



**INNOVEST SME**  
Accelerating Small Business

# Understanding Social Learning

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*To know oneself is to  
study oneself in action  
with another person.*

BRUCE LEE

# PREFACE

We are continually placed in social learning situations. Whether we are continuing education, learning new skills at work, or participating in a club, learning often takes place in social settings. By fully understanding the process of social learning, it is possible to enhance both social and learning skills to reap the full benefits of any social learning situation.

*The path to greatness is  
along with others.*

BALTASAR GRACIAN



# SETTING THE RIGHT GROUP DYNAMIC (I)

Most people belong to groups. Groups may be formal, such as work groups, or informal, like book clubs. The success of any group depends on its dynamic. Group dynamics are how the members of the group interact. Leaders have a responsibility to establish a strong foundation in groups. Setting the right dynamics in communication, collaboration, and sharing will improve the success of the group and enhance social learning.

## COMMUNICATING

No group can be effective without constant and effective communication. It is essential that all members of the group understand this concept. The methods of communication will vary with each social group. Some large groups will require more centralized communication than other groups do. Many smaller groups benefit from open communication. This allows all members to actively communicate and share ideas, which encourages creativity and builds teams.

## Open Communication Strategies:

- Be positive and respectful.
- Be open and honest.
- Adjust your communication style for a diverse group.
- Give feedback immediately, especially when in a leadership role.

## COLLABORATING

Collaborating is an important part of any group dynamic. When done correctly, it spurs success. When done incorrectly, it can lead to failure. Anytime you work with another person, you are collaborating. When you are working collaboratively, expect to hear many different viewpoints. Embrace the diversity and creativity of your group, and never cut people short.

### How to Collaborate:

- **Listen carefully:** Listen to the ideas that other group members share.
- **Ask questions:** Ask for clarification.
- **Commit to the group:** Focus in the success of the group rather than your ego.

## SHARING OF BEST PRACTICES

All groups and organizations can benefit from best practices. A best practice is any practice that consistently delivers positive results. Group members have an opportunity to identify and share best practices. In a group setting, it is important to promote cohesion within the group and gain the involvement of all participants. There are several ways to identify and share best practices:

- Meetings
- Social network sites
- Blogs
- Newsletters

All group members should have the opportunity to share their best practices, and all information shared should be treated with respect.

## REFINING IDEAS

Effective groups will be able to discover and refine ideas. Refining ideas requires constant feedback from the group, which leads to change. This change will produce constant growth, which helps the group reach better and better solutions. The process of refining ideas makes them clearer and more specific. There are many different ways to discover and refine ideas:

- **Brainstorm:** List ideas as a group and then discuss which ones are best.

- **Narrow a topic:** If ideas are too broad, work together to narrow the topic, it should look like an outline.
- **Ask questions:** Ask who, what, where, when, and why about each idea.

No matter which method you choose, make sure that everyone is involved in the refining process.

## PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

Devon was leading a team tasked with finding a way to recreate the company's brand. He had a definite direction in mind. In the first meeting, he asked members to brainstorm and refine strategies. Devon immediately dismissed any comments that conflicted with his preconceived ideas. On the second day, he again dismissed any ideas that conflicted with his. By the third day, he noticed that the group was no longer very communicative, which annoyed him. At the end of the week, he was complaining that he might as well finish the project himself.

*The same dynamics that  
support performance also  
support behavioral change.*

KATZENBACH & SMITH



# SETTING THE RIGHT GROUP DYNAMIC (II)

There are always pros and cons to social learning. The diversity and differences that make a group strong will also cause friction in social settings. Effective groups will address these issues as they develop and manage to keep the communication civil. Knowing how to create a diverse and respectful social learning group will make the experience more efficient.

