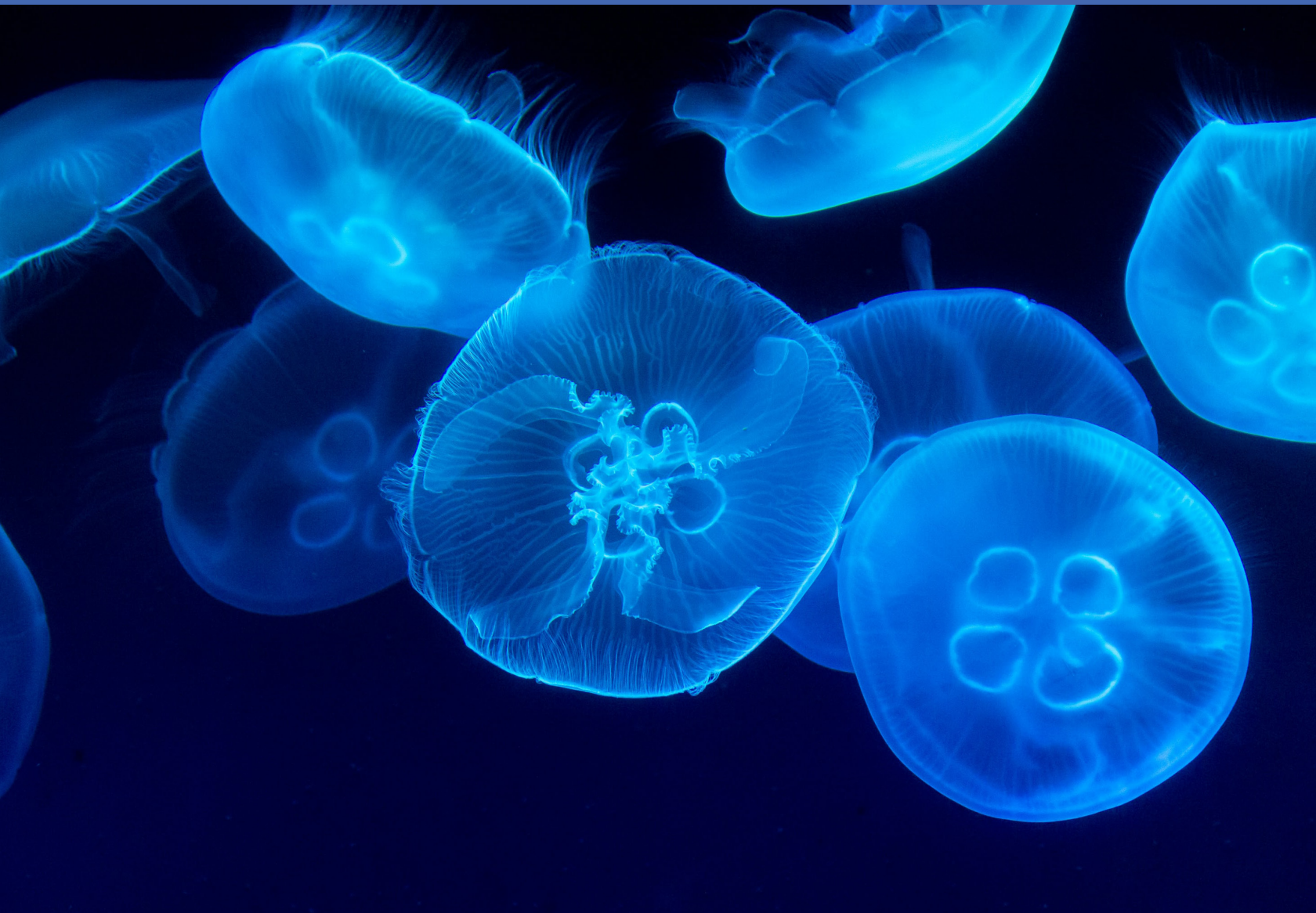




What Is Collaborative Learning?



Executive summary

All over the world, L&D leaders are fighting a war for attention. Unfortunately, it's a war they're losing.

👉 Right now, most organizations are averaging course completion rates of just 20-30%. There are simply too many competing demands on your teams, and people don't have the time or the space to learn the way they want to. This learning crisis is about much more than the COVID-19 pandemic and the global pivot to remote working. It's bigger than the ever-increasing expectations to get more done during the day. And it goes beyond our continued reliance on sluggish and outdated learning tools.

So, how can we help people lift their heads above water and learn the way they want to? How can we start to view learning not just as a one-off yearly requirement, but as a key part of daily life? How can we celebrate learning together? 🧐



We need to get people excited about learning again. We need to connect teams, get out of the way, and let them grow by sharing their expertise.

