



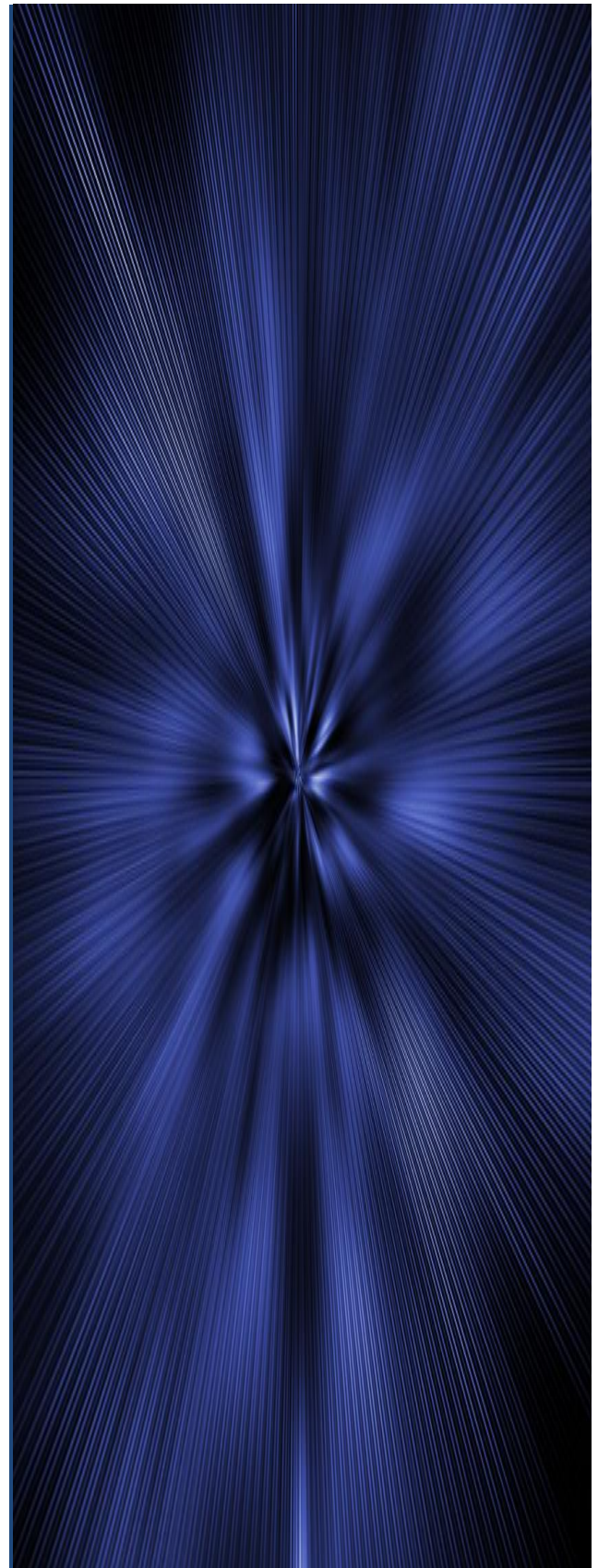
DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

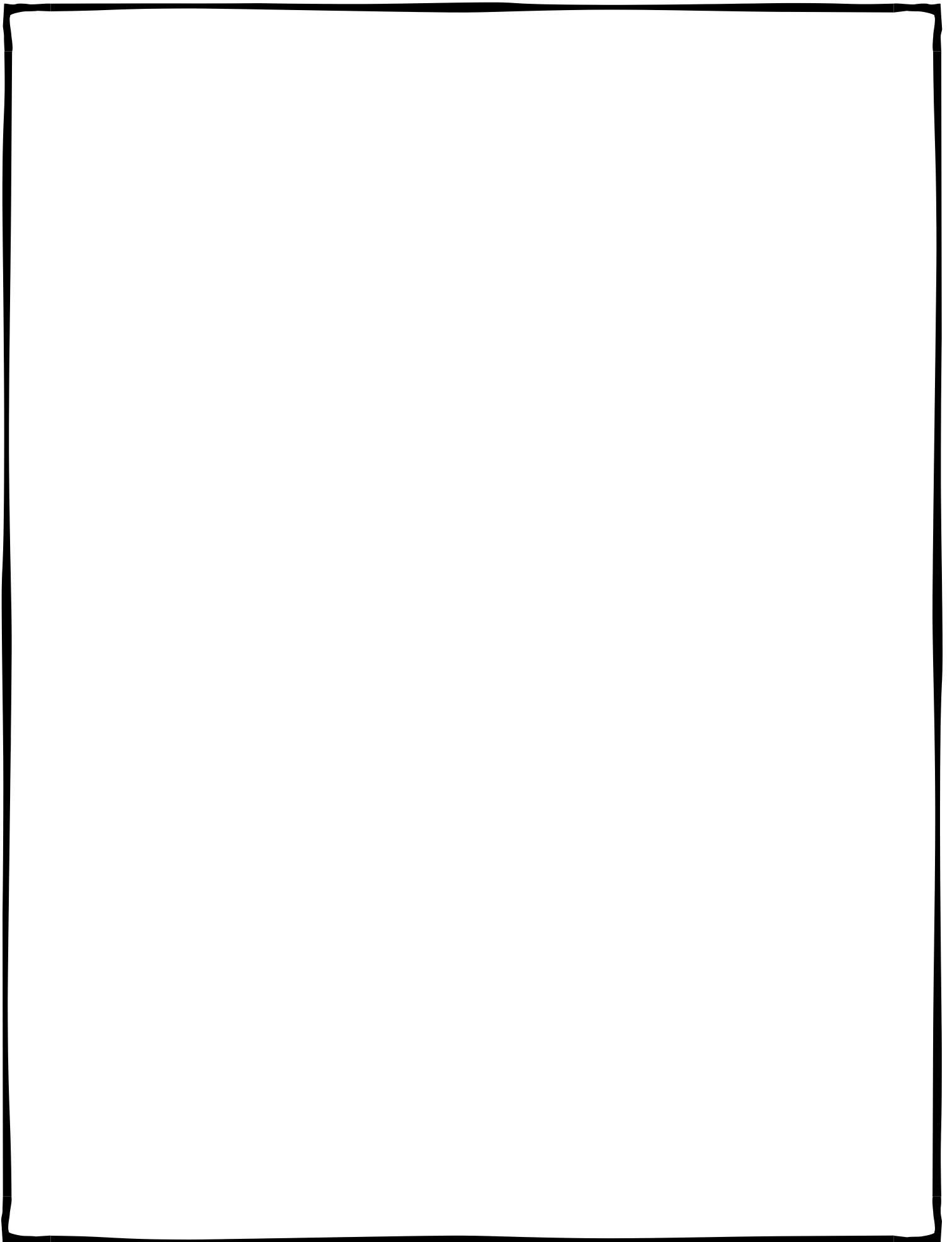
Blended Learning Approach

December 2010

Office of the Chief Human Capital
Officer

Office of Learning & Workforce
Development





A Message from the Chief Learning Officer (CLO)...