## DIVERSITY BUILDS KNOWLEDGE

When creating social groups, it is important to make sure that they are diverse. Compiling a diverse group takes time. It is necessary to choose people with diverse cultures, skills, backgrounds, and strengths. These differences will make the team stronger. Only choosing like-minded people will weaken the group and stifle creativity. Diversity builds knowledge and challenges the group to grow. When choosing a diverse group, you need to focus on the skills that will benefit the group. For example, a group could benefit from mixing people with academic understanding of a subject and others who have real world application. It is also beneficial to blend people from different levels within the same organization.

## **SOCIAL INTERACTIONS**

Social settings and interactions require basic social skills. This may seem like common knowledge, but you will have to remind people to behave and assess their social skills. There are basic social skills that people need to master in order to make sure that the social interactions in the group go smoothly. Basic social skills include:

- Listen to other people.
- Express positive thoughts or feelings in a civil manner.
- Express negative thoughts or feelings in a civil manner.
- Make requests.
- Appreciate people and thank them.

If anyone lacks these basic social skills, social interactions in the group will suffer. Social skills training can improve social interactions for people who need to improve their social skills.

## **PEOPLE ARE DIFFERENT**

Everyone is unique. This can be both beneficial and cause problems to group dynamics. The positive aspects include:

- Creative problem solving
- Enhance synergy in teams
- Attracts talented people

- Challenges individuals to grow

The cons of having a diverse group include:

- Personality clashes
- Competition for promotions
- Competition for work

Acknowledging that there are cultural and personality differences between people and preparing for these differences will help create a functional learning group.

## **DEALING WITH DIFFICULT PEOPLE**

In any social situation, you will have no choice but to deal with difficult people. People are difficult on different levels. Some may not be invested in the learning process and others will actively push back against the group dynamic.

People who passively resist social learning may refuse to participate in discussions or leave tasks incomplete. The best way to handle passive people is to address the reason behind their behavior. It is important not to push people too hard to participate. You should offer assistance as needed.

Some people aggressively resist social learning. They push back by causing trouble and trying to take over the group. Problems include verbal attacks and disruptive behavior. It is important not to take the attacks

personally and to make sure that the person acting out is told that the behavior is not appropriate. If the individual become too aggressive, he or she may need to be removed from the group dynamic.

## **PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION**

Mitchell is taking a training course at his company. One of his peers is taking the class with him, but he is not happy about the course because he does not believe that he needs any training. He argues with the instructor, and refuses to do any assigned work. Mitchell is miserable in the class because his friend feels that the class is a waste of time. Mitchell tried to talk his peer into behaving better, but this only resulted in verbal abuse. The entire class suffered because one person did not want to use basic social skills and chose to be disruptive.

*Organizational  
culture is civilization in  
the workplace.*

ALAN ADLER



# DEVELOP A SOCIAL LEARNING CULTURE AT WORK (I)

It is not enough to simply create social learning programs. Social learning must be integrated into the culture of the organization in order for it to be effective. This requires making connections, identifying star employees, encouraging questioning, and recognizing teaching moments. By creating a culture of learning, organization will continue to improve and grow.

### MAKING THE CONNECTION

A culture of social learning requires people to make the connection between working together and success, which is called collaborative learning. This culture of collaborative learning requires all members of the group to work together as equals. Encouraging people to learn from each other creates this type of learning environment. Sharing and learning is facilitated by providing opportunities for communication and working together, such as:

- Formal meetings
- Online sources
- Informal meeting spaces

- Group projects

Each group is unique and will have to determine the best ways to facilitate collaborative learning.

## **TAGGING STAR EMPLOYEES**

Your employees are your best chance of increasing the success of social learning. When employees share their expertise, the entire organization will benefit from their insight. The first step to accomplishing this is identifying and tagging star employees. A star employee is anyone who goes above and beyond.

### **Traits of Star Employees:**

- Trustworthy
- Exhibit company values
- Set standards
- Problem solvers
- Handle criticism

Once star employees are identified, they should be tagged to take on the role of a SME (Subject Matter Expert). SMEs are able to perform specialized tasks with expertise. The tasks can include: software, accounting, technology, etc. Tagging star employees for the role of SME requires discovering their expertise and determining if these areas of expertise can benefit the organization. If the employee, for example, is

an expert in social media, he or she can benefit the company by sharing that knowledge.