After all, your organization's **institutional knowledge** is your greatest asset—you just need a way to put it to work. 💪

Years ago, when we began applying the Collaborative Learning methodology to organizational learning, we were looking for a way to help businesses share their internal expertise quickly and easily. We had no idea just how urgent and vital Collaborative Learning would become. Now, we want to show you how it works, and how it's changing learning for organizations everywhere.

**In this ebook, we'll explain
what Collaborative Learning is, how it differs
from traditional learning methods, and how
it can help you win the war for attention.**



Estimated reading time for this ebook: **15 minutes.**

About

360Learning



360Learning empowers Learning and Development teams to drive culture and growth through Collaborative Learning. Our Learning Platform combines collaborative tools with the power of a Learning Management System, enabling high-growth companies to unlock learning based on collective expertise, instead of relying on traditional solo-based eLearning. 360Learning is the easiest way to onboard new employees, train customer-facing teams, and develop professional skills—all from one place.

360Learning powers the future of work at over 1,200 organizations, including Toyota, AlphaSights, and Airbus. Founded in 2012, 360Learning has raised \$41 million, with over 200 team members across New York, Paris, and London.



Want to see how we can help you make
Collaborative Learning a reality?


Request a demo with 360Learning today. 

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Chapter 1

What is Collaborative Learning?

✦ Collaborative Learning is a training methodology where employees share their knowledge and expertise, teaching and learning from one another at the same time. This group learning enhances the training experience by capitalizing on each employee's skills, ideas, and institutional knowledge.



Collaborative learning is often confused with cooperative learning, where students work together in small groups to solve a problem or master a concept. Cooperative learning is a useful learning tool, but it's difficult to deploy on an organizational scale. It's most commonly used in high school and

higher education settings. Like cooperative learning, Collaborative Learning encourages higher-level thinking, problem-solving, and teamwork—but it's much easier to scale across teams.

Collaborative Learning is part of a larger trend toward interdependence in learning. Organizations are moving away from more **hierarchical top-down management styles** and toward **low-authority, high-accountability models**. Instead of individual project ownership, we're relying more and more on group work to achieve outsized results.

In other words, we work in teams,
so why wouldn't we learn as a team? 🙌

The key elements of Collaborative Learning



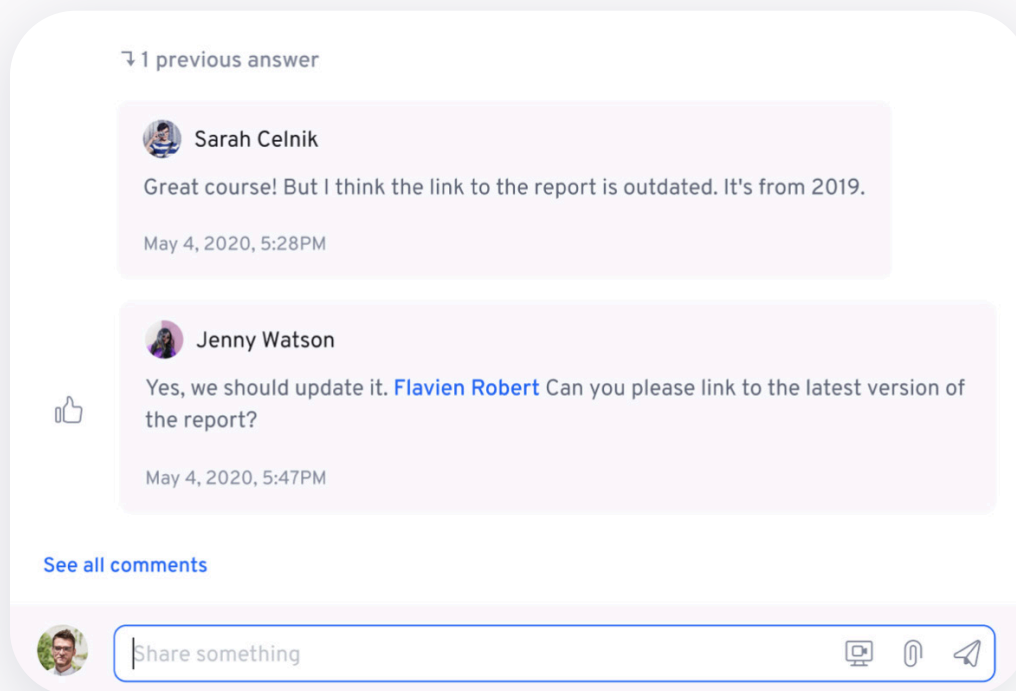
Collaborative Learning focuses on peer engagements and interactions at every level of the learning process.