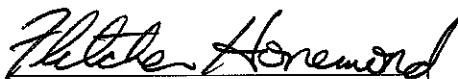
I am pleased to provide the revised version of the Department of Energy (DOE) Blended Learning Approach. Since our last version, which was developed in June 2008, several new technologies have become available to the learning and development (L&D) community such as iPortal and PowerPedia. We strive to stay current with trends and new technology as we provide you with innovative and relevant approaches to L&D.

This document is intended to assist you in addressing your employee's L&D needs. The DOE Blended Learning Approach is a guide that identifies possible L&D activities that facilitate improved performance, resulting in a more effective and better performing organization. Our hope is that you see us as a "trusted advisor" who is able to address your L&D individual and organizational needs.

The DOE Blended Learning Approach is one tool for you to use in order to address and develop your employees. In order for the DOE to continue contributing to the future of the Nation by meeting its mission, it is essential for us to focus resources and efforts to develop ourselves and our employees. Each of us must be committed to a culture of continuous learning and self-development.

I appreciate your cooperation and commitment in taking an active role in developing your employees. I look forward to partnering with you as the Department implements this and other L&D initiatives. I invite you to contact L&D Programs, HC-22 for a briefing and ongoing assistance in implementing blended learning solutions.

Thanks for your ongoing partnership and commitment to continuous learning.



Fletcher Honemond
Chief Learning Officer
Office of Learning & Workforce Development

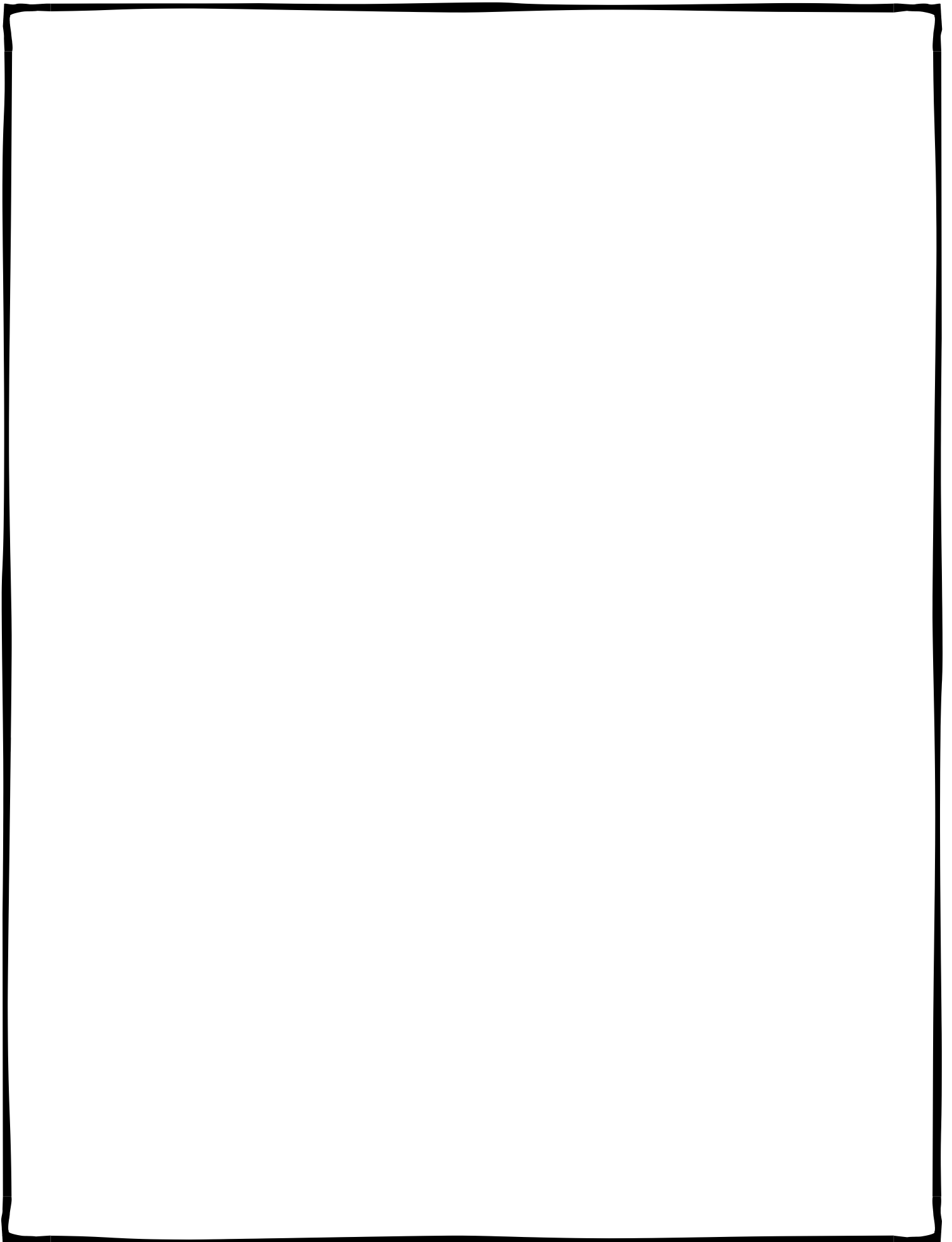


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BACKGROUND

The Department of Energy is challenged to ensure that it has the required talent and skills in the current and future workforce to accomplish its broader mission. In simpler terms, our challenge is to ensure that we have the right people, with the right talent, at the right time. The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has identified “several compelling trends” that have a great impact on the Department meeting its challenge. The following are the specific trends, obtained from OPM’s *Career Patterns: A 21st Century Approach to Attracting Talent*, that indicate the Federal, civilian workforce is changing:

- A significant retirement wave among current Federal employees is coming—we should expect 40 percent of our workforce to retire between 2006 and 2015.
- Competition for scarce talent among employers throughout the national economy is increasing.
- The applicants we must attract have differing expectations; their needs and interests have shifted from past generations, which means we must offer a wider variety of employer-employee relationships.