## **RECOGNIZING TEACHING MOMENTS**

Teaching moments are often more effective than the traditional teaching methods because they are more organic learning opportunities. Taking advantage of teaching moments requires recognizing them. A teaching moment can occur at any time, and it is a chance to teach through demonstrating skills or sharing information. For example, someone who understands how a computer system works can coach a person he notices having problems with a program. Teaching moments occur every day, it is important to keep an eye out for moments when you can teach others. These moments are essential to social learning success.

## **CULTURE OF QUESTIONING**

Nurturing a culture of the questioning is like nurturing a plant. If the culture is nurtured, the questions asked will grow, bloom, and produce new questions. Asking “why” when it is appropriate will actually contribute to the conversation and help generate new ideas. There are a few ways to help instill a culture of questioning in the workplace:

- People should admit when they do not know things.
- Taking risks should be rewarded.
- Encourage people to ask effective questions.
- Teach people how to question and generate ideas.

## PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

Fred was initially excited about joining the new mentoring program at work, but it did not live up to his expectations. His meetings with his mentor reminded him of his old classes. They were mainly lectures and reading. When he asked his mentor for help in the moment, he was told that experience was the best teacher. After three months, Fred began thinking about leaving the program. He considered talking about the decision with his mentor, but he decided that it would be a waste of time.

*An organization's ability  
to learn, and translate  
that learning into action  
rapidly, is the ultimate  
competitive advantage.*

JACK WELCH



# DEVELOP A SOCIAL LEARNING CULTURE AT WORK (II)

The culture at work plays an important role in determining the effectiveness of social learning. By carefully guiding and monitoring the work environment, you will be able to create a culture of learning. The goal is to create an environment where it is safe to share and a passion for sharing and learning permeates the atmosphere. Always remember that the culture is modeled by leadership.

### SAFE TO SHARE ENVIRONMENT

If people do not feel they are safe sharing information, they will keep their knowledge and ideas to themselves. Safe environments are not overly critical. All criticism must be constructive in order for it to be effective.

#### **Tips for constructive criticism:**

- Avoid personal criticism.
- Use a professional tone and language.
- Be empathetic.
- Allow people to respond to criticism.

Encourage all people to share and respond to each other constructively. A few ground rules should encourage civil behavior.

## **INSTILLING A PASSION FOR LEARNING**

Effective social learning groups have members with a passion for learning. Leadership plays an important role in instilling this passion by modeling it. If a leader approaches learning like it is a chore, this is how employees will perceive learning situations. Anyone in leadership needs to make a personal passion for learning evident. This will inspire others to learn.

### **Ways to inspire learning:**

- Encourage employees to share their passions.
- Support employees in their passions.
- Provide tools to support learning.

By inspiring learning, social groups will actively engage in the learning process.

## **INSTILL A SENSE OF SHARING**

As we have already established, the company culture needs to encourage sharing and learning. Making the learning environment safe will help encourage sharing. It is also important to motivate people to share their knowledge and ideas. People can be possessive of their ideas, afraid that someone will steal them. The best way to combat this fear is to remind members of the group that they are a team. Collaborating with others is

beneficial. People who share ideas gain valuable feedback that improves ideas and leads to better learning practices.

## **LEARNING IN THE SOCIAL UNIT**

Social units grow into small communities, and they have natural conflicts and resolutions that affect learning. In social units, learning is collaborative. The group needs to create social norms. These norms include roles and responsibilities, communication, levels of trust, and the purpose of the group. Setting basic guidelines for learning and behavior may be necessary for the social unit in the beginning. Self-motivation and effective communication are essential to the learning process. Through dialogue and constructive criticism, new ideas develop based on the prior knowledge of the participants. Reaching this level of dialogue takes time.

