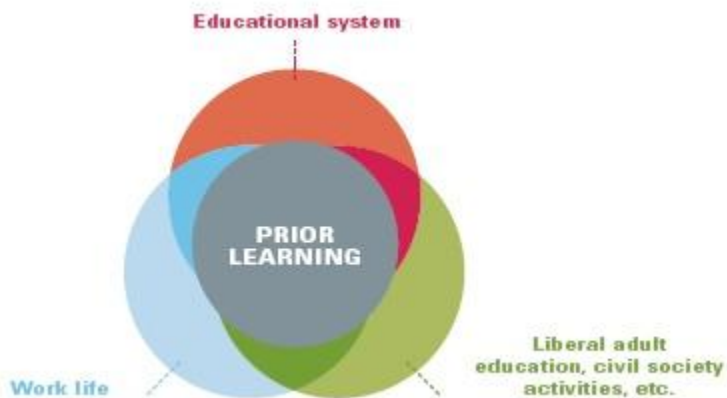


Introduction

With over eight years experience within the learning and development function I work as the training coordinator for FBD Insurance, managing people and resources. A key success in this role has been my participation in the roll out of Moodle as a Learning Management System (LMS) to three of the companies within the group reaching in excess of 1000 people. A central aspect of my role is the management of Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) and Instructional Designers to develop e-learning content. Another aspect of my role is the management of outside vendors that offer e-learning services to the organisation. I feel that the Masters in Applied e-Learning would help refine my skills and experience as I transition from offline to online responsibilities. The opportunity also exists to use the learning gleaned from the course to guide the development of e-learning within this organisation in the future.

Previous Experience

My career in learning and development began as a Sales Office Trainer providing training in new Information Technology (IT) systems and developing trainees understanding and application of company procedures. A key aspect of this role was co-operation with colleague trainers to develop and deliver induction training material.



A highlight of my training career was my involvement in the setting up of a new Contact Centre for FBD Insurance. As part of the project team, my responsibility was to develop an entire induction training plan that adhered to the Financial Regulator guidelines. The induction for new staff involved a three week programme delivered to a group of approximately 15 people. In total I delivered over 2000 hours of training over a 12 month period. Reporting was an integral part of this role and at the end of each induction Team Leaders were provided with an update on areas of strengths and weakness for each inductee. The goal of this was to determine the need for further training, support or coaching which was instrumental to staff development. The induction training was not static; we deviated from our plan as we applied the learnings from one session on to the next.

A similar project was the creation of product and system training for a contact centre to which a new product had been outsourced. An essential aspect of this

project was the development of the material in a manner that allowed for a smooth transition to an external trainer.

My most recent project has been my involvement with the introduction of e-learning to the organisation. I have contributed to the design, testing and roll out of the Moodle (LMS). My work involves updating and maintaining the system, managing issues and new developments. The role has seen me encounter the e-authoring packages Articulate, Adobe Captivate and Oracle UPK to develop e-learning content. I have also been involved in designing and evaluating e-learning content developed by colleagues.

My career path in learning and development has exposed me to a variety of experiences. I have gained knowledge in the areas of adult learning and e-learning and improved my organisational skills and my ability to communicate and engage with many groups including internal stake holders and external vendors. This experience provides a strong foundation and a key starting point from which I can continue to develop and refine my skills through attendance of the MSc in Applied learning.

Conclusion

My instinct as a trainer is to provide training in the style that I prefer. However my experience has taught me that students do not necessarily learn in the way that I prefer and arising from this was the realisation that people have different learning styles and abilities. Today I am more cognisant of the various learning styles but I want to delve deeper and develop a better understanding of how people learn and how e-learning can help this. Reflecting on my experience of developing induction training for the new contact centre I can see that I applied the key learnings from each session on the next, designing more engaging, experiential learning opportunities. I want to apply the same pattern of improvement to e-learning. One of the key skills that will help me do this is a focus on instructional design which will provide more engaging programmes for learners. In particular I would like to engage our senior adult learners who often feel that they have lower information technology (IT) literacy than some of their junior colleagues. The challenge and the opportunity is to provide innovative learning that fulfils the needs of the wide variety of learners within the organisation.

In the course of my work I have encountered a number of course authoring tools since the introduction of e-learning to the organisation. It is exciting that the development of content and courses no longer rests with those with specialist IT qualifications and with the growing number of applications available I would like to continue to upgrade my skills in this area.

External factors such as compliance requirements imposed by the Central Bank has meant that those involved in financial services must now engage in learning in the form of Continuous Professional Development (CPD). As a result investment in e-learning within the organisation is increasing with staff being able to access learning from their PC terminal. Most recently the company has encouraged staff development through the delivery of online FETAC accredited courses to approximately 200 people. Since its introduction e-learning has become successfully embedded with the organisation. My goal is to engage with the MSc in Applied e-Learning and contribute to the future development of learning within the organisation.