If we are going to attract and retain talented employees who will enable the Department to meet its goals, we have to devise strategies that adapt to our workforce’s expectations and create an environment that facilitates and supports employee success. One of the strategies the Department has adopted to meet this challenge is to invest in employee learning and development (L&D).

By successfully leveraging L&D and cutting-edge technology, we will most effectively compete to attract new employees and will retain current employees who have the talent needed to accomplish the Department’s mission. Blended learning will enable us to embrace the challenge and opportunity to shape DOE’s new highly skilled and motivated workforce. We should embrace this challenge as we embark on the unique opportunity to shape a workforce that is highly skilled and motivated to perform at all levels throughout the Department.

What is Blended Learning?

At DOE, we define **blended learning** as combining two or more approaches to optimize learning and development using both formal and informal methods. The formal method is learning conducted in a structured manner and the informal method is learning outside of a classroom and is self-directed. The most common approach is combining classroom learning with on-line learning, however, there are many combined approaches that enhance the learning and development experience. We should be careful not to limit or too narrowly confine the blended learning possibilities.

The U.S. Department of Labor estimates that 70% or more of work-related learning occurs outside formal training. That is, most real learning occurs on the job. As managers, employees, and training practitioners, we must continue to broaden our view of L&D.

We need to be creative in approaching learning and development and in actually using a comprehensive blended learning approach designed to encompass formal as well as informal methods. Ideally, learning should be incorporated into everyday work not just formal methods with a structured curriculum. Most importantly, the more we link learning to our mission, the more effective and efficient we will become in designing our training programs and expending our resources. We need to provide an environment where learners are empowered to take control of their learning.

Tip #1: Use Formal & Informal Methods

Why Should We Use a Blended Learning Approach?

Blended learning, when used properly, is one of the most effective approaches for developing adult learners and improving performance for the following reasons:

1. *Increased interaction and positive learning experience.* With a blended approach, learning is a continual process not just a one-time event. It appeals to various styles of learning which make a positive experience. Employees benefit from learning because they are working to solve “real” organizational problems while developing new knowledge and skills. With blended learning, employees look for opportunities to grow and develop while contributing to the success of the organization.
2. *Increased transfer and retention of knowledge.* Employees can immediately apply the knowledge and skills they acquire because it’s done on the job and in a structured environment. Applying learned knowledge and skills adds to retention.
3. *Blended learning optimizes organizational resources.* Organizations can utilize technology for integrating resources into a single site which streamlines informal learning. Less time is spent keeping multiple sites updated and recreating procedures that are already in place in another organization.

Tip #2: Make Learning Easy

What is the Goal of Using a Blended Learning Approach?

The main goal for DOE's blended learning approach is to choose the optimal combination of L&D activities that creates the greatest impact on performance for the lowest possible cost. With this goal in mind, we should also look for opportunities for employees to use the knowledge and skills they obtain, not only on the job but in their personal life as well. This is called, according to Jim Bird, CEO of WorklifeBalance.com, "dual-purpose learning".

Using dual-purpose learning shows employees the organization's commitment to work-life balance while teaching knowledge and skills that can be applied on and off the job. The more employees practice and use knowledge and skills, the better chance of them demonstrating enhanced performance, which is our ultimate goal.

An example of dual-purpose learning is a course in Emotional Intelligence (EI). Specifically, the subject matter and principles taught in an EI course can be used by an individual on and away from the job. Learning the skill of monitoring your and other's feelings, can enhance an employee's interpersonal relationships on the job and at home.

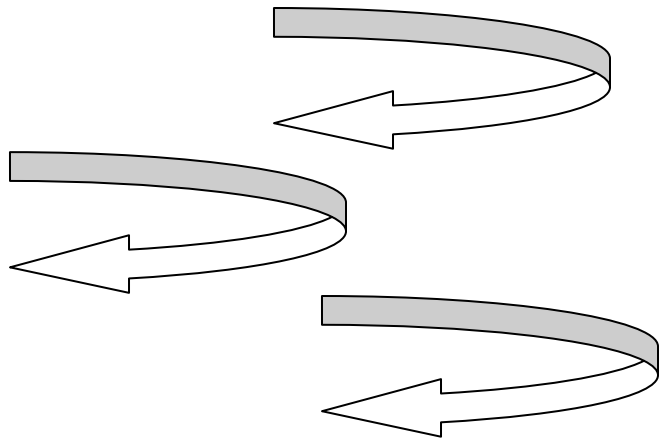
Tip #3: Create "Dual Purpose" Learning

How Can We Use a Blended Learning Approach?

The purpose of learning and development is to acquire knowledge and skills to enhance performance. L&D activities are methods or strategies for obtaining these performance enhancing knowledge and skills. Within DOE, the ideal learning environment effectively integrates multiple formal and informal L&D activities - in other words, **Blended Learning**.

Like many enterprises in both the public and private sectors, DOE has adopted a streamlined, four-step process for using blended learning. The steps are as follows:

1. Determine the L&D need.
2. Determine the L&D activities.
3. Conduct L&D activities.
4. Assess progress.



This process can be used for individual employees as well as groups of employees within an organization. The following pages outline each step in detail.

1. Determine the L&D need.

This first step in using a blended approach involves defining what you want to accomplish using learning and development. In other words, think about the end result to determine what L&D you need.

Tip #4: Begin with the Desired Outcome

Remember the goal is to use the blended learning approach to address a learning need, which improves performance, for the lowest possible cost. L&D closes performance gaps when there is a lack of knowledge and skill. There could be other causes for performance gaps that L&D will not solve. It is critical that you make an accurate determination of the cause of the performance gap before utilizing resources on a solution that will not yield the results which you desire.

You can begin to determine the L&D need by answering the following few basic questions:

What task is the employee not able to perform? List the task(s) the employee is not able to perform effectively.

What competencies are required for the job? List the competencies the employee needs to develop to perform effectively on the job.

Competency-Centric Learning at DOE

The DOE has adopted the Office of Personnel Management's leadership, competency management principles. Competencies are observable, measurable skills, knowledge, abilities, behaviors, and other characteristics an individual needs to successfully perform work roles or occupational functions.

The Department developed the Competency-Centric Learning and Development Framework to address the need to proactively develop a "continuously high performing organization" to achieve Departmental goals and objectives, and to ensure individuals comprising the DOE workforce possess the competencies that will support the current and future mission. This Framework will serve as a foundation for the Department's learning programs and as a guide to support DOE organizations as they address key issues involving workforce development, learning and development efforts, and skill gap challenges.