## **PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION**

The CEO of Weather Time Inc. decided that his group would benefit from Emotional Intelligence classes. He was surprised when he was expected to attend as well. The CEO would wander in late and text on his phone during the sessions. In the discussion, he was dismissive and ridiculed people if he did not see the merit of their ideas. He noticed that the participants did not have the passion that he hoped to see. Halfway through the course, he berated the entire group for not taking learning seriously. He said that turnover would increase if they did not change their attitudes.

*Learning is not something  
separate from doing: it is a  
process – learning/doing.*

SAINT AVICE



# DEVELOP A CULTURE OF SOCIAL LEARNING AT WORK (III)

The culture at work will influence whether people are willing to engage in social learning. Understanding what people fear in social learning situations will enable you to avoid mistakes and build a cohesive unit that empowers people to learn. By developing a culture of learning, a social community that benefits all participants will evolve.

### REMOVE FEAR OF FEEDBACK OR CRITICISM

Feedback and criticism are essential to the learning process, yet many people fear feedback and criticism. Often, this fear is founded on negative experiences because many people do not know how to give effective feedback. When feedback and criticism are given well, the receiver will be able to accept the information and use it to grow.

- **Make feedback immediate:** Waiting for planned meetings will only cause people worry.
- **Give positive feedback:** While there is always room for improvement, only pointing out what is wrong can damage morale and productivity.

- **Base feedback on facts:** Feedback should not be emotionally charged when presented. Include the observation, the outcome, and make requests.
- **Invite feedback:** Feedback should be a two-way street.

Giving and receiving feedback must become part of the company culture. Once the fear is removed, people will develop a mindset that is comfortable with inviting and learning from feedback.

## CREATING A SOCIAL UNIT

Social units are not functional immediately; they must be given the time to develop. Most people are “me thinkers.” They are concerned about their own needs and focus on ideas that benefit them more than the entire group. For a social unit to flourish, this must develop into community thinking. Community thinkers are able to prioritize the needs of the community and collaborate when working towards a common goal. This shift in thinking will take time, but there are steps you can take to help the group become more cohesive.

- Encourage effective communication.
- Establish group decision making. (This is not possible for every situation.)
- Value all ideas and opinions.
- Step aside. (The leader should not participate in every discussion so that others take on leadership roles.)

## IMITATION AND MODELING

Imitation and modeling are key in social learning situations. You must find ideas that work in your situation and imitate them. For example, smaller groups might benefit from brainstorming sessions. Once you have chosen which practices to imitate, it is important that you model the practices and behavior that you would like other members of the group to imitate. When you are modeling, you should make sure to get the attention of other members. Also make sure that the action you are modeling is something that can be repeated. You also need to consider what motivation the members of the group have to copy the modeled behavior. For example, modeling how to run a new operations program is something that can be repeated. Additionally, people who use the program are motivated to learn from what is being modeled.

## EMPOWERING LEARNERS

Social learning is effective because the learners have more power. This power engages the learners, and their confidence increases as they discover knowledge. Creating a culture of learning will help empower learners to take control of their own learning experiences.

### **Steps to empower learners:**

- Include everyone in decision making.
- Include everyone in choosing and planning instruction.
- Offer support and continuously train employees.
- Praise success.

## PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

Gina was uncomfortable with her new social learning group. It was her second job, and she was uncomfortable in learning situations because her first job was a nightmare. Her boss yelled at her every time that she asked a question. All of his feedback was negative, and she waited on pins and needles with each review. She quit this job after a year because of the stress. Unfortunately, she was too afraid to actively participate in the course because she did not want anyone to yell at her again.

*Whoever wants to  
understand much must  
play much.*

GOTTFRIED BENN



# ROLE PLAYING (I)

Role playing is a useful tool in social learning situations. It requires a minimum of two people, which makes it suitable for small groups. This type of exercise allows people to examine situations from different points of view and prepare for different situations that they will face in the real world. Preparing role playing scenarios requires discovering scenarios, finding variables, and preparing people for their roles.