Every team member is able to **declare their own learning needs**, helping to reinforce individual responsibility for training outcomes. Then, learners can respond to these needs by working with others to **convene project teams** and **create and ship courses** based on their own knowledge and expertise. This way, **expert knowledge** is captured and made accessible for everyone's benefit.

Because learning materials need to ship quickly to stay relevant, Collaborative Learning is built around ongoing iterative improvements to courses. Rather than course material being set in stone, **authors and learners can make suggestions** to update information, add new elements, and point out new developments in the field. They can also recognize others for their contributions to learning, which helps make training a shared goal to be celebrated.

With Collaborative Learning, every course features evaluations, providing an essential feedback loop. This makes every course a commitment to continuous

learning, and keeps teams focused on sharing and gaining knowledge in the most effective way possible: **through peer interaction**.



Now, let's take a closer look at how these factors set Collaborative Learning apart from traditional learning approaches. 🔍



Chapter 2

What makes Collaborative Learning different?

Traditional, top-down approaches to corporate learning are a major reason for our current crisis in learning. These approaches treat learning as something that is done *to* people, rather than something they can decide for themselves.

👉 The major problem with corporate learning as we know it? It's centralized, generic, slow, static, and driven only by deliverables. Management or HR sets the learning priorities for everyone, and learners don't have an easy way to offer



The major problem with corporate learning as we know it? It's centralized, generic, slow, static, and driven only by deliverables.

feedback on content to help it improve. This isn't just a drag for the learner—it's also a missed opportunity for course creators to receive valuable feedback on whether their learning content is relevant or useful.

In contrast with this top-down approach, bottom-up Collaborative Learning is democratized, relevant, fast, iterative, and driven by impacts.



Now, let's take a closer look at what these five benefits means in practice. 🌟

The five benefits of Collaborative Learning

1 Democratization

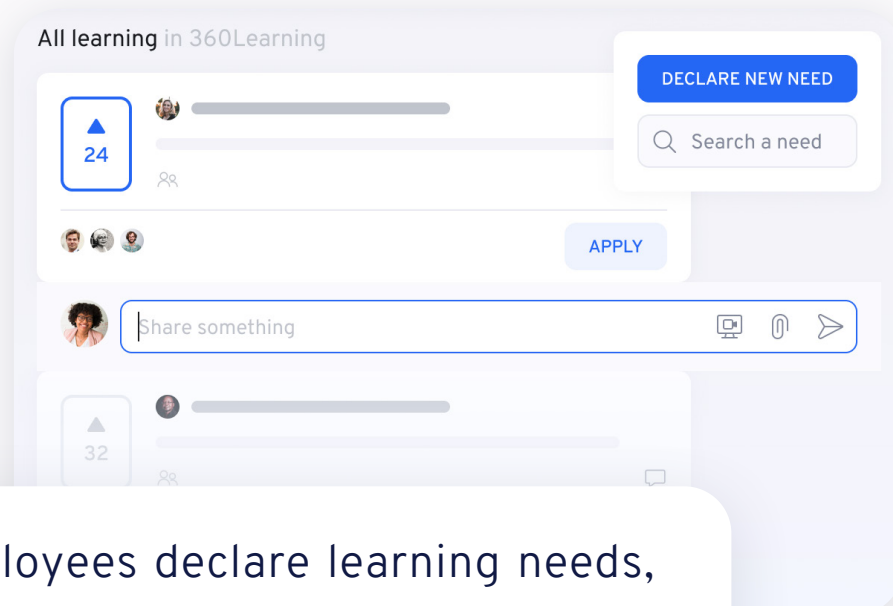
Most traditional corporate training reflects a **top-down management style**, meaning management or L&D determines training needs and then creates or buys learning materials to meet those needs. In contrast, in a Collaborative Learning methodology, anyone can make a request or create a learning need.

This allows everyone in the organization to contribute to the learning process, making them feel more engaged, focused, and

valued. Employees suggest training needs, and other employees use their unique skill sets to create content to fulfill those needs. Then, L&D teams assist others in completing courses, run quality control, and make sure learners have what they need to succeed. This gives L&D teams the ability to focus on what really matters, instead of low-value repetitive tasks like course scheduling.



Because employees declare learning needs, they can learn about the things they really care about. The result is greater employee buy-in and smoother knowledge-sharing between employees and departments.



2 Relevance

Collaborative Learning courses are created by your fellow team members, which means the content is more nuanced and specific to your company than third-party courses would be.

With traditional corporate learning, the L&D team either creates the learning content or purchases courses from a third party. The process for commissioning courses typically involves a group of instructional designers with technical backgrounds. Classes can take

months to produce, and be very expensive.

In contrast, Collaborative Learning enables L&D and employees **create and fulfill learning needs together**. As a result, employees are more invested in the learning process. They help **create quality content** that L&D doesn't have to buy or source through expert interviews.