What are possible causes for the performance gap? Answer the questions in the table below.

Ask yourself...	If "no", then this may be a possible cause for the performance gap.	Possible Solutions
Do I give my employee regular feedback on performance?	Feedback	Provide more feedback on how the employee is performing.
Does my employee know what and how well he's expected to perform?	Standards/M Measurement	Clarify and communicate performance standards with clear measures.
Does my employee have adequate resources to perform effectively?	Conditions	Provide additional resources or re-structure work processes.
Are there consequences for poor performance and incentives for good performance?	Motivation/Incentives	Provide incentives for good performance and consequences for poor performance.
Is my employee able to perform the task effectively?	Capacity	Consider reassigning work to use employee's strengths.
Does my employee have the necessary knowledge and skills to perform effectively?	L&D	Blended Learning Approach to develop knowledge and skills gap.

Is L&D a possible solution for the performance gap?

What type of knowledge and skills do I want the employee to develop at the end of the learning? Do you want the employee to develop technical, conceptual, or interpersonal skills?

How do I want the employee to use the knowledge? Do you just want the employee to be aware of information or to use the information?

How well do I want the employee to be able to perform the skills? Do you just want the employee to apply the skills or do you want her to be able to teach other employees to use the skills?

How much do I want the employee to retain? Do you want the employee to rapidly recall the skills learned or be able to use the skills with a job aid?

2. Determine the L&D activities.

The second step in using a blended approach to L&D is to select the right mix of L&D activities to improve performance. To make it easier to implement a blended approach to learning and development, we have grouped commonly used L&D activities into three main categories:

- Relationship
- Experiential
- Instructive

Certain types of skill development lend themselves to certain types of L&D activities. For example, if you are using L&D to change culture or develop interpersonal skills, you should always include a relationship developmental activity in your blended approach. Below are specific examples of L&D activities within each category. See Appendix A: L&D Activities for descriptions and additional information.

CATEGORY	L&D ACTIVITY
Relationship (dependent on the involvement of other people)	knowledge sharing (peer-to-peer)
	social networking (email, video conferencing, conference calls, web meetings)
	coaching
	discussion forums
	information interviews
	learning groups (teams)
	mentoring
Experiential (focused in enabling on-the-job-learning)	action learning
	knowledge libraries (wikis)
	developmental assignments/ special projects
	shadow assignments
	on-the-job training
	communities of practice
Instructive (conveying information)	job aids
	self-directed learning (books, e-books, videos, CD-ROM, on-line tutorial, other resources)
	web-based training (WBT)
	classroom learning (courses, seminars, workshops)
	simulations
	web searches (Google, Yahoo, Bing, etc.)

Choosing L&D activities from each of the three categories ensures that multiple informal and formal activities are used, therefore, achieving a blended approach. Instructive L&D activities tend to be formal, while relationship and experiential L&D activities are more informal. An easy way to accomplish blended learning is to ensure that each core L&D activity has four parts:

- Stop to **prepare** for learning
- Actively **engage** in learning
- Slow down to **reflect** on learning
- Proceed to **act** on learning

For example, if one of your employees requests a course on conducting program evaluations, you can encourage her to take an online learning (*instructive*) to **prepare** for the course. This will enable her to become familiar with basic principles and terminology associated with program evaluations. Before your employee attends the training, you should discuss the learning objectives and your expectations for the employee to use the knowledge and skills learned after returning to the job.

The employee actively **engages** in the classroom training (*instructive*) knowing that he or she is expected to use the knowledge and skills obtained.

At the end of each day of training, the employee should **reflect** on the learning that has occurred. Reflection should also occur at the end of the course by employees conducting a knowledge sharing (*relationship*) session with her colleagues once she returns to work.

The last step to ensure blended learning is accomplished happens when the employee plans ways to **act** on the learning that she obtained in the course. One way that you can foster this is to recommend the employee to participate on a special project (*experiential*) where the new or enhanced knowledge and skills can be used. You should always have discussions with your employees after engaging in L&D activities.

By preparing for learning, reflecting on learning, and acting on learning, you can ensure that the blended approach is used and learning becomes a regular part of work activities. Reinforce that every work activity can be a learning event. For a job aid to remember the DOE Blended Learning Approach, see Appendix A: Choosing L&D Activities.

Tip #5: Create Continual Learning Environments

On-line Learning at DOE

The DOE OLC² is the web-based learning management system (LMS) that provides DOE Federal employees a convenient avenue to access career-enhancing courses while at the office, at home or on the go.

The OLC² provides a wide variety of quality courses to DOE Federal employees. With access to over variety of courses, employees can fulfill their training needs with ease and save money on travel and training costs. With the OLC² you can take a few courses at your leisure or schedule several courses at a time. Whether at the office, in the comfort of your home or on the go, you can access your online training at any time.

You should always consider using the OLC² as a part of your blended approach to L&D. The courses that reside in OLC² can be used to **prepare** for learning, **engage** in, **reflect** on learning, and **act** on learning. The following list provides the OLC² course subject types:

- ✓ Security and Safety Operations
- ✓ Business/Professional Skills
- ✓ Project Management and Leadership
- ✓ Desktop Applications
- ✓ IT Professional
- ✓ Computer Networking and Programming
- ✓ Legal Compliance
- ✓ Personal Development and Retirement Planning



3. Conduct L&D activities.

As employees prepare for, reflect on, and act on learning, reiterate that their learning is their responsibility. Your responsibility is to ensure they have opportunities to learn and resources to foster those opportunities, but actual learning is up to them. Always look for ways for your employees to learn and develop.

You can have briefing meetings with your employee before conducting L&D activities to communicate what you expect him to be able to do as a result of the activity. Likewise, you can have a conversation at the conclusion of the L&D activity to explore how he plans to use the knowledge and skills that he's obtained.

4. Assess progress.

In some instances, you can see immediate results of how well the blended approach worked to improve and enhance performance. In other instances, it may take up to three to six months to see an optimal level of performance improvement. If your blended approach was successful, you will see an improvement in your employee's performance. If you do not see an improvement in your employee's performance within three months, you should re-evaluate the training need. Your employee may not lack knowledge and skills to perform a task effectively, there may be another cause of the performance problem.

For specific examples of using a blended learning approach see Appendix C: Examples of Using a Blended Learning Approach.



L&D Activities

All activities can be used to **engage** in learning.

