Elucidat

The ultimate guide to designing quality elearning

How to design engaging digital learning experiences that deliver impact.
An evidence-based guide.

www.elucidat.com

Contents

Introduction

With **86%** of training now taking place either **completely or partly online,** it's clear that digital is a key element of every successful L&D strategy. Faced with widening skill gaps, most businesses are looking to digital learning to help them respond. But this increase in demand for online learning has seen **43%** of L&D professionals struggling to respond at speed, while maintaining quality. And there's no point delivering lots of training solutions quickly, if they're not effective.

So, how do you design engaging elearning that meets end users' needs and delivers real **business impact?**

We've surveyed learners, gained insight from L&D professionals and reviewed the latest industry research to discover what makes engaging digital learning experiences that deliver impact. This guide brings together our findings and provides elearning best practices, practical tips and lots of examples.

So, whether you call yourself a learning designer, performance consultant, an accidental instructional designer or a subject-expert and are creating elearning for the first time, you'll find what you need to design effective online learning solutions.

**Read on for design best practices.**

What is elearning best practice?

The modern learner has around **20 minutes a week** for learning at work (Bersin & Forbes). That's a mere **1%** of their working week. This might not even be 20 minutes in one go or one place. So, a really crucial aspect of what makes effective elearning is that it respects its audience and makes good use of this time. After all, elearning effectiveness is measured on whether it makes a difference to a person's behavior or performance habits. It needs to drive change!

Effective elearning design takes into account modern learner trends and dives into the needs and habits of its end users. Long haul, click-through, interactive elearning? No thanks. Elearning effectiveness comes from solutions that are engaging, relevant and personalized.

How frequently are employees engaging with elearning courses?

Daily: 4%

Weekly: 18%

Monthly: 37%

Quarterly: 28%

Yearly: 13%
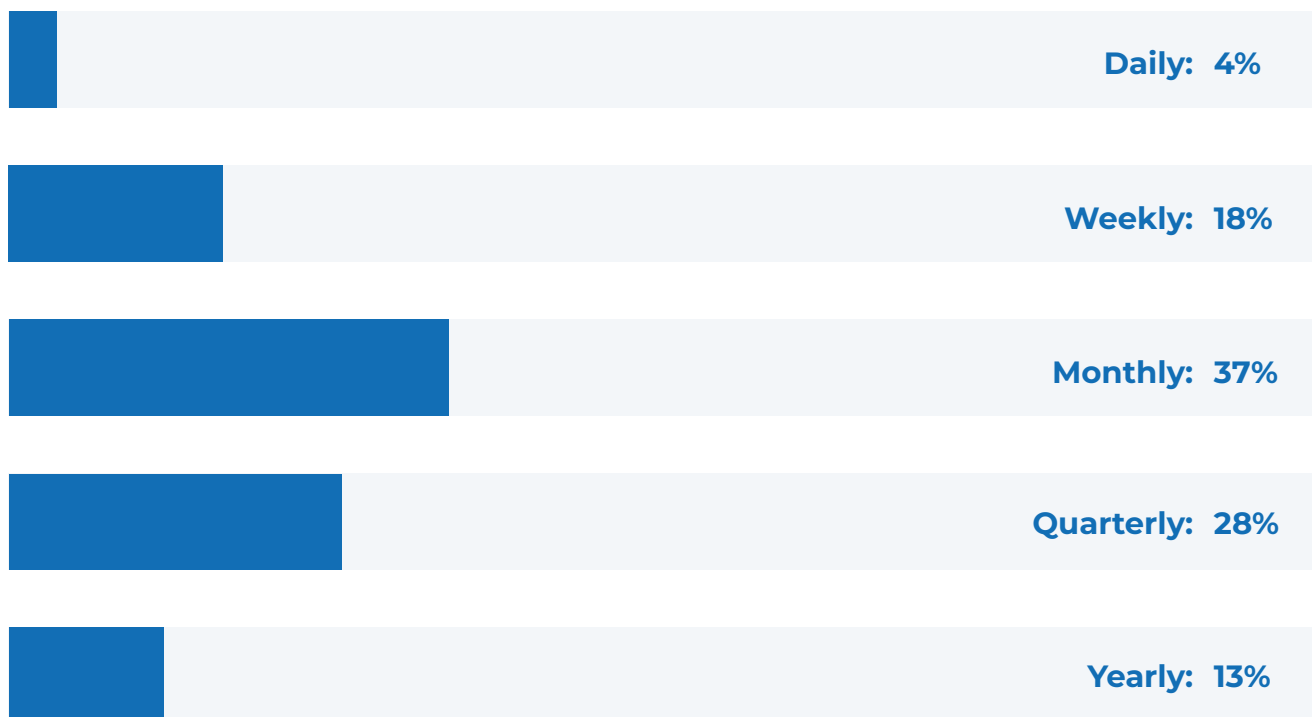
What do you know about modern learner needs?

When we talk about learning we're really talking about changing people's behaviors and habits. To be successful, you need to get under the skin of your audience.

- What will really help them perform better?
- What will engage them?
- And what challenges and blockers do they face?

> *"Think about how you can advocate for your learners. Ask why this is useful? What's the purpose we serve...I really think that we have an opportunity to influence in a broader way...and from a learner centric perspective."*
>
> Stella Lee, Founder of Paradox Learning, Leading with purpose through thoughtful L&D

Of course, every organization is different. So, it's vital you always research your end users as part of your elearning development process. To boost your own findings, however, we have pulled together key insights from our own research with modern learners - otherwise known as employees in global organizations.

Read on for the headlines.