3 Speed

One of the biggest contributors to today's learning crisis is the sluggish response to training needs. By the time L&D teams have realized there's a gap in their resources and responded with the right learning content, the chance to make the biggest positive impact has long passed.



Collaborative Learning connects people together, allowing them to declare learning needs, share their skills and expertise, **convene project teams**, and create learning content quickly to answer urgent questions.

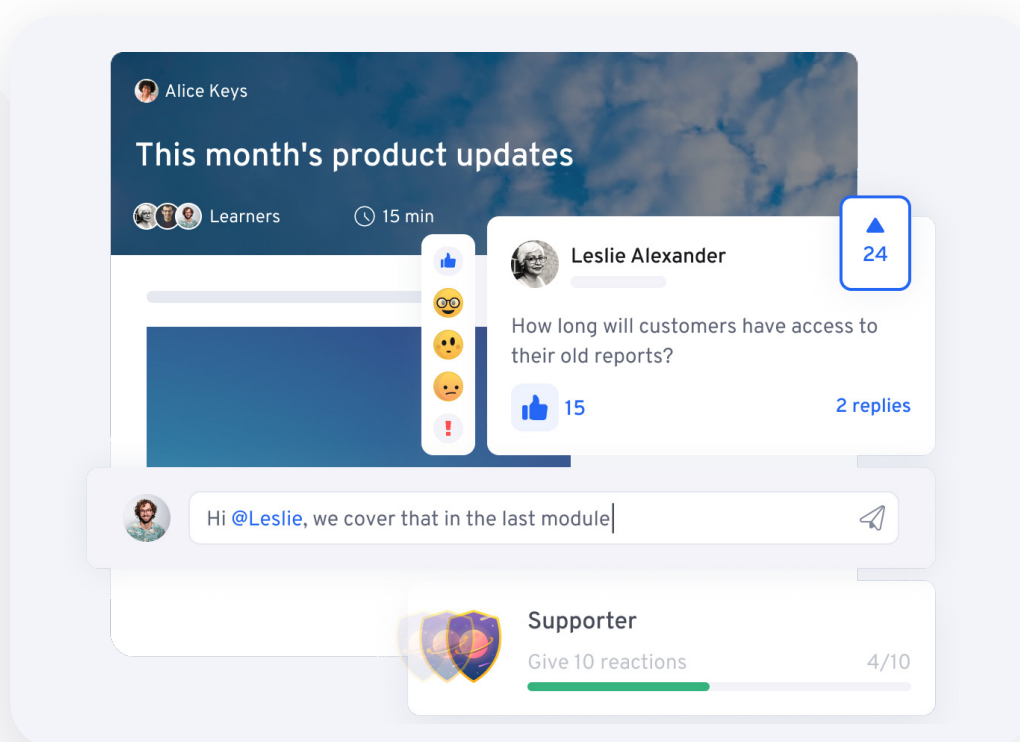
This way, organizations can respond to opportunities for growth in a way that is timely, effective, and makes the most of learning opportunities.

4 Iteration

Because course creation has traditionally been slow and expensive, updates and refreshes have been infrequent. Collaborative Learning prioritizes making it easy to create and edit course materials, which means it's far easier to update them based on **new information or employee feedback**.

Now, iteration and continuous improvement is more important than ever. Courses frequently become dated due to technological or organizational changes. Static course design hinders flexibility and slows down employee learning. In fact, this is one of the biggest problems with so many organizations **relying on outdated learning technology like SCORM**.

With Collaborative Learning, you can disseminate information and iterate it over time based on feedback. This way, crucial information gets into the hands of employees exactly when it is needed, empowering them to make better decisions.



5 Impact

Traditional L&D programs are focused only on deliverables and counting things like course completion. In contrast, Collaborative Learning is impact-driven, and looks at the impact your training is having over time.

In most L&D departments, success is measured by the number of courses shipped and completed by employees. This approach offers very low visibility into how employees are interacting with the courses or what they're getting out of that experience. It also makes it more difficult to demonstrate the ROI associated with training.

In contrast, Collaborative Learning is impact-driven because it doesn't define success with simple course delivery. Rather, because teams are active in the learning process, their feedback indicates whether a course has been successful.

🧩 Now, let's take a step past the theory and see how exactly Collaborative Learning works in practice—and how you can make it work for your business or organization.



“

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Chapter 3

How does Collaborative Learning work?

All of this theory might sound great, but for readers with an established culture of traditional corporate learning, it can seem a little daunting. How exactly is this supposed to work in practice? And where are you supposed to start with such a big shift?

🔍 To explain this in detail, let's look at how Collaborative Learning helps companies solve the current learning crisis by keeping learning programs nimble, peer-driven, and distributed.