L&D ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	BEST USE	CHALLENGES
action learning	A powerful problem solving tool that builds leaders, teams and organizations using small groups working with real problems, taking action, while learning as individuals and team members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To prepare for, reflect on, and act on L&D activities • To solve organizational problems • To acquire and apply knowledge and skills • Foster learning environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time consuming • Difficulty maintaining participation and scheduling • Requires a trained facilitator
coaching	Formal coaching is a short-term relationship with a certified subject matter expert external to the organization. Informal coaching is a relationship with an individual, also, external to the organization.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To act on L&D activities • To provide one-on-one L&D on a specific skill • To provide feedback while applying and practicing a skill 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal coaching can be expensive • Time consuming
communities of practice	Communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To prepare for, reflect on, and act on L&D activities • To acquire and apply knowledge and skills • Share lessons learned • Foster learning environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires a moderator to manage information
developmental assignments/ special projects	Sponsor driven opportunities to develop and use acquired knowledge and skills while accomplishing work assignments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To acquire and apply knowledge and skills • To act on L&D activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be expensive if travel is involved • Managing existing workload

Appendix A

L&D ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	BEST USE	CHALLENGES
<p>discussion forums</p>	<p>A group that meets on a regular basis to share ideas, information, and solutions to work-related issues.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To prepare for, reflect on, and act on L&D activities • To share lessons-learned and successes • To reduce duplication within an organization • Brainstorming ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Takes time to form group • Difficult to maintain high attendance rates
<p>information interviews</p>	<p>An appointment you schedule with a particular individual, expert, for the purpose of gaining current, regional, and/or specialized information from an expert or professional point of view.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To prepare for, reflect on, and act on L&D activities • To gather data • For benchmarking • Starting new projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty scheduling appointments • Time consuming to analyze data collected
<p>instructor-led training (courses, seminars, workshops)</p>	<p>Work-related training held in a traditional classroom setting either onsite or offsite.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To prepare for, reflect on, and act on L&D activities • To foster learner interaction and discussion • To learn complex knowledge and skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Takes time away from the job • Can be expensive
<p>job aids</p>	<p>Tools that give step-by-step guidance for completing a task (e.g., checklists, decision aids, procedure and policy manuals, work samples, flowcharts).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To prepare for, reflect on, and act • To supplement any L&D activity • When a task is performed infrequently • To summarize "how-to's" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not suitable for complex or unpredictable tasks • Low interaction with others • May require frequent updates

Appendix A

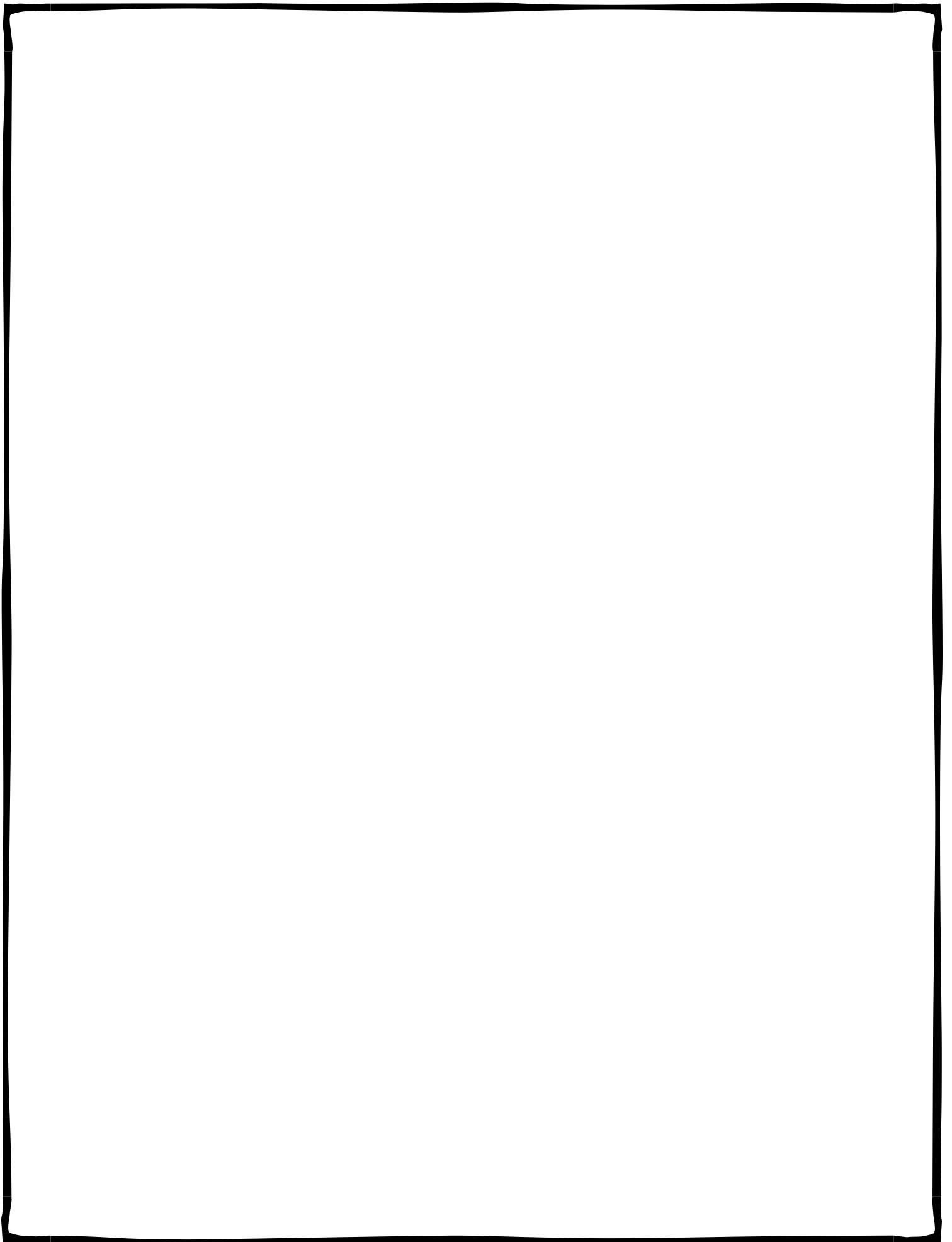
L&D ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	BEST USE	CHALLENGES
knowledge libraries (iPortal, wikis)	Where employees can share lessons-learned (successes and failures) and locate commonly used organizational documents electronically;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To prepare for, reflect on, and act on L&D activities • Foster learning environment • Change organizational culture • To learn supplemental information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Takes time to input information • Requires someone to set up and manage the library
knowledge sharing (peer-to-peer learning)	When one or more employee conducts a L&D activity and shares it with other employees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To reflect on activities • Save resources from sending multiple employees to the same L&D activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible dissemination of inaccurate information
learning groups (teams)	When employees meet to focus on their own learning and development in a particular interest area such as information technology, public speaking, or career paths.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To prepare for, reflect on, and act on L&D activities • Develop team-building skills • Foster learning environment • Change organizational culture • Brainstorming ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Takes time to form group • Difficult to maintain high attendance rates
mentoring (group, situational, one-on-one)	Long term relationship with a recognized expert outside of the direct chain of command. The purpose of a mentor is to help you learn how to become successful in and navigate through an organization. The mentor provides ongoing support of the mentee's learning and development, advice, and career direction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To prepare for, reflect on, and act on L&D activities • To assist employees in a new position • To provide support when learning difficult skills • To orientate new employees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be time consuming • Requires commitment