3 key insights on the modern learning experience

Insight 1: Time is squeezed

The modern learner has **3 hours or less a month** set aside for learning at work. That's a mere **1-2% of a full-time worker's hours.** This might not even be 20 minutes in one go or one place. In this time-pressured environment, it's clear that digital learning offers a far more flexible solution than traditional classroom learning. However, whether it's online or in person, time away from work needs to be time well spent. So, it's crucial that any elearning respects your people's time.

Insight 2: Learning can misalign

Making good use of your people's time ultimately means delivering training that meets their learning needs. Often quicker to develop than face-to-face training, digital learning can help organizations and individuals keep up with new and evolving skill requirements. However, **around a third** of employees feel that their digital learning **does not fully align with their company's goals.** And if elearning isn't covering the skills and knowledge employees need, then it's wasting their time.

Insight 3: Room for improvement

Covering the right skills is the minimal viable product. Making the most of people's time means maximizing the impact of any training. But with more than **50% of elearning in large organizations rated as fair to poor,** there's definitely room for improvement. So, we asked learners to give us their thoughts on what good and bad elearning looks like to them. The answer was clear. Long, passive, click-through elearning? No thanks. People want focused, active and relevant digital learning that they can easily access and apply in their work.

> Deep dive into the minds of corporate learners by reading the
> Secrets to elearning engagement report.

How to design successful elearning

So, how do you take these learner insights and use them to deliver more successful people-centered training that tackles your business' skill gaps?

4 best practice principles for impactful digital learning

1 **Make it relevant**

👍 Solutions that overtly meet the specific performance needs of individuals in their context	👎 Taking a one-size-fits-all or a "top down" approach to learning

62% of learners said **relevant content was the most important factor** when it came to elearning. If something is really useful it gives people intrinsic motivation to use it.

Mundane, generic content is easily spotted by learners, and they are then likely to switch off. The average person gives learning content around **7 seconds** to decide if a page is for them or not, and will leave if their needs aren't met.

"Acquiring knowledge must have an element of purpose... You're going to get the information that matters to you right now. Because you're faced with a situation where having the knowledge becomes essential."

Lila Warren, Global Head of Retail Academy, Pret a Manger
Harnessing curiosity to empower learners

How do you achieve this?

Start with clear learning objectives and user profiles: It goes without saying that unless you know what problem you're trying to fix, why it exists and what the audience needs, your elearning project is unlikely to be effective.

Speak to them: Is your **tone of voice** speaking to the target audience(s)? Is it at the right level? Is it helping turn theory into actionable outcomes? Is it contextualized?

Include examples: To make sure you design elearning that's overtly relevant to your audience, provide context. Don't just tell learners what to do, include real life examples of how these skills are applied in their day-to-day work. This might require different versions of content, or the use of personalization tools to help filter out what's relevant to that **audience member.**

Provide role or skill specific content: Try a simple "role filter" at the beginning of your learning content, and then use **dynamic menus or branching** to serve up the topics or pages that apply to that role. If you're providing training on a specific skill, ask your **learners what** context they need to apply the skill. Armed with their answers, you can provide the specific examples or application exercises they need.

Localize your content: Translation can really help engage global audiences, but localization can go further. This is where someone from that location helps edit the written and visual content to bring it in line with local "norms" and contexts.

"Some training modules do not relate to the ever-changing nature of my work. I must learn things that don't relate to my department, which is time-consuming and inefficient."

Anonymous employee feedback

2 Get truly interactive

👍 Content and experiences that connect with audiences and motivate them to do something

👎 Online manuals, technical jargon, passive experiences, indirect communications, click-through content

20% of learners said they **switched off when elearning lacked interactivity.** But they're clear that interactivity isn't just about clicks. It's about engaging them through active **participation and connection** using a variety of approaches, including visual and multimedia content.

> *"[Effective learning] drives action, opportunity to practice and creates a series. There's a more-ish effect. So, I've had a little taste and I want a bit more. I can fall into the rabbit hole, or I can grab what I've got and move on."*
>
> David Hepworth, Learning & Talent – Design and Technology Lead, Aviva
> Embedding democratized learning creation at Aviva

How do you achieve this?

Create participation: Active learning and practice are the building blocks of effective or "sticky" learning. Encourage action and participation inside and outside your elearning. Reflecting, trying, practising, being stretched, failing, discussing, comparing (in person or online via social polling) – this kind of interactivity engages by involvement.

Tell stories: Great digital storytelling and immersive learning experiences connects hearts and heads. It creates **emotional connection** which is vital for effective learning to take place.

Make endings the beginning: Embed links to relevant next steps to create a continuous learning experience. For example, discussion forums, further learning, practice tasks, and on-the-job guides.

3 | Keep it concise

👍 Uses people's time wisely, makes learning short and to the point, allows people to dip in and out.

👎 A splatter gun of disconnected pieces; just "info" without any support

17% of learners reported **improved learner engagement** when elearning was **concise, easy to understand,** and **well-organized.** Bite-sized, digestible digital learning content can fit around schedules, so it's no wonder it's popular with busy employees. But effective elearning courses aren't just short for the sake of it. For elearning best practice, go for solutions that **deliver real value** and make good use of learners' time – whether that's in 2 minutes, 10 minutes or longer.

"Content does not become more useful simply by virtue of breaking it into smaller pieces. To create useful content, we would actually have to talk to the people we are creating it for."

Nick Shackleton-Jones, CEO and Founder of Shackleton Consulting
[Stop going through the motions and start delivering learning impact](#)

"Digital learning keeps my attention when it stays active and keeps me focused on the task."
Anonymous employee feedback

How do you achieve this?

Less is always more: Reading on screen is hard work, and there's only so much detail someone can take in at a time. Say what you need to say in the shortest way possible.