Helping companies stay nimble

With a learning platform that leverages Collaborative Learning, you can keep employees abreast of changes by creating courses in minutes, not months. This lets your company react quickly to accelerating technology, industry disruption, and [unpredictable world events](#).

How Collaborative Learning Works



Nimble

Create courses in minutes, not months

The problem: L&D can't keep up with organizational change

In recent years, global events have shown us that an organization's priorities, goals, and infrastructure can change overnight. For example, in March and April of 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic forced workers to transition suddenly to remote work. Employees had to learn new workflows and adopt new technology with zero planning or prep time.

🔥 In an ideal world, L&D would have handled this transition, but most learning platforms don't allow for quick course production. Producing even a single training course can take months of group work, and L&D teams frequently rely on instructional designers to build courses. The entire process is admin-heavy and resource-intensive. Also, it's expensive.



In recent years, global events have shown us that an organization's priorities, goals, and infrastructure can change overnight.

The solution: easy course creation that anyone can master

Collaborative Learning makes it easier and more cost-effective to create and share learning materials. Anyone at the company can quickly learn how to create a course, with no outside help required.

👉 Sales Enablement can demo new product features. Customer Satisfaction can create a tutorial to help reps deal with a specific recurring issue. John in accounting can demonstrate the new procedure for submitting expense reports. All of these courses can be easily distributed, and educators (course authors) can get quick feedback from relevant stakeholders as they iterate and improve over time.

That accessibility opens the door for a whole new range of training possibilities. You can still create comprehensive onboarding courses and set learning paths. But you can also develop micro-courses that are relevant to only a single department or even a solitary position. You can create courses that address temporary

changes, even if they're only applicable for a month or even a week. You can roll out urgent content quickly and update it later to reflect new developments or real-world changes in the market.

- **Example in practice:** When the company adopts a new billing software, the Customer Ops team is able to quickly create best practices and a course on how to use the software.
- Employees are able to start using the software right away. Customer Ops can then continue to update the course to reflect employees' questions.

Putting people at the center of learning

Employees are a company's most valuable resource. A Collaborative Learning platform helps you leverage that competitive advantage by letting teams learn from one

another rather than simply prescribing standardized learning content based on role.



The problem: irrelevant and unengaging training programs



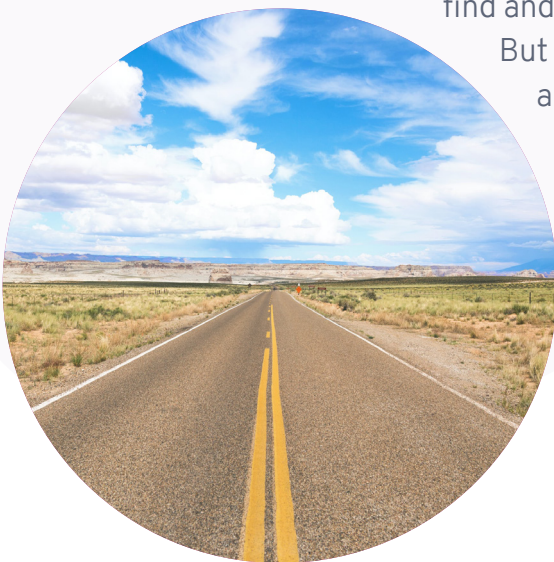
Right now, too many organizations think of learning as a one-way street

Right now, too many organizations think of learning as a one-way street: L&D creates learning materials, and employees consume them. Everything goes in one direction, with no opportunity for any back-and-forth or feedback. This is industrialized learning, designed with the sole goal of delivering skills to employees. Only it doesn't work.

Centralized content creation is deliverable-driven, not results-driven. L&D wastes time and money creating or purchasing courses that nobody pays attention to. They pump that content into LMS systems built for administrators, not learners.

✦ This approach hasn't been effective in the past, and it's certainly not sufficient now. Media consumption habits have changed to favor peer-driven content. You only have to look at the growth of billion-dollar social media companies to see that people respond most strongly to **peer-driven content**.

LXPs got us halfway to solving the problem. They made it easier to find and consume learning materials than a stodgy LMS did. But the real crisis isn't in the presentation of content; it's a critical lack of focus on creating engaging content that also encourages community interaction.



The solution: learning as a conversation, not a directive

Collaborative Learning is a peer-driven, bottom-up method for creating learning materials, making it **more effective than traditional eLearning methods**. Employees identify specific learning needs based on what they view as gaps in their knowledge. In-house experts then meet those needs by creating relevant courses. Everyone is an active participant in learning together.

Not only is this more democratic, but it's also more dynamic. There is room for conversation, feedback, and iteration. You can create more effective learning materials and boost employee engagement at the same time.