Appendix A

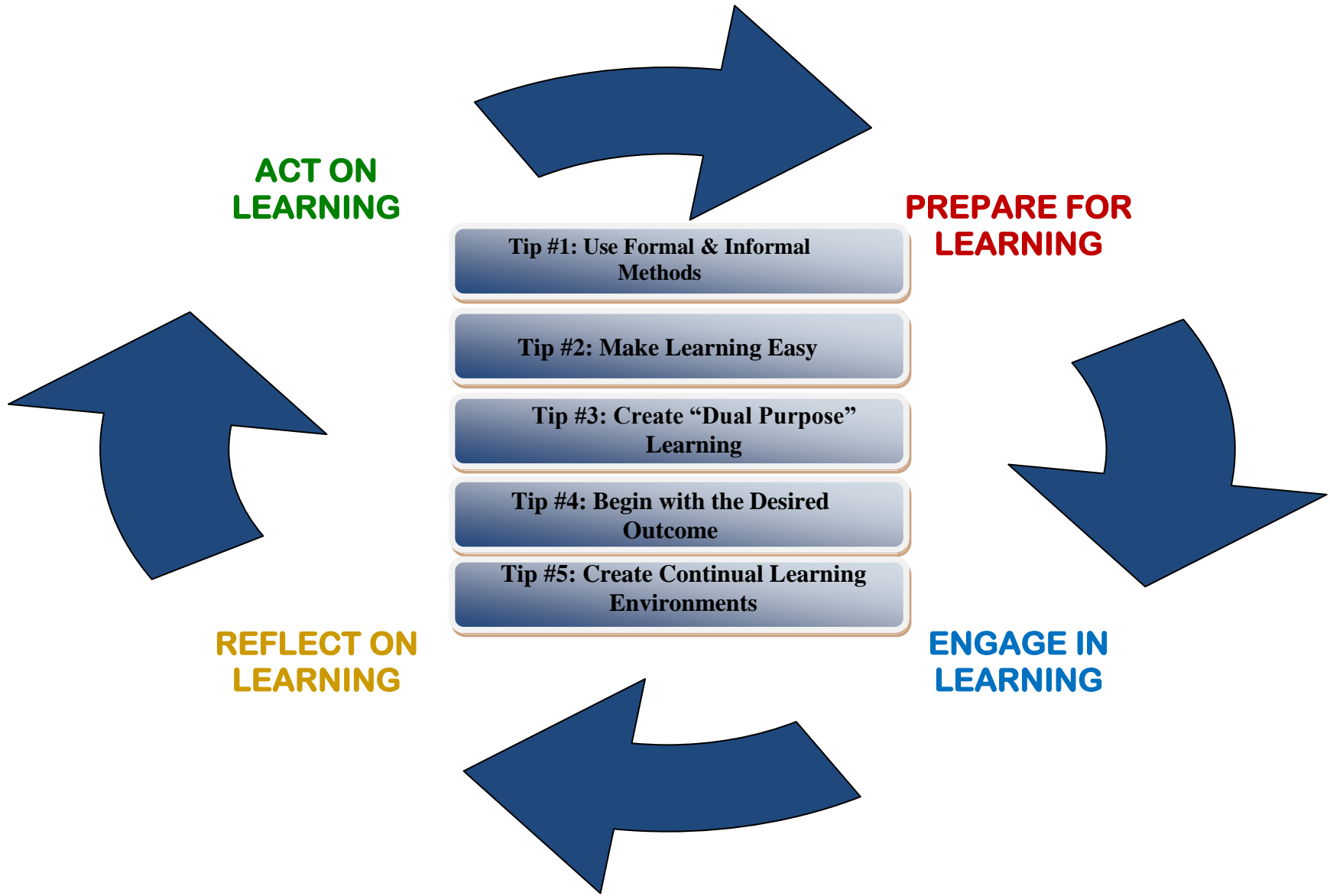
L&D ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	BEST USE	CHALLENGES
on-the-job training	Structured activities that allow learners to practice the application of knowledge and skills acquired through training back on the job.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To reflect on and act on L&D activities • To practice a skill in a real work setting • To provide feedback while applying and practicing a skill • Useful for complex topics • To provide individualized attention and feedback • To get an immediate assessment of learning progress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time consuming • Work environment can be distracting • Removes skilled workers from job responsibilities while training others • Not suitable for training large numbers of employees • Can lack consistency unless structured properly
self-directed learning (books, e-books, videos, CD-ROM, Podcasts, other resources)	Development activities an individual can pursue on his/her own, allowing employees to focus on developing specific areas according to their own needs and schedules.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To prepare for, reflect on, and act on L&D activities • To supplement any L&D activity • To highlight information on specific topics • To provide L&D to large audiences in various geographic locations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty tracking completion • Not suitable for interpersonal communication or interaction
shadow assignments	An assignment during which an employee or manager observes another person in his/her daily routine for a period of time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To prepare for, reflect on, and act on L&D activities • To learn a skill being conducted in a realistic setting • To observe interpersonal skills being used 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be distracting • Time consuming

Appendix A

L&D ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	BEST USE	CHALLENGES
simulations	Scenario-based activities that provide learners with a real world environment to apply knowledge and skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To reflect on and act on L&D activities To apply technical skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expensive to develop
social networking (email, iPortal, video conferencing, conference calls, web meetings)	When two or more users communicate with each other via an electronic medium.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To prepare for, reflect on, and act on L&D activities To help supplement learning Communicate with other learners to share information Connect learners with Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May be distractive Difficult to judge engagement Difficult to maintain high levels of participation
web-based training	Internet-based, self-paced training.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To prepare for, reflect on, and act on L&D activities To provide L&D to large audiences in various geographic locations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expensive to develop Not suitable for interpersonal interaction High dropout rate
web searches (Google, Yahoo, Bing, etc.)	Search for key concepts or terms to learn.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To prepare for or reflect on L&D activities To help supplement learning To highlight information on specific topics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">