Use a direct, active voice: Use the **"you"** word and what people need to do (e.g., "here are three things you can do in this situation," not "when in this situation, employees should…" Imagine the audience is there and say what you want to say out loud, then write it.

Make it scannable: Use clear headers, subheadings, emboldened sentences, bullets and more to help make the copy more scannable and digestible.

Get visual: An image is worth a thousand words. From diagrams to photographs, the right visuals can increase your impact. They help communicate your key concepts quickly, engage your learners and can even get an emotional response.

Spaced repetition and practice: Rather than asking learners to sit through a two hour-long course which they'll likely forget in a few weeks' time, break learning into short chunks that have purpose. This allows you to build up **learner competence** and confidence incrementally across a period of time through spaced repetition.

"For me, it is interactive rather than simply reading lots of text, as this won't keep my attention."
Anonymous employee feedback

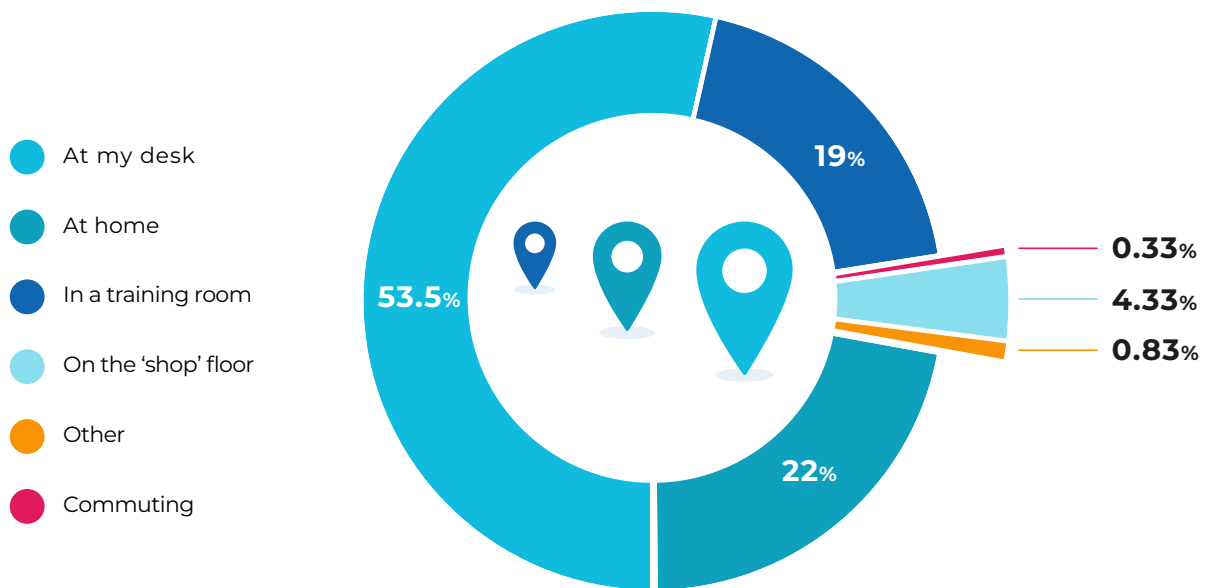### 4 Ensure it's easy to access

👍 Content that's easy to find and use when people want it, wherever they are

👎 Content that's hidden in long courses, behind complex menus or systems, with obscure names

22% of learners said **learning engagement increased** when it was **easy to access at the point of need.** The vast majority of workplace learners prefer learning on the job.

- At my desk
- At home
- In a training room
- On the 'shop' floor
- Other
- Commuting

53.5% · 19% · 22% · 0.33% · 4.33% · 0.83%

This means learning through doing, trying, observing and discussing. But it also means that any additional learning – e.g., answers to questions someone might have about a process or what tactics to use – should be easily accessible in those moments of need. Effective elearning is sympathetic to this, and doesn't force lengthy, hard-to-use courses on people. Rather, it provides **short form, responsive content.**

> *"L&D is not responsible for learning. Learning happens in someone's brain. Our job is to provide the best conditions ...That doesn't mean, we're going to give you courses. It means that we're going to understand what your problems are, and then provide you tools. And that may be a course, but it could be a simple checklist."*

Zsolt Olah, Senior Learning Technologist, Amazon
Rethinking learner engagement to deliver real impact

How do you achieve this?

Make it micro-learning: Shorter chunks of elearning give busy users the option to use it in a moment of need, on their commute and on smaller screens. This article and video explains more about how to create effective microlearning.

Give choices: Design your solution to support employees to make choices that are right for them. Do they need the 5 minute overview or the 15 minute deep dive? Do they want activities they can do themselves, or case study exercises to do in a group?

Enable on-the-job learning: Job aids, such as checklists, resources and how-to videos, are great for encouraging action, collaboration and discussion in the moment. Make sure they can be easily accessed on the systems people use as part of their day-to-day work, such as the intranet, Slack or Teams.

"When everything is all over the place and the right learning is hard to find, it's time consuming and time wasting."
Anonymous employee feedback

For best practice elearning tips, check out elearning best practice 101.

5 best practice approaches to inspire you

Online learning materials can take many forms, from on-the-job performance support resources and diagnostic surveys through to microlearning skills training and immersive simulations.

Here are a few highlights from our best elearning examples to provide some immediate elearning inspiration.

(1) **Microlearning and on-the-job resources**

There's been a big shift from courses to resources in the last ten or so years. This microlearning approach can take various different shapes – from standalone job aids to multiple resources that are part of a cohesive learning journey or campaign. Here are two examples:

On-the-job resources

Access to microlearning resources which employees can use at the point of need has an immediate impact on performance.