Facilitating knowledge transfer and idea-sharing among employees isn't just a way to drive better performance; it also enables innovation in learning. Course creators are forced to think like educators: employing decision-making and critical-thinking skills to create the best courses. Your teams might not have realized the skills and knowledge present within their teams. Once they're aware of it, there's no limit to what you can create.



Facilitating knowledge transfer and idea-sharing among employees isn't just a way to drive better performance; it also enables innovation in learning.

- **Example in practice:** Instead of a sales enablement manager setting mandatory pitch-assessment modules to be completed by all reps, she could give reps the opportunity to declare where they were running into problems and propose solutions. Then she could create learning paths that offered the support and the guidance needed to improve.

Enabling a distributed company culture

In a world where employees are increasingly willing to job-hop, strong company culture matters more than ever. A platform that leverages Collaborative Learning can help you build that strong company culture, one that's more flexible, decentralized, and nurturing. One that helps employees develop their skills and careers.



The problem: corporate learning makes employees feel like automatons

Building a company culture that empowers employees is a tall order. Unfortunately, it's an area where organizations have frequently failed in the past, especially during moments of crisis. A rigid, top-down corporate culture will inevitably be less flexible and in-touch with employees' needs.

Centralized learning programs only contribute to the problem. They are more likely to be focused on specific deliverables,

for example, upskilling large swaths of employees without concern for individual growth opportunities. To do this, they turn to one-size-fits-all solutions, like mass reskilling programs or in-person training seminars.

These solutions are usually expensive, are not effective, and can be challenging to scale. Generic learning programs make employees feel like a number, not like valued

team members. This lack of personalization is a major contributing factor to the current crisis of engagement.

The solution: a culture of learning that empowers workers



A Collaborative Learning culture should be focused on training impact. No more pointless videos or interminable webinars: If an activity isn't helping people learn, it's not worth their time.

Collaborative Learning can play a decisive role in the ongoing struggle to keep employees happy, present, and focused. It encourages each employee to take ownership of organizational culture by creating an environment where they can contribute their skills and experience toward a common goal by **creating content**. In a **Collaborative Learning environment**, each person's skills and ideas are genuinely valued.

A Collaborative Learning culture should be focused on training impact. No more pointless videos or interminable webinars: If an activity isn't helping people learn, it's not worth their time. 🚀

A culture of decentralized learning empowers all people while helping them move forward in their learning journey. Most importantly, decentralized learning is useful in a company of 10 or 10,000. It works whether you're all in the same building or spread out across the world. It scales as the company grows, and it's elastic enough to change with the organization's priorities.

- **Example in practice:** Instead of instituting a **corporate reskilling initiative** for 1,000 engineers, a company could encourage each employee to set their own learning goals based on their specific aspirations and priorities for development.

The new role for L&D in Collaborative Learning

Collaborative Learning has big implications for the way L&D teams deliver learning outcomes. Instead of having to schedule courses, follow-up with learners on their completions, and send out requests for feedback, L&D teams can become coaches, facilitating an environment where learning happens between peers. This creates new opportunities to focus on what matters.



In contrast with dedicated training departments, with **Collaborative Learning**, coaches are responsible for scaling learning outcomes. As peers create more courses, coaches guide people through their learning experiences, ensuring that learning needs are met with the right courses, and ensuring that courses are as effective as possible. This new role helps L&D to take track exactly how Collaborative Learning is driving growth and improving learning outcomes.

With all that in mind, let's take a look at how companies are using Collaborative Learning in practice. ☀️

Chapter 4

How are leading companies using Collaborative Learning in practice?

Adopting Collaborative Learning can have significant positive real-life effects that extend beyond just the L&D department, namely: building a more flexible and adaptable workforce, encouraging robust learning and engagement, and creating a shared learning culture.



Building a more flexible and adaptable workforce 🚴

Collaborative Learning allows people to learn new products and processes quickly. It's significantly easier to create training programs, which, in turn, makes it easier for specific departments, or even entire companies, to adapt to products or processes.

This flexibility is a huge competitive advantage in a world in constant flux. A learning platform focused on quick and nimble responses to training opportunities can have a profound impact across your entire business. With a responsive learning platform, you'll be able to pivot quickly to meet changing market dynamics or counteract world events. In practice, this means smoother transitions for workplace developments, such as the switch to remote working.

Most importantly, next time a crisis hits, you may be able to rapidly reskill employees and avoid layoffs. For example, when Scandinavian Airlines found themselves with thousands of grounded flights due to COVID-19, they quickly **retrained their service workers as health-care support workers**. In this case, the company fulfilled a critical national need even as their primary income generator was off the table.

Encouraging robust learning and engagement

Effective collaboration encourages active learning, making it more useful for knowledge retention and deeper learning engagement than traditional passive learning methods.

