

# **Self-directed learning: L&D's holy grail?**

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Learning and and OD Manager

When it comes to **learning for work**,  
what type of organisation do you work for?

# Telling



# Thinking



# Telling organisation symptoms

“I’ve got a new manager in my team and they need some training.”

“Two members of my team don’t get on and they need training on how to work better together.”

“I can’t do [insert thing] because I’ve not had the training.”



# Thinking organisation symptoms

“I’ve been thinking about the next step in my career...”

“I’ve been given a bigger remit and I think I have a few skills gaps...”

“My team are sharing new things they’ve learnt at team meetings...”



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# Telling



Eric Berne, M.D. (1964) *Games People Play – The Psychology of Human Relationships*

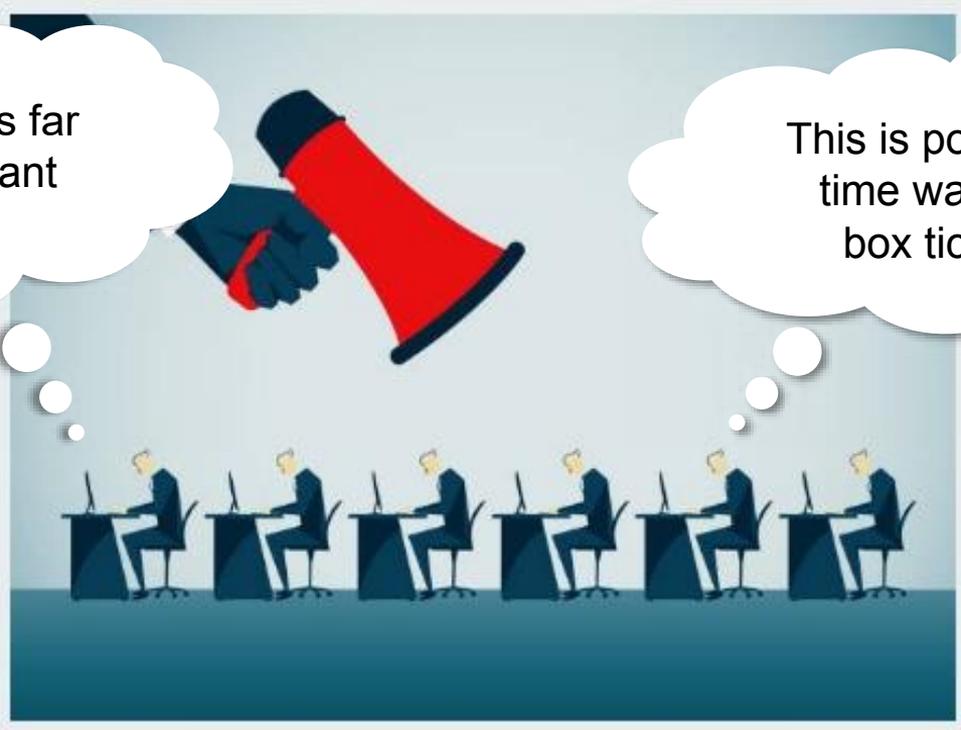
# Is a **Telling** organisation **bad**?



# What's so wrong with a **Telling** organisation anyway?

My 'real job' is far more important than this

This is pointless/  
time wasting/  
box ticking



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# Thinking



Robert Swartz (2008) Thinking-Based Learning

## What's so brilliant about being a **Thinking** organisation anyway?



Start enabling the use of techniques, not training out subjects.

Techniques such as critical thinking, problem solving, abstract thinking, self-awareness, conscious behaviour changes.

Significantly increased engagement in learning at work as a whole.

**Being** rather than just **Knowing**.

Send in self-directed learning!



# Moving from **Telling** to **Thinking**: Issues of Readiness

Wait... I don't know  
what training I need  
:-/

But... I don't  
understand what I'm  
supposed  
to do...

Wait, no!



The most profound artefact of a **Telling** organisation...



Piaget (1923) Frederic Bartlett (1932) - The Psychological Schema

How can self-directed learning work if you have issues with **readiness**?



## Step 1: Thinking about learning for work

What do I **need** to learn?

Add value to the organisation to enable it to achieve it's purpose and goals.

What do I **want** to learn?

Continue my professional development and work towards my career goals.

# Why bother?



# Step 2: A supportive self-directed learning platform

Your learning Playlists ▾ Browse... Topics ▾ Ways to learn ▾ Search... 🔍



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Show tips for getting started...

## Development mapper

The objective of the Development Mapper is to help you identify your key development needs in relation to critical behaviours you wish to develop.

Identify development needs →

## Learning record →

Your learning record is populated with content you've accessed within Leadership Live.

View your record →



## Step 3: Create a half-and-half format



### Suggested format

- Discuss what the skills gaps might be
- Set up some resources and/or learning paths online and give them a week to read it/do it
- Get them together and facilitate a discussion about what they read/did/learnt about
- Discuss how this applies to them
  - Are we doing this?
  - If not, should we?
  - What are we doing instead, and should we change it?
- Use learning journals
- Rinse, repeat

## Step 4: Push the boundaries and challenge

### Our challenge

In an area of our business, in order to improve our colleague's experience, we wanted their leaders in to start thinking about how they lead and manage people.

- Describe how you lead and manage.
- Why do you do it like that?
- Would you do anything differently?
- Why?
- What's stopping you?



## Remember the **Thinking** principles...



**Don't be tempted** to go into a facilitated session and spoon feed the answers.

**Ask the opening questions** and get them to offer their thoughts.

Their job is to **interpret what they've read** and apply it to the real world, with your help.

**Use questioning** to enable this to happen.

## References and further reading

BERNE, E. (1964). *Games people play: the psychology of human relationships*. New York, Grove Press.

SWATZ, R. (2008). *Thinking-Based Learning: Promoting Quality Student Achievement in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. Teacher's College Press.

PIAGET, J. (1923). *The Language and Thought of the Child*. Psychology Press.

BARTLETT, F.C. (1932). *Remembering: A Study in Experimental and Social Psychology*. Cambridge University Press.