This product knowledge example supports people on the shop floor. It's short and focused. Learners can use it as and when needed - to explore the product catalog or check a quick detail while with a customer.

See this microlearning example

Get started

How to replenish perishables the DairyYard way

This quick guide will show you how to replenish perishable goods like a pro. Simply follow the instructions and check your work as you go.

Your brief

Perishable products such as bread, milk and vegetables, have short shelf-lives. If you work in one of these sections, you'll need to **replenish** and **rotate** the goods at least twice a day so that we:

- minimise waste
- keep up with demand
- remove items that are about to expire

You will need:

- Box cutter
- Pen and notebook
- Watch or timer
- Stock cart
- Gloves (if you're in the refrigerated section)

Structured microlearning journeys

This quick guide example is designed to be part of an onboarding campaign for new starters. It uses an **in-page progress menu** to help learners orient themselves in the learning experience. The guide ends with real world actions to take on the shop floor during their first shift.

See this microlearning example

Microlearning is a great approach for:

- Audiences that have a lot to remember and are likely to need reminders 'in the moment'.

- Theoretical content that needs to be made practical; think new procedures or change management. Or factual content that learners might need refreshers on; think product or systems training.

- Performance support resources.

- **Spaced practice** – think Duolingo, where competence is built through practice over time.

- Holistic approaches to learning. The same microlearning nugget may support multiple outcomes and can be used in different contexts and learning journeys.

- **Speedy elearning development** – as the same template can often be reused.

Explore these handy tips to make your Microlearning Strategy really deliver.

Microlearning design top tips

Be the answer to a specific problem: Google is so popular because it helps you find just what you're looking for. Microlearning needs to do the same. But your answer can be better, as it can reflect your workplace and audience context. Make each bite-sized piece **specific, targeted and concise.**

Create clusters: Avoid producing microlearning nuggets blindly. Know how each topic fits into overarching performance goals and connects with other content. Is it a performance support resource, part of an incremental skill building program, or both?

Create spaced practice: Providing learners with regular challenges that enable them to practice applying skills in slightly new situations helps grow competence and memory more than other approaches. String together **microlearning challenges/learning** into learning journeys that get harder or easier depending on performance.

Keep track: Consider allocating **scores, badges,** or some kind of reward to learners when they complete a challenge. Could the challenges be at different levels? Can you mark milestones for when X amount has been achieved?

Remember your learning design principles: Just because you're producing something short doesn't mean it should be dry or just "info." Stories, examples, demos, challenges, expert tips and job aides should all be considered.

2 Gamification

Game-like learning taps into a fundamental aspect of human behavior: **motivation.** Creating a sense of play and competition in your corporate elearning is great for engagement – and easy to achieve through gamification.

Gamified scenarios

Using levels, points and badges are classic devices to reward and motivate.

This game-like quiz example is made up of three rounds on data protection. Each round offers the chance to win points and badges. Learners are incentivized to apply their knowledge correctly, making the content more likely to stick in the learner's mind when handling a real situation.

See this gamification example

Gamification is a great approach for:

- A cohort or community of learners who are motivated by competition and will make the most of the **benchmarking, competition and social elements.**

- Content that involves **high pressure scenarios** – gamification is great for replicating this sense of pressure – or less serious topics that you can have a bit of fun with.

- **Simulation-based learning experiences** when you can offer up scores in different areas – e.g., management training where choices may impact on the team's mental health, business efficiency, innovation, productivity, quarterly targets and more.

- **Longer-term programs** and learning campaigns, where scores and rewards are threaded throughout.

Gamification in elearning: design top tips

Start small, but don't cut corners: Rather than going all-in on a high-profile gamification project, target a particular business area, audience or program and experiment with different approaches. Don't just add points to a task or tack a leaderboard onto an end-of-course quiz. The game mechanics have to **serve a purpose** beyond "making it fun."

Prioritize the learning, not the game: Points and competition only deliver value if they're tied to behaviors and performance. Always get the **learning objectives** straight first and design game mechanics to be in service of those.

Develop a hierarchy of points: Whereby points are earned (maybe for completing a profile or sharing a course). Badges are more meaningful, offered only in return for doing something that demonstrates new knowledge, competence or skills.

Be clear on criteria and progression: Keep people engaged and motivated. What tasks earn points? What do points mean? Perhaps they translate into badges or unlock new content. What's the criteria for reaching the next level or reward?

Ramp up the challenge gradually: Learners need **frequent, easy achievements** to begin with. Once they've gotten to grips with things and seen that effort reaps reward, they're primed and ready for a bigger challenge.

Don't disregard individual competition: It isn't always feasible or appropriate to pit learners against learners on public leaderboards – but that doesn't mean you can't successfully gamify your content. Social polling in elearning lets an individual see how they compare to others, but anonymously. Or, take FitBit: it has the community aspect, but plenty of people use it without that. Balance intrinsic with extrinsic drivers.

