisation.

Generating new knowledge

Rebecca next wants to increase innovation in the organisation.

Supporting innovative projects

Project	Driving innovation in teaching practices at a TAFE			
70	Project Small amount of funding and time			Mentoring
20	Major support for the project	Community of Practice focused on innovation		
10				

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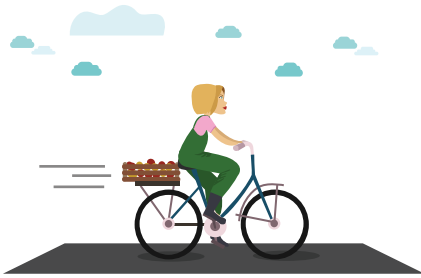
Rebecca facilitates a program where employees run self-initiated innovation projects. To be part of the program an employee has to apply and they are given a small amount of money and time away from their normal duties to make the project happen. The funding is about \$1000 to \$1500.

For employees who are part of these projects, this is often the first time that they have been involved in innovation-related project work. Rebecca forms a community of practice around employees involved in the program. This provides them with a group of peers who are excited about change and the community of practice enables the group to share challenges and solve problems together.

There are many models for generating and making innovation happen in an organisation. Another model is the IBM online jam event. An online jam event is focused around generating ideas over a period of 24 hours. It's a global brainstorming event. IBM used the jam process to derive their organisational values. Because of the scale and global nature of their business, an online process was the only way that IBM could ensure widespread input into these values.

Another form of innovation is 'hackathons', where people are given a challenge and work in teams over a short period of time to prototype and build an idea. The ideas are then pitched and prizes awarded. Hackathons have become part of the way technology companies innovate but the process can be applied to other areas like generating new practices or new processes.

The 70:20:10 concept is a journey not a destination



The 70:20:10 concept is flexible and its adoption lays a pathway for a different way of learning in the workplace. Previously I've talked about a mature approach to 70:20:10, where learning is at the core of what an organisation does. Getting to this stage is more of a journey than a destination; just as you feel like you have developed a mature approach to one aspect of the model you will see (and should be seeing) areas where it can be improved and refined.

I hope the ideas in this eBook have helped you along your 70:20:10 journey.

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