### IDENTIFY WORK RELATED SCENARIOS

The first step to effective role play is identifying work related scenarios. Scenarios will vary according to each group. Identifying the scenarios requires the topics to be researched and written well. Make use of scripts and take your time making decisions.

When choosing work related scenarios, try using open discussion. Brainstorm problems and situations that the group will face. Make a list of these, and determine which ones will make effective role playing scenarios.

#### **Example:**

- Addressing inappropriate behavior
- Helping customers

- Improving listening skills
- Handling dangerous situations

## **ADD VARIABLES**

Variables are situations that change from one scenario to the next. These are what make it possible to create different role playing scenarios for each problem. Things that change include the number and nature of the characters and the settings. As these details change, the role playing will change. For example, a role play scenario with a customer can vary. Variables include phone communication, returns, irate customers, etc. Each variable alters the dynamics of the role play and determines that appropriate response for the participants. When choosing variables, identify ones that target your group's needs.

## **ASSIGN ROLES**

The details of the role play must be clear. They include the setting, number of participants needed, the role of each participant, and the nature of the problem. The next step is to assign the roles to each person participating. The roles playing scenarios should be short. The goal is for each participant to play each role, which is why role playing between two people works well. Playing the different roles allows the participants to see things from multiple perspectives. It also helps everyone engage with the scenario completely.

## PREPARE ROLE-PLAYERS

Before engaging in role playing, it is a good idea to provide the players with a little guidance. Role play is not an excuse to act out. A few ground rules will help keep the role playing activities in line. You need to address appropriate behavior during role playing activities and how to stay focused.

### **Examples of Ground Rules:**

- Profane language is not allowed.
- Sexual innuendo is not allowed.
- Stay on the topic outlined in the scenario.

## PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

Sharon is leading a role play activity. She hands out the assignments and tells the class to begin. The scenario is an employee with an irate customer. Soon, she hears a few choice words from some of the participants playing the role of the customer. Additionally, some people playing the role of the employee take the opportunity to share their dissatisfaction with company policies. There are numerous complaints after the activity is over. Sharon wonders if role play activities are worth all of the trouble she has encountered.

*People tend to forget that  
play is serious.*

DAVID HOCKNEY



# ROLE PLAYING (II)

People typically love or hate role playing activities. The purpose of role playing is to encourage people to engage with the topic, prepare for different scenarios, and see different points of view. Providing examples will help people engage and learn in the role playing activities. Once role playing is acted out, the group should debrief and discuss what they learned from the scenarios. When done correctly, role playing is an effective social learning tool.

### ACT IT OUT

Role playing requires people to act out different scenarios. This can be difficult to for some participants if they are shy or uncomfortable. This is why it is important to create a comfortable atmosphere and begin with a demonstration. Remind participants that they are acting out a role, and encourage them to have fun with the situation. You may want to lead them in breathing techniques or visualization techniques to help improve their mindset before the activity.

### DEBRIEF

After completing the role playing exercises, groups should debrief. This allows participants to share their observations and what they learned.

There are many different ways to debrief. For example, you may choose to have people write short explanations, lead a discussion, or a combination of both. The method of debriefing you choose will depend on the size and dynamics of the group. Regardless of the way you debrief, you should end the session by reviewing the main conclusions that the group made on the subject.

### **MIRROR GOOD EXAMPLES**

Demonstrating role play ahead of time will make participants more comfortable with the idea. It will also increase participation and provide an example that will guide them as they perform their own role play scenarios. Examples for people to mirror may be done in different ways. You may ask two volunteers to perform in front of the class, or you may perform a role play with another leader or a participant. When providing an example for people to mirror, it is a good idea to start with a prewritten script. This will prevent any awkward pauses or confusion.