3 Interactive multimedia and content

Interactivity is all about **driving engagement.** Rather than simply reading text or watching a video, you need to get people reflecting on what they've seen or putting what they've learnt into practice. There isn't one right way to deliver content. But by using a well-chosen and arranged combination of content and interactions you can produce learning with impact.
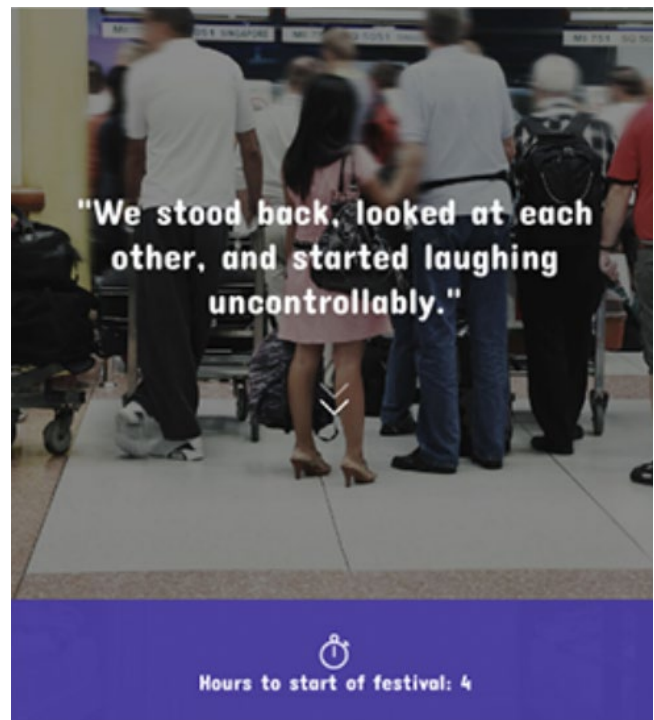
Digital storytelling

Storytelling is an incredibly powerful force for learning and memory. It has been part of what humans do since the beginning of time. When done right, it has the ability to strike up emotions and connect with users – which are both crucial to engaging their hearts as well as their minds.

Storytelling doesn't always need video or audio. This example contains a simple soundtrack to add context but it doesn't have to. It's a subtly interactive story that asks users to make some choices for themselves partway through. Great for the start of a wider performance change campaign.

See this example of Interactive Storytelling

Storytelling in elearning is a good approach for:

- Big change programmes, where emotional connection is critical to getting people onboard.
- Tasks that involve **multiple colleagues working together** and require understanding different perspectives to be successful.
- Showing what good (and not so good) looks like! And gray areas or context around a topic.
- **Higher risk situations** where people need to understand the serious impact of not making the right choices.

Storytelling design top tips

Find the human side of your content: Whether it's the story of an overstretched parent whose relationship with his children improved when he made some changes to his day (time management training), or the trials of a young manager who felt overlooked and shut down by her superiors (diversity and inclusion training), people and their experiences will make your content **compelling.**

Show, don't tell: When you've uncovered the emotion, let it take center stage in your story, and trust your learners to work out what's going on. Write dialogue rather than learning points, **focus on feelings,** and describe senses rather than stating facts.

Provide multiple perspectives: Our natural curiosity doesn't just apply to one character in a story. Often, we're intrigued by how our opinion differs from others.

Not sure why stories and learning are a winning combination, check out these ideas and tips for storytelling in elearning and this immersive storytelling article for inspiration.

Scenario-based video learning

Scenario based learning puts users in the driver's seat and is a great way of increasing their engagement with a digital learning experience. "Choose your own adventure"-style scenarios like the examples below immerse users in a story and allow them to make decisions that control the outcome. This approach allows users to learn through experiencing consequences rather than being informed of them. In particular, it enables people to learn from (safely) making mistakes.

This video branching scenario, based around mental health issues, asks users to make a call on what they think is going on and what action someone should take.

The personalized results at the end analyze the approach the user took, compares it with others', and sets out how other options would have played out.

See this scenario-based video learning example

Video in elearning is a good approach for:

- **Interviews** with experts, leaders and peers.
- **Promotional pieces** to hook audiences into a learning campaign, for example.
- **Drama-based learning experiences,** where emotional connection and reflection are key.
- **Branching scenarios** where characters "react"' to learners' choices.
- **Shareable content** – standalone videos do well on social platforms.
- Demonstrations of **best practice,** and not so best practice!

Video-based elearning design top tips

Don't splash the cash unless you really need to: Check if the perfect video already exists on YouTube or other platforms, and embed it.

Make it personal: Capture personal stories when interviewing people, not corporate messaging. Do a few takes, each time helping your subject drill down to the essence of their story.

Experiment with selfie videos: Taken simply on a smartphone, and have people upload them for you to use within or to complement your elearning.