Choosing Blended L&D Activities



Appendix B

Examples of Using a Blended Learning Approach

The examples provided demonstrate how the blended learning approach was used to achieve L&D goals. Each example provides the following:



L&D Goal. *Why was the training needed?*



Task Prioritization. *What task is performed and how important is the task as it relates to the job e.g. high, moderate, low?*



Content Type. *What type of content e.g. Technical, Interpersonal, Conceptual?*



Current Learning Environment. *What are possible conditions that can impact L&D activities?*



Blended Learning Approach. *What L&D activities would accomplish the L&D goal, e.g. **prepare** for, **reflect** on, **engage** in, and **act** on learning?*

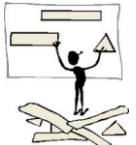
**Use the examples provided to assist you in accomplishing
organizational L&D goals**

EXAMPLE #1 - Computer Skills



L&D Goal

To develop approximately 5,000 employees worldwide on using a new learning management system (LMS).



Task
Prioritization

High (H)—Moderate (M)—Low (L)

For non-computer-literate employees:

1. Use Microsoft Windows operating system. (H)
2. Use a mouse. (M)
3. Navigate using Windows Explorer. (H)
4. Open programs. (M)
5. Close programs. (M)

For all employees:

6. Login to system. (H)
7. Launch a course. (H)
8. Create learning plans. (M)



Content
Type

Technical



Current
Learning
Environment

- Some employees were computer savvy, but many were practically computer illiterate.
- Learners were geographically dispersed, in multiple time zones.
- Technical infrastructure existed at each location for web-based training.
- Training facilities were available at each location.



Blended
Learning
Approach

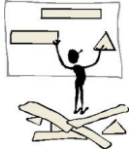
- **Paper-based Assessment (Self-Directed Learning):** One month prior to the start of training, all employees were required to complete a paper-based assessment to determine their computer skill level. The results were tabulated and the learners were divided into two groups: beginner and intermediate.
- **Classroom Learning:** The employees identified for the beginner group were required to attend a two-hour instructor-led course, *Introduction to Computers*, to have hands-on practice and individualized feedback. The training facilities at each location will be outfitted with computers for the training.
- **Classroom Learning:** The beginner group attended another two-hour instructor-led course to learn how to use the LMS to launch a course and create learning plans.
- **On-line Tutorial (Self-Directed Learning):** The intermediate, more computer-savvy learners, were trained to use the LMS to launch a course and create learning plans via an on-line tutorial, which they could access at their own convenience.
- **Workbook & On-line Practice (Self-Directed Learning):** For a period of three weeks after the classroom training for beginners or WBT for intermediates was complete, employees were given a workbook for follow-up activities and access to the training site of the LMS, to practice using the system at their leisure.
- **Social Networking:** After the training, a group space was created to have on-line discussions regarding issues users were encountering.
- **Job Aids/Knowledge Library:** As employees began to use the new LMS, job aids were posted on the internal Wiki to help remind employees how to use the LMS.
- **Coaching:** More technically savvy employees were identified to coach employees having difficulty.

EXAMPLE #2 – Management and Leadership Skills



L&D Goal

To enhance supervisory skills.



Task
Prioritization

High (H)—Moderate (M)—Low (L)

1. Set clear goals with employees. (H)
2. Communicate effectively. (H)
3. Influence others. (H)
4. Implement time-management techniques. (H)
5. Select the best people for your team. (M)
6. Improve your problem-solving skills. (H)
7. Use leadership to motivate your staff. (H)



Content
Type

Combination of interpersonal and conceptual



Current
Learning
Environment

- Learners were geographically dispersed, in multiple time zones.
- Technical infrastructure existed at each location for web-based training.
- Upper management requires “just-in-time” training to bridge the gap until employees can attend training.



Blended
Learning
Approach

- **Email (Collaboration System):** Two weeks before attending the course, learners were emailed a pre-course kit, telling them what to expect for their upcoming course.
- **Electronic Job Aid:** The pre-course kits also provided learners with links to a variety of resources, including the link to electronic job aids to locate help for a given leadership topic by accessing an on-line index or conducting a keyword search. The job aid included a variety of tools, including printable worksheets and checklists that were available “just-in-time”.
- **Knowledge Library:** The pre-course kits also provided learners with a worksheet containing a series of management problems along with a link to an internal knowledge library. Prior to attending the training, they were

required to research solutions to the problems using the knowledge library, which contained best practices on over 60 different leadership topics, and using the electronic job aid. Completed worksheets were sent to the second-level managers for review and comment.

- **Simulation:** Prior to attending the course, learners were also required to conduct five hours of practice time using the online simulation. They were required to work through a variety of scenarios that built on the material presented in the previous two activities. The built-in “coach” provided learners with feedback based on the decisions they made during each of the scenarios.
- **Classroom Learning:** A two-day instructor-led course took place at each of the corporate offices. Content covered included communication and influencing others. The face-to-face interaction allowed for valuable practice through role plays and peer coaching.
- **Book:** Learners were encouraged to read books pertaining to time management and influence others.
- **Knowledge Sharing/Social Networking:** Learners met on-line periodically to share key concepts learned from books read. The meetings took place using the internal group space.
- **Web Meeting Discussion Forums:** After the course, learners were required to participate in web meetings to discuss how they implemented (acted on) the knowledge and skills learned in the other L&D activities.

EXAMPLE #3 – Writing Skills



L&D Goal

To develop employees' business writing skills for effective communication between departments.



Task
Prioritization

High (H)—Moderate (M)—Low (L)

1. Organize your thoughts. (H)
2. Write from the reader's perspective. (H)
3. Make your message easy to read. (M)
4. Structure a paragraph. (H)
5. Use proper grammar. (H)
6. Use proper pronunciation. (H)
7. Structure sentences. (H)
8. Use netiquette to write an email. (M)
9. Write a memo. (M)
10. Write an executive summary. (L)
11. Write a management plan. (M)
12. Write a communication plan. (M)



Content
Type

Conceptual



Current
Learning
Environment

- Limited bandwidth available.
- Management had a specific deadline for all L&D activities to be completed.