### **GENERAL ROLE PLAYING TIPS**

Every role playing exercise and setting is unique and should be treated like it is. Individualizing role play will increase its effectiveness. Leaders have different options that will improve role play for each group. Making sure that participants are comfortable is the single most effective tip for improving role play.

**Tips:**

- Ask for feedback after the demonstration.
- Do not force people to perform demonstrations.
- Pair the role play with a game to make it more interesting.
- Try to use small groups so you can better observe them.

The size and dynamics of the group will determine how the role play should be done.

**PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION**

Ron was leading role playing for the first time. He knew that demonstrations could be effective, and he decided to choose two participants to demonstrate for the class. He randomly called on Jack and Sarah. Sarah protested, but she eventually complied. After reading the prompt, Jack and Sarah stared at each other awkwardly for almost a minute. Jack began the role play, but Sarah did not respond quickly. When she did speak, she sounded wooden and unconvincing. Ron was not sure how to salvage the situation and encourage role play. Sarah seemed embarrassed the rest of the session.

*We shape our tools and  
then our tools shape us.*

MARSHALL MCLUHAN



# UTILIZING THE RIGHT TOOLS (I)

Every project requires its own set of tools, and social learning is no exception. Modern technology has provided greater access to learning tools that will improve social learning. With social media and concepts like gamification, social learning has taken on a new life. Using the right tools will enhance social learning.

## MENTORING

Mentoring is the classic method of social learning. Mentors teach by example and meet with mentees regularly. Mentors need to take their roles seriously in order for the social learning experience to be effective.

### **Roles of the Mentor:**

- Act as a role model
- Advise
- Provide feedback
- Assist in problem solving
- Be trustworthy

- Be available
- Share experiences

Mentoring can be a valuable experience to both mentor and mentee. Mentors who keep open minds are able to learn from their mentees.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA**

Social media makes communication much easier, and this includes the communication necessary for social learning. Social media makes it easier to share information, collaborate with others, and provide comments or feedback. Each social media tool has its own use, but there is overlap between the different tools.

### **Uses for Social Media:**

- **Blogs:** Share information
- **Social networks:** Stay in contact and provide comments
- **Mobile technology:** Offers all types of communication methods
- **Wikis:** Facilitate collaboration

## **CRITICAL THINKING**

Critical thinking is a useful skill that will enhance learning in the social setting. Critical thinking is a necessary part of the decision making process because it identifies potential bias and helps people make clear

decisions. The process of critical thinking requires asking questions, being objective, and keeping an open mind.

### **Steps to Critical Thinking:**

1. Identify topic or issues being discussed.
2. Evaluate your own comprehension and bias. (Rewording information helps evaluate this.)
3. Consider the application of information.
4. Analyze information by breaking it down into smaller components.
5. Synthesize prior knowledge with new information.
6. Evaluate information to make a judgment.

## **GAMIFICATION**

Gamification borrows from the process of gaming dynamics to motivate people. This playful system encourages problem solving by allowing you to earn points towards rewards with each accomplishment. The points you earn provide incentives to complete more tasks and earn more rewards. You can create your own life game by taking a few steps.

### **Create Your Own Game:**

- **Identify problems and tasks:** List the tasks that you need to accomplish to solve your problems.
- **Assign points:** Assign a number of points to each task. Tasks that you are likely to avoid should be given more points.

- **Assign rewards:** Better rewards have higher points attached to them. For example, renting a movie could be 30 points, while purchasing a desired item could be 150 points. The rewards will depend on what motivates you.
- **Keep score:** Find a way that works for you to keep track of your points. You could use anything from spreadsheets to phone apps.

## PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

Tim signed up to be a mentor in his organization. He met with his mentee for coffee, and he had high hopes for the mentee. Howard, the mentee, was enthusiastic at first. He took Tim's advice to heart, and thanked him for his time and effort. After about six months, Howard was comfortable in his position at work. During one meeting with Tim, he offered to show his mentor how to use some social media tools. Tim was insulted and called social media a waste of time. They argued about the benefits of social media, but neither one would admit the other was right. This encounter strained their relationship.