Studies show that **active learning increases knowledge retention**.



Employees have a more involved learning experience when they create and take peer-generated courses instead of watching training videos or listening to lectures.

Employees have the opportunity to interact with the learning materials and can ask questions and suggest feedback.

Collaborative Learning is also linked to **greater employee engagement**. Employees are more motivated to complete courses when they know their peers are counting on them. For example, 360Learning strengthens this motivation by encouraging group members to become learning champions who share their skills with others.



Industry research firm AlphaSights offers a great example of this peer-based learning in action. By onboarding 240 subject-matter experts to contribute to digital training programs, AlphaSights turned a massive 27% of its workforce into expert contributors to course content. This not only helped AlphaSights' learning content to be more current and informed; it also helped them **boost their course completion rates to 95%**.

Researchers have also linked Collaborative Learning activities to **enhanced communication and team-building capabilities**. That's because the act of teaching requires employees to flex their communication and critical-thinking skills. Helping colleagues learn builds a layer of responsibility and camaraderie as colleagues work together to conquer business challenges.

Creating a shared learning culture

A Collaborative Learning platform helps build a shared learning culture by creating an atmosphere where team members are continually collaborating by learning with and from one another. Employees are always sharing expertise and building new skills, leading to **higher levels of engagement in the learning process, and greater learning outcomes.**

Companies frequently make the mistake of waiting until an immense and obvious skill gap appears before they invest in new training solutions for their workers. Unfortunately, by then, the gap is usually too big to be easily overcome. Instead, you need to foster an atmosphere of constant learning and growth before you end up with a massive skill gap to traverse.



With new interactive learning platforms, organizations can develop and test learning content in a small group, before scaling it out to wider teams, divisions, and clients. **AI consulting firm Appen** offers a great case study highlighting this in action. The company saved a huge 102 days' worth of training over a three-month period by scaling up their employee onboarding.

🔥 This example demonstrates what can happen when you make human interactions the key focus at every step of the learning journey. This way, rather than just setting a standardized curriculum of course content and tracking completions, you can support **open conversation, dialogue, and collaboration.** With the right practical exercises, you can encourage experts and learners to work together, rather than just passively completing learning activities.



Collaborative Learning is the answer to our learning crisis

As we've seen, L&D teams everywhere are facing a crisis in learning. People don't have the time or the space to focus on online training the way they want to. We need a drastic solution to get them excited and empower them to share their skills and expertise.

Companies can respond to this crisis by creating a robust culture of Collaborative Learning. In return, they will be rewarded with a highly-skilled, engaged, and

loyal workforce that's ready to tackle the challenges ahead. They'll have the means to turn their collective talents into a competitive advantage and the flexibility to solve learning needs as soon as they arise.

To do this, you'll need the right tools. A traditional LMS or LXP will take you only so far. You need an integrated learning platform that's nimble, people-centric, and distributed. We talk to L&D experts on a regular basis, and these discussions tell us that making human interaction the central focus of learning leads to better outcomes.

👉 That's why we've built a learning platform that combines the power of a modern LMS with Collaborative Learning. It can be used as a standalone learning system or in addition to your existing LMS. It lets everyone play a part in your company's learning culture and encourages every employee to actively build their skills and share with others. With our platform, our users engage in 11 learning activities per day on average, with course completion rates boosted from the industry average of 20-30% to over 90%.

For years, we've been advocating Collaborative Learning as a way to transform organizational culture. Now, we believe that we are on the cusp of a Collaborative Learning revolution. The way we work, communicate, and learn is changing fast, and it's changing for good. If you fall behind now, you risk being disrupted by your competition.

Interested in how we can help you make Collaborative Learning a reality? [Get in touch with one of our learning experts today.](#)

Over 1,200 companies love us already! ❤️

360Learning is already helping over 1,200 clients to transform their organizational culture through Collaborative Learning.



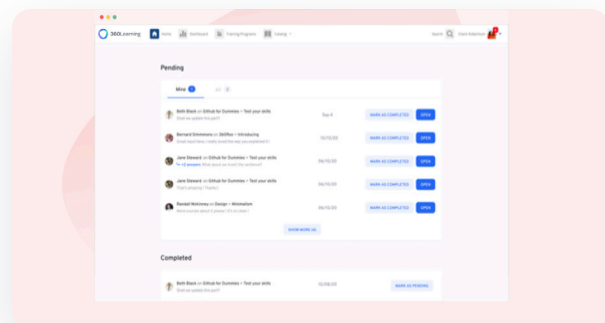
But don't just take our word for it: take a look at organizational learning expert Josh Bersin's exploration of [why Collaborative Learning makes such a big difference](#)—and how all kinds of companies can put it to work.