Check out more advice in this [micro guide to using audio and video in elearning.](#)
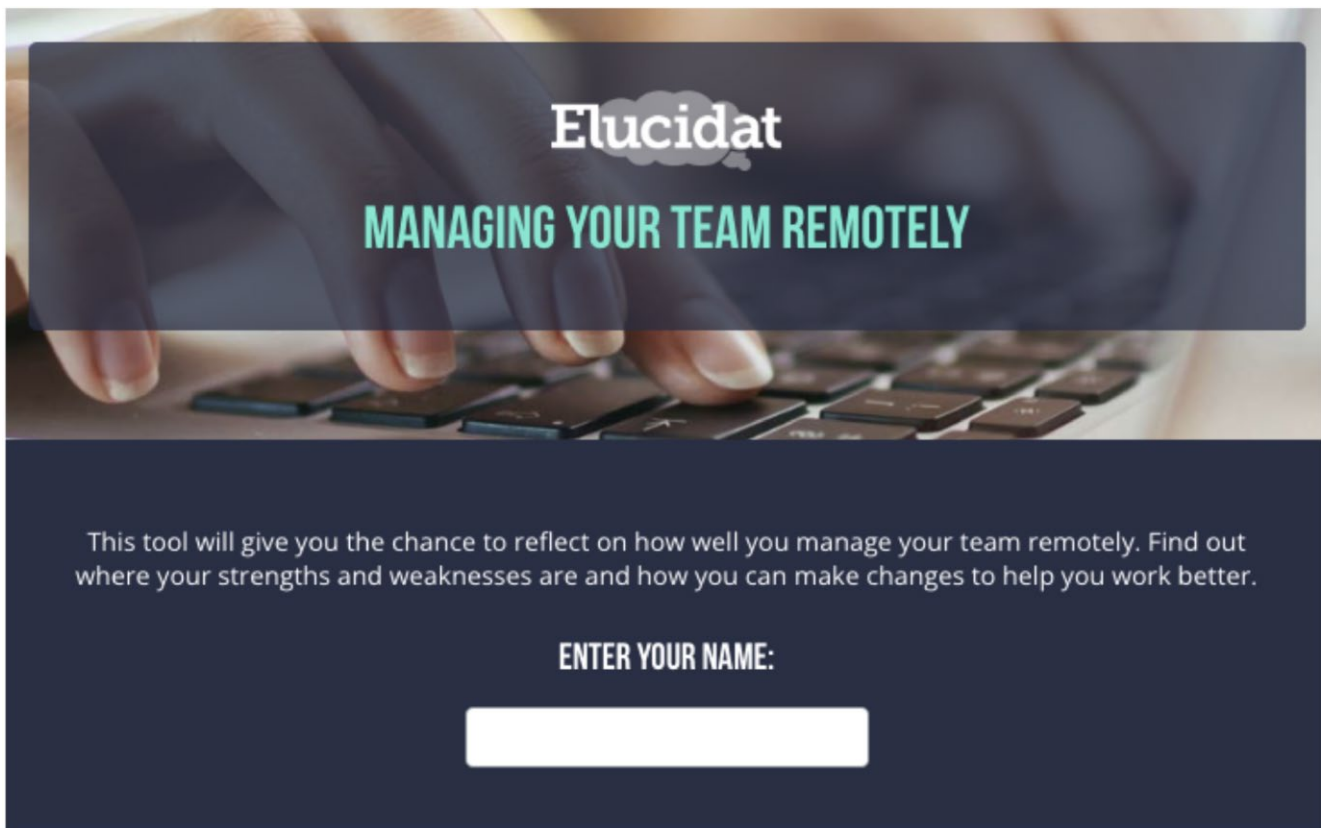
Reflective learning

Getting people to reflect on their current capabilities is critical to improving their performance. Afterall, you need to know what you want to improve before you can improve it.

This guided self reflection encourages learners to stop, reflect and then commit to actions they'll take forward to manage their team more effectively. Including social polling appeals to people's natural curiosity as they can compare their own responses to those of their peers.

See this guided self reflection example

Reflective learning is a good approach for:

- An audience with a varied level of skill, experience and confidence that needs to be directed to the key learning they need to focus on.

- **Motivating people** to engage with your learning. Learner reflection offers the opportunity to challenge assumptions, reassure the less confident and highlight how your digital learning will meet someone's unique learning needs.

- Getting people to really engage with scenarios and examples by reviewing and rating what they've seen.

Reflective learning design top tips

Start with a chance to reflect: Asking your learners to reflect on their current experiences is a great way to engage people at the beginning of your learning experience.

Add reflection points throughout: Keep learners reflecting throughout your learning experience. This might be rating an example, considering how they would apply a process or identifying what they want to do next.

Leverage FOMO: Use **social polling** so learners can see how they compare to their peers. Fear of missing out on being part of the gang will help motivate people to change their behavior.

4 Accessible and inclusive content

Everyone should be able to have a great learning experience. With employees accessing elearning anytime, anywhere and on any device, delivering quality responsive learning experiences on smaller screens is critical. And if you want to ensure your digital learning is truly inclusive, it also means making sure you consider accessibility from the start.

Mobile learning

This quick briefing example shows how a short interactive resource could be used for just-in-time support. The simple structure (What, Why, How and What's next) can be quickly scanned through on any device. So people can access the information they're after in the moment of need.

See this quick briefing resource example

Mobile learning is a good approach for:

- **Quick glance microlearning** (short, 2-3 minute modules).
- **Performance support resources.**
- **Video content,** including interactive video.
- **Simple interactions,** such as polls.
- **Short quizzes.**

Mobile learning design top tips:

Embrace the scroll: Design your user interface so it's a natural fit with the device and mimics how people explore other online content. Long pages and **fewer clicks** are best.

Make it bite-sized: Design for the amount of time your users are likely to stay on their phone. Our data, based on millions of learners, shows the average session time on mobiles is **10 minutes.**

Reduce the number of clicks: Focus on one action at a time, removing unnecessary screens or clicks.

Make it thumb-friendly: Ensure content can be easily accessed with thumbs, and buttons and links are big enough and spaced out.

Make it easy to scan: The fast-scroll is inevitable, so make sure your key points will stand out. Use clear **headers, numbered points and icons to grab attention.**

Declutter: Remove any images or sections that won't work on smaller screens or just clutter up the experience.

This article contains the low-down on mobile learning design best practice.

Accessible elearning design top tips

Think about assistive tech from the start: Make your content compatible with assistive technologies (e.g., screen readers) by adding captions, providing a transcript and choosing your language wisely.

Think about readability: **Color contrast** is key to readability of text. Ensure that contrast is high, either by using very different tones or very different colors. Consider boosting your text size too, to improve legibility.

Consider your interactions: Certain interaction types are not fully-accessible for all learners. For instance, some drag and drop and sortable activities rely on a learner using (and being adept with) a mouse, which will exclude anyone using keyboard navigation.

5 Assessments, quizzes and questions

Assessments that test learners' understanding are often critical, especially where compliance is concerned. But don't just save these for the end of your course assessment. Start with a question to find out what they already know. Challenge their preconceptions. Get them reflecting on how they approach things. Use questions to pace the learning. Follow up after you've provided key content to check their knowledge.