*You can't expect to meet  
the challenges of today  
with yesterday's tools and  
expect to be in business  
tomorrow.*

ANONYMOUS



# UTILIZING THE RIGHT TOOLS (II)

The tools used to engage the learners will determine the effectiveness of social learning. Over time, the effective tools will become more evident. Knowing how to find and utilize the right tools is an essential skill to social learning. Tools such as shadowing, knowledge management, and social facilitation will improve the chances of success.

### RELEVANT RESOURCES SELECTION

Relevant resources will vary for each group. These resources become apparent over time as the group discovers which resources are relevant and helpful and which ones are not. After filtering out what does not work for the group, learners will automatically gravitate to the effective tools. Once they are identified, these relevant resources should be made readily available to all members of the social group.

#### **Determining which resources may be relevant:**

- Consider the source of information.
- Ask if it directly applies to the problem.
- Do the resources provided have specific guidelines?

## JOB SHADOWING

Job shadowing provides opportunities for social learning. In job shadowing, a learner follows the experienced teacher on the job. Learners are able to engage in observation and hands on learning in the process of job shadowing. It is important for the teacher to be prepared for the job shadowing process. Following a few tips will make the process run smoother.

### **Tips:**

- Plan “hands on” tasks ahead of time.
- Begin with a tour of the facility.
- Explain each step of the process.
- Invite learner to ask questions.

When done correctly, job shadowing will help both the teacher and learner.

## KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

Knowledge management is focused on creating, obtaining, and sharing information. It helps establish what is effective in social learning and what is not effective. There are many different tools used to collect and measure the effectiveness of social learning.

### **Common tools:**

- Peer assessment

- Self-assessment
- Research files
- Databases
- Shared files
- Wiki

Once information has been collected, it should be reviewed to determine what does and does not work in the social learning group. This information should be shared through the wikis or other networks.

## **SOCIAL FACILITATION**

Social facilitation is based on the innate competitiveness of human nature. According to psychologists, many people perform better and are more productive when they feel that they are being observed. The feeling that we are competing with other people or being evaluated arouses the level of attention that people pay to their tasks. The key to social facilitation is balance. People should feel like they are being observed without being micromanaged. Feelings of nervousness will cause people to make more mistakes than they normally would. The margin of error will increase if someone is nervous and the task is more complicated.

## **PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION**

Carl's social learning group at work kept growing. Over time, the tools that they used seemed to lose their effectiveness. The role playing exercises

were chaotic, and the communication seemed to fall apart. The leadership did not seem interested in changing anything. When Carl asked about using different tools, he was told that their tools were effective in other social learning situations. After one particularly chaotic day, Carl looked into changing his social learning group. He felt like he was no longer learning anything.

*Peoples' minds are changed  
through observation and  
not through argument.*

WILL ROGERS



# MODELING AND OBSERVATIONAL LEARNING

Modeling and observational learning are essential ingredients for social learning. When people are inspired, have positive role models, and improve their self-efficacy, they are more likely to embrace learning and new experiences. Not only will social learning improve, you are likely to see an improvement in morale and productivity as well.

## INSPIRED BY LEADERS

Leadership inspires much of the company's culture for better or worse. There is an obligation to inspire others to perform well. The best way to accomplish this is to lead by example. When people see specific behaviors and ideals modeled for them, they understand what is expected of their behavior. Modeling behavior also generates respect for leadership.

### **Ways to Inspire:**

- Present a positive attitude
- Communicate clearly and openly
- Avoid bias and preconceived ideas

- Recognize and reward achievements
- Encourage questions, and answer them

## **BOOSTING SELF-EFFICACY**

Self-efficacy is the personal belief that one is capable of reaching a goal. This belief motivates learning and improves self-esteem. People with high self-efficacy are more likely to take action and achieve success. People with low self-efficacy are more likely to fail. While much of self-efficacy is personal perception, there are ways to boost it in others, and observation is a useful way in boosting self-efficacy. When you see someone else perform a task, you are motivated to try the task yourself. People are more likely to try something new the more that they see modeled. As they succeed in learning, their self-efficacy will improve.