- See how our Collaborative Learning platform can help your business keep up with the trends, opportunities, and challenges identified in Gartner's [2021 transformation report](#).
- See how we stack up against other organizational learning solutions at Gartner's [peer insights page](#).
- For a closer look at how we support collaboration between teams, check out features like our [Experts Engagement Tool](#), [Discussion Forum](#), [Authoring Tool](#), and [Learning Needs Tool](#).
- For a deeper look at how our clients embrace Collaborative Learning, read about how we helped [AI consulting firm Appen](#) save \$240k in annual training costs.



360Learning is much more than a Learning Platform. Every single company needs a platform like this.

Josh Bersin



What's next?



The world is changing fast, and so is the way we learn. Traditional models of corporate learning are simply too slow, rigid, and unengaging.

Now, L&D teams everywhere need a better way to drive learning engagement.

You need a platform that lets you respond to learning opportunities quickly, develop bespoke content that matches learner needs, and drive results using subject-matter expertise.

Embracing fast, peer-based, and scalable Collaborative Learning doesn't just keep your teams happy and engaged: it also helps L&D teams save time on low-value administrative tasks like updating old content, scheduling courses, and tracking completions. More than that, it helps your organization respond to opportunities for innovation and invention.

Our Collaborative Learning platform achieves this by:

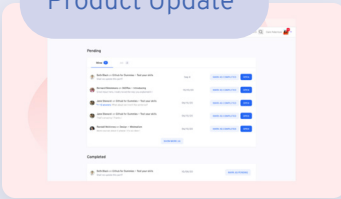
- Making it easy for people to declare their learning needs
- Empowering any team to make and ship courses quickly in response
- Shaping learner recommendations based on user data relating to skills, interests, role, feedback from other learners, and more
- Encourage subject-matter experts to contribute their skills, share their knowledge, and iterate learning content over time
- Enabling L&D teams to build tailored programs by curating courses from 3rd party platforms - including existing SCORM libraries
- Using continuous feedback to keep content accurate and engaging
- Fostering a shared sense of connection and belonging through making every step of the learning process as interactive as possible

Want to find out how Collaborative Learning can help?

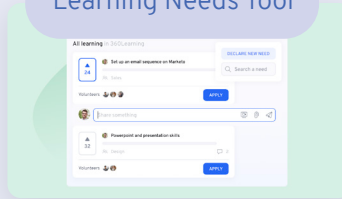
Request a free demo today!



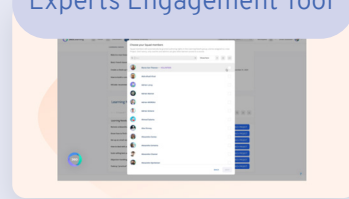
Product Update



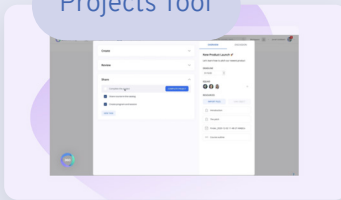
Learning Needs Tool



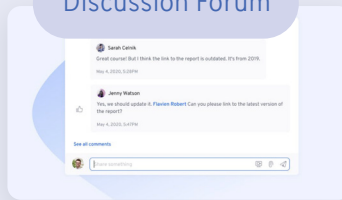
Experts Engagement Tool



Projects Tool



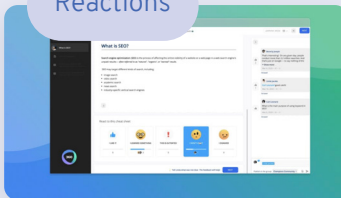
Discussion Forum



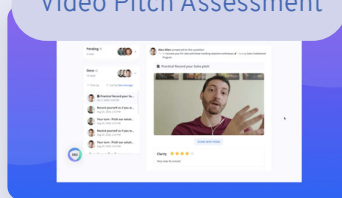
Authoring Tool



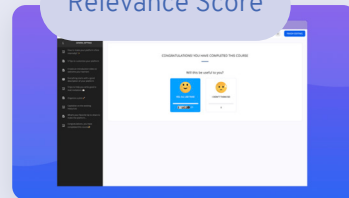
Reactions



Video Pitch Assessment



Relevance Score



Looking for more great reading?

Web Series



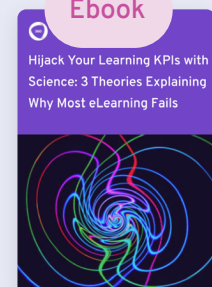
Onboarding Joei: Our award-winning unscripted docu-series

Blog



CLO Connect: A series of in-depth interviews with L&D experts

Ebook



Hijack Your Learning KPIs with Science: 3 Theories Explaining Why Most eLearning Fails



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