Upfront diagnostics

This personalized toolkit example asks targeted multiple choice questions to users about their current habits and struggles when delegating work. It then serves up a tailored report based on how they answered to help them see where they need to improve. It makes effective use of learners' time by honing in on real gaps and providing targeted guidance on the next things they need to do.

Of course, this sophisticated diagnostic isn't the only way to help learners find content that's relevant. Smart menus that include reflective questions and give clear choices allow people to tailor their learning experience.

See this quick briefing resource example

Robust assessments with question pools

In this compliance test, question pools are used to create a robust assessment. Question pools mean that when a learner retakes the test, they're unlikely to see the same questions again. This helps ensure learners truly understand the content – they won't be able to simply choose a different answer on a second attempt. It also makes it harder for learners to share answers as it is unlikely their colleagues will have been posed the same set of questions.

See this question pools example

Assessment is a great learning approach for:

- **Business critical content** that needs to be tested, such as compliance rules and regulations.
- Audiences who need to prove a **thorough understanding** of a subject before starting a particular task.

Assessment and quizzes design top tips

Write the questions before the content: This may seem counter-intuitive, but by writing solid questions that test the learning objectives and then developing content to support those questions, your content will be leaner and tighter.

Test what you want people to do, not what you think they should know: Always try and put the question into a workplace context. For example, give the learner a **scenario** and ask which of the answer options would resolve it, or ask, "Here are the opinions of four colleagues. Whose would you follow to resolve this situation?".

Get people thinking with your incorrect options: A good distractor should seem like a plausible option to someone who doesn't know the learning content, but should be clearly wrong to someone who does. It shouldn't, however, be incorrect on a vague technicality – especially if that technicality isn't specifically covered in the learning content.

5C framework for success

Although every organization and project is different, certain steps are fundamental to the success of all digital learning. We've drawn on the experience of hundreds of learning teams and boiled these down to five key stages.

- **Capture** – start with a clear plan: Understand the problem, so you can shape your solution.

- **Conceptualize** – lead with a prototype: Turn what you know about your audience's needs into a vision for effective and engaging learning.

- **Create** – build with confidence: Start building in your authoring platform with a streamlined, efficient development process.

- **Cultivate** – improve and refine: Use data to improve projects and inform future strategy.

- **Commercialize** – deliver better ROI: Making sure your product works for your business.

Top tip: Embarking on a new process can be daunting. Start small by trying out the process on one project. Focus on the first three Cs (Conceptualize, Create, Cultivate). Decide on what works for you, your colleagues and organizations.

Find out more and access our free 5C Framework guide to walk you through each step.

Collaborative ways of working

Of course, even the most robust process will fail if it's not supported by effective ways of working.

Developing impactful training can't be done alone. You and your team may be the learning experts, but without the skills and knowledge from across your organization you can't deliver.

There are two key players who can make or break your project:

> **Stakeholders:** From kick off to sign off, your key business partners' buy-in and approval is essential.

> **Subject Matter Experts (SMEs):** SMEs make sure your learning is relevant, up to date and engaging. Without them identifying or creating credible examples and stories is almost impossible.

Collaborating effectively with these colleagues speeds up production so you can meet training needs and respond to emerging skill gaps more quickly. And with everyone onboard with your best practice approach, you can even start to increase their involvement. Rather than just being your gateway to content and audience, SMEs can become elearning authors. With the right support and collaborative tool, they can input content directly into your authoring platform. Freeing up you and your L&D team to focus on strategic oversight, building quality and maintaining consistency.

> *"The idea was to essentially build a community of people from all parts of the business that we're able to either create, or co-create solutions with us, and effectively start to remove ourselves from being a blocker."*
>
> Jonathan Holmes, Digital Learning and Strategy Manager, Domestic & General
> How D&G meet high demand through collaborative content creation

We've drawn on the experience of L&D teams who are taking this more collaborative approach to content creation. Their experiences have highlighted **two key tools** for effective collaboration during digital learning development.

Ready-to-go with templates

Don't reinvent the wheel with every learning project. Using templates reduces the time you need to create courses with real impact.

> *"I could create templates, that aligned with the nCino brand and what our other courses look like, but also that incorporated instructional design best practices"*
>
> Olivia Cunningham, Instructional Designer, nCino
> Customer spotlight: Guided Authoring

Start by building up a good selection of templates with specific training purposes in mind. Make sure they're on brand, ready-styled, and have a sensible flow to them.

Once you and your colleagues – the L&D experts – are happy with the templates you've created you can open them up to be used by your SMEs. They're experts in their own area and not learning designers, but with ready-to-go templates they can produce the building blocks of quality elearning straight away.

Help SMEs stay on track with your templates by:

Curating best practice examples: Bring together some great examples of the learning your organization produces. Suggest templates to SMEs so they can get off to a great start with the most appropriate template for their learning.

Providing baked in guidance: A template, even with on-brand styling and a structure, is still an empty shell. Go further and include advice and guidance in your template, so SMEs use your templates correctly to include case studies, stories, videos, questions and much more.

Making asking for help as easy as possible: In their normal day job, an in-house expert will turn to a colleague for advice or input when needed. Encourage this in their elearning creation too and help them get their project done more efficiently.

Want to find out more ways to support your SMEs? Check out our guide to setting SMEs up for success.

Top tip: If you've got a great design, why not reuse it? Whether it's localizing existing learning or reworking an effective design, duplicating courses means you don't have to start from scratch and maximizes the impact of your effort.

Clear review stages

The key to ensuring you're creating impactful elearning is to set and hold up standards. Getting the right people's input and review at the right points in the process will help you do this.

Clear review stages: Make sure each project has clearly identified review stages and reviewers. This will help you **ensure projects are on track.** When and how often this takes place may vary depending on the size/risk of the project. Flex your approach but make sure it's defined on each project.