Blended
Learning
Approach

- **Email (Collaboration System)/Job Aid:** One week prior to course, learners were emailed introductory information for the upcoming course and job aids covering making a message easy to read, using netiquette, writing memos, executive summaries, management plans, and communication plans.
- **Classroom Learning:** A half-day instructor-led course took place covering content relating to writing from the reader's perspective, structuring a paragraph, using proper grammar and punctuation, and structuring sentences. This allowed for hands-on practice and feedback.
- **On-the-job Training:** Writing assignments were emailed to learners, once each week for the first six weeks after the course. They were required to complete the assignments and get feedback from the instructor.
- **Self-Directed Learning/Knowledge Sharing:** Review previous writing to evaluate it using key concepts and skills learned. Look for ways to enhance writing. Learners share the same work with a peer and compare revisions.
- **Special Projects:** Rotational assignments were conducted to be the editor of the internal newsletter. Each employee was given the opportunity to edit submitted articles.

EXAMPLE #4 – Orientation



L&D Goal

To orient new employees located in five regions across the state.



Task
Prioritization

High (H)—Moderate (M)—Low (L)

1. Corporate overview (vision, missions, values, organizational chart, branch locations). (L)
2. Corporate culture and expectations. (M)
3. Corporate policies and procedures. (H)
4. Safety and ethics. (H)
5. Benefits program. (M)
6. Computer usage. (H)
7. Phone usage. (H)



Content
Type

Combination of conceptual and technical



Current
Learning
Environment

- Management wanted all new employees to have an opportunity to tour headquarters and meet some key members of senior management.
- Only headquarters was equipped with a training facility in which to conduct the training.
- Computers not available in training facility; learners would need to be trained on computers in their own departments.
- Mandate that safety training be conducted via Instructor-led training; WBT was not an option.



Blended
Learning
Approach

- **Kick-off Session by Upper Management and Pre-course Information Session (Learning Groups):** All new employees from each of the five locations were brought together at headquarters. Employees were given a welcome kit containing general corporate information as well as a benefits package. A senior training coordinator welcomed employees to the organization, explained how the training would be conducted, explained the benefits package, and played a welcome video from the President of the company.

The video provided a corporate overview and explained corporate culture. Key members from upper management were present, each saying a few words to welcome new employees to the company and to reiterate the importance of the orientation training.

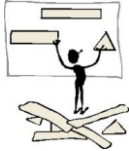
- **Classroom Learning:** A one-day instructor-led course covered content relating to corporate policies and procedures and the mandatory safety training.
- **Discussion Forum:** For six months after the classroom training, new employees and line managers meet to discuss challenges experienced.
- **On-the-job-Training:** Back on the job, line managers trained employees on computer and phone usage and discussed their expectations with each employee. Employees were then required to view a corporate ethics video, after which a Q & A session took place with the line manager.
- **Mentoring:** Each employee paired up with a more experienced, high-performing employee who acted as an on-going mentor. This provided new employees with another alternative for help or guidance when their direct managers or supervisors were not immediately available to them. In six months, new employees became mentors for the incoming new employees.

EXAMPLE #4 – Diversity



L&D Goal

To synthesize instructors to the issues associated with teaching groups of diverse learners.



Task
Prioritization

High (H)—Moderate (M)—Low (L)

1. Create a safe learning environment. (H)
2. Establish ground rules for behavioral expectations. (H)
3. Balance the composition of workgroups. (L)
4. Use a group's diversity for more meaningful discussions. (M)
5. Model inclusive behavior. (H)
6. Deal with resistance. (H)



Content
Type

Interpersonal



Current
Learning
Environment

- Teaching schedules made it very difficult to get learners away from the job for any extended periods.
- Management insisted that the training had to include an WBT component.



Blended
Learning
Approach

- **Book:** Read a book relating to teaching diverse learners.
- **Web-based Training (WBT):** Learners were presented with the issues and principles of diversity, with tips on modeling inclusive behavior and dealing with resistance.
- **Group Discussion/On-the-job-Training:** In a group setting, lead by a training manager, learners were presented with a series of real-life diversity problems and then asked to discuss how to best handle each situation. The primary focus was group discussion, accompanied by some role playing to allow learners opportunities to practice the material learned in the WBT.

- **Informational Interview:** Interview an experienced instructor to find out lessons learned for dealing with resistance and creating a safe learning environment. Compare information obtained in the interview with information obtained in the WBT and the book reading.
- **Coaching:** Ask experienced instructors to sit in on actual teaching sessions and evaluate the performance of the instructors who completed the training.

EXAMPLE #4 – Soft-skills



L&D Goal

To improve recruitment and interviewing skills.



Task
Prioritization

High (H)—Moderate (M)—Low (L)

1. Establish a selection system. (H)
2. Create a position description. (H)
3. Solicit applicants. (M)
4. Administer skills-gap assessments. (H)
5. Conduct a job analysis. (H)
6. Write job-related interview questions. (H)
7. Conduct an interview. (H)
8. Select the best candidate. (H)
9. Make an offer of employment. (H)



Content
Type

Combination of interpersonal and conceptual



Current
Learning
Environment

- Limited bandwidth available for WBT .
- Extremely diverse audiences from a wide variety of industries and locations.
- Learners' biggest complaint was the need to travel to participate in the training.



Blended
Learning
Approach

- **WBT Tutorial (Self-Directed Learning):** Since the learner audience was so diverse, an optional WBT tutorial was offered as a part of the L&D blended solution to teach learners, who were new to WBT, how to use each of the WBT components.
- **Workbook (Job Aid):** Workbooks were distributed prior to attending training. They included information about the rest of the L&D activities, pre-course exercises, instructions for each of the training components to follow, and tools to use back on the job after attending training.
- **WBT:** A series of WBT modules, each about an hour or two in length, taught all of the most critical content. The modules provided learners with the opportunity to practice the skills being taught through a variety of

interactive exercises. They also included assessments, examples, and printable tools, which the learners were required to complete and bring with them to the virtual classroom session.

- **Virtual Classroom Training:** This session gave learners the opportunity to ask questions, interact with other learners, and practice skills in a more realistic manner without having to travel. On-line breakout rooms were made a part of the virtual classroom to allow for small group work.
- **Social Networking:** After the training, a group space was created to have weekly on-line discussions regarding issues users were encountering.
- **Job Aids/Knowledge Library:** When employees and managers had to recruit new employees and interview applicants, they downloaded job aids posted on the internal Wiki.
- **Coaching:** Experienced recruiters and interviewers monitored and evaluated the performance of learners based on knowledge and skills provided in the other L&D activities.



**For more information
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