## **PEER ROLE MODELS**

Peer role models provide informal modeling and observational learning. Like any other role models, peer role models ought to exhibit traits and actions that should be repeated. Mentoring programs may be peer modeling programs, but peer modeling does not have to be an official work relationship. Peer modeling occurs anytime when one peer learns from another. Peers may provide a point of view that leaders cannot. Peers are effective at modeling:

- Tasks
- Ethics
- Communication

## GENERATING ENGAGEMENT

Learning is not possible without engagement, and if people are truly not engaged in the learning process, nothing will engage them. There are, however, ways to generate and improve upon engagement that already exists:

### **Motivation:**

- **Rewards:** Create an environment that encourages learning with intrinsic and extrinsic rewards.
- **Opportunities:** Provide opportunities to grow and learn.
- **Tools:** Provide the tools that people need.
- **Respect:** Maintain a culture of respect.

## PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

Cal's boss always joked that employees should do as he says, not as he does. Cal would be yelled at if his son's daycare called the office, while his boss's child would run amok, distracting everyone. Cal noticed all of the ways his boss slacked at work. He would sneak out early, avoid learning groups, and lie to people at social gatherings. Tired of doing his best when it clearly was not appreciated, Cal began to do the minimum. He came in late for training on new software. He figured if his boss could get away with it then so could he.

*I have never met a man so  
ignorant that I couldn't  
learn something from him.*

GALILEO GALILEI

# CLOSING THOUGHTS

- **Will Rogers:** A man only learns in two ways, one by reading, and the other by association with smarter people.
- **Richard Bach:** You teach best what you most need to learn.
- **Abigail Adams:** Learning is not attained by chance, it must be sought for with ardor and diligence.
- **Lord Chesterfield:** Learning is acquired by reading books, but the much more necessary learning, the knowledge of the world, is only to be acquired by reading men, and studying all the various facets of them.



**Rick Chisholm** made history when he single-handedly changed the professional Audio Visual industry by breaking all the rules and capitalised over 50% market share in Australia with very little capital, no partners, mergers or lenders and set up the first franchise operation of its kind in the world in the late 1990's and early 2000's.

As a 7x founder of companies and 30x businesses such as Innovest, AI Machine, Lightsounds, LSW, Light Emotion with revenue in excess of \$300 million and having employed more than 1,000 staff over the last 35 years. Rick is known as the Start-Up and SME Guru and is Author of a number of books including Business Success for Life. Unlike many mentors, he actually walks the talk and has a number of businesses under management in such areas as Automation, Events management, Importing, Distribution, Retailing and E-commerce.

His BIG passion is Business Education empowering Businesses Owners through knowledge and skills. Whilst Rick has experienced great success, he has also endured many failures. Rick has faced and overcome the exact same challenges you are facing now.



**Tala Chisholm** is an SME specialist who has owned and managed several small to medium sized businesses in the last 20 years, several of which were eventually sold. She has extensive experience in the fields of retail, franchising, licensing, dealerships, education, importing, distribution and consulting.

Her expertise lies in building and implementing customised cross-platform database and software solutions for businesses, automation, IT, web marketing, advertising, graphic design, business administration, process refinement and implementation. Her business experience ranges from bricks-and-mortar Giftware retailing to highly technical fields such as Security, CCTV, Entertainment Lighting and Audio sales, hire and installations as well as e-commerce.

Throughout her career she also trained and mentored Franchise business owners as well as internal division managers. Some areas of training included retail operations, management practices, business strategy, accounting, cash-flow, marketing, customer service and IT. She has also headed up the drafting of Operating Compliance Manuals for Franchise operations and implementation of all the elements involved.



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