Ensure you have oversight: If SMEs are using your ready-to-go templates, L&D should support and have full oversight. Make sure you are available for **regular check-ins** and final review points.

Keep the review process in one place: Authoring tools, like Elucidat, make the whole review process simple for everyone involved. Seamlessly invite and manage reviewers inside your authoring platform, in a streamlined and efficient way. No more feedback hidden in long email chains or huge spreadsheets!

Just under half of the L&D functions we surveyed are looking to create content collaboratively to meet demand and respond to skill gaps more quickly. If you are too, check out our Guided Authoring workflow.

Summary

Effective elearning is about more than slick presentation. It's about behavior change. It motivates and instructs learners on how to make changes that will improve their performance in the workplace. With that in mind, best practices for designing great elearning all come down to your learner and their behaviors too.

1. Find out what your learners need

All elearning – in fact, all training – should be aiming to **improve performance or solve a problem** within the business. It goes without saying that unless you know what problem you're trying to fix, you're unlikely to be able to fix it. So, every elearning project should start with understanding your audience, their learning styles and training goals.

2. Put our best practice principles in action

• Make it **relevant and useful** by providing context and examples.

• Get truly **interactive** using storytelling, reflective questions and practical activities.

• Keep it concise by writing **short, active content** and developing microlearning as part of wider blended learning journeys.

• Ensure digital learning is **easy to access** by developing responsive and inclusive content.

3. Get set up for success with the right processes

Our tried and tested **5C framework** will help you to plan, design, create, optimize and commercialize your online courses. Effective collaboration using templates and review tools speeds up the process and allows you and your L&D team to focus on quality and consistency.
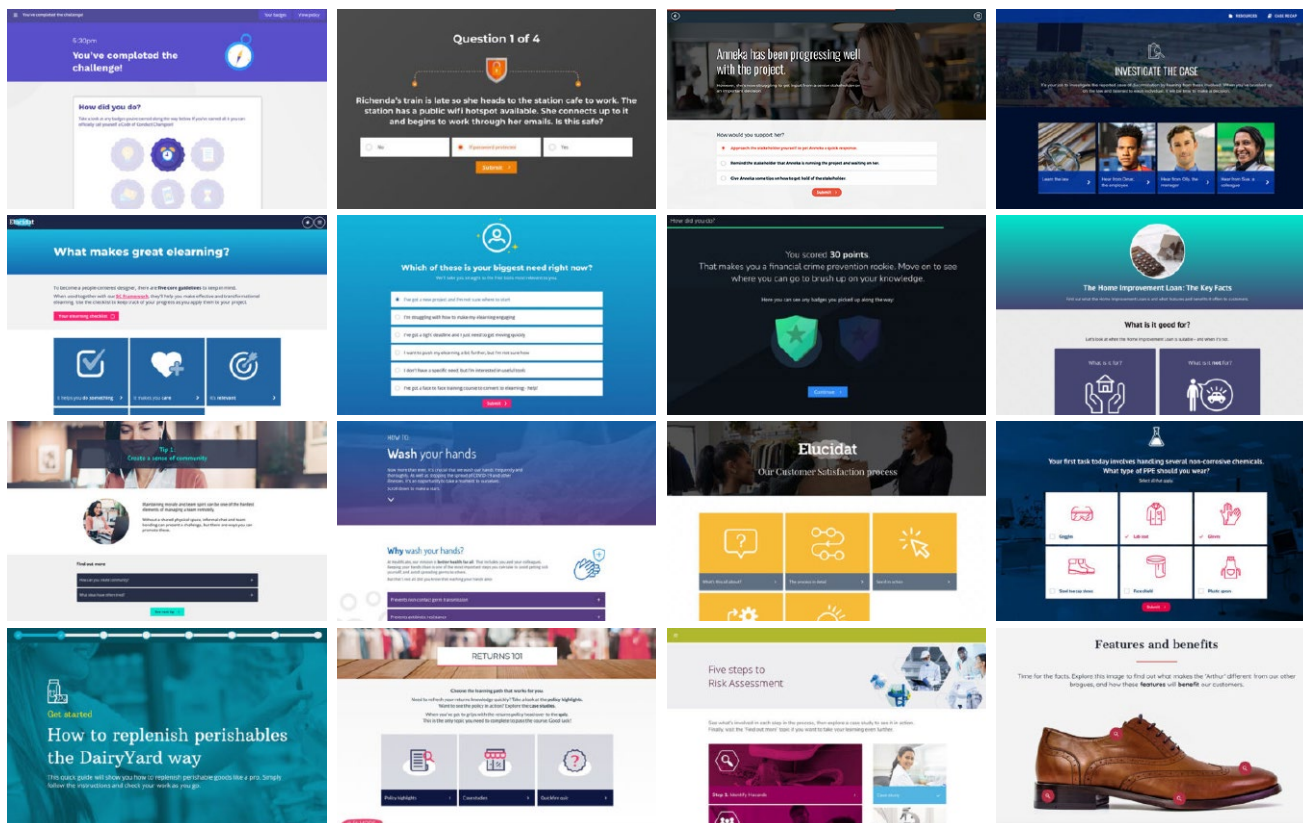
We can help you do it!

Elucidat is the collaborative tool your team needs to produce learning that excites and engages your audience.

Guided workflows and ready made, **expert designed templates** make it easy for anyone to produce high quality digital learning at speed.

Enhanced collaboration features makes the review process seamless and maintains standards. Empowering you and your colleagues in the L&D team to expand content production and capture expertise, all while increasing learning quality!

With these best practices in mind, you can create impactful elearning!
Book a demo today!

Elucidat

www.elucidat.com