Georgetown University: A Virtual Reality Needs Assessment
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Georgetown University is a private research university with over 17,000 students as well as a global student base and worldwide business partnership. There are over 200 course offerings and just as many developmental and career-focused training sessions. Because GTU's is a prestigious university with strong community support and over a million dollars in alumni and donor financing, GTU has a stringent faculty, staff, and student recruitment process to ensure excellence. The learning and development (L&D) professionals' recruitment process is just as rigorous and focused on the ASTD's competency and expertise guidelines. The university provides distinct learning opportunities across its various campuses and global outreach programs to ensure that all are aligned to the university mission and positioned to reach their individual potential (Georgetown database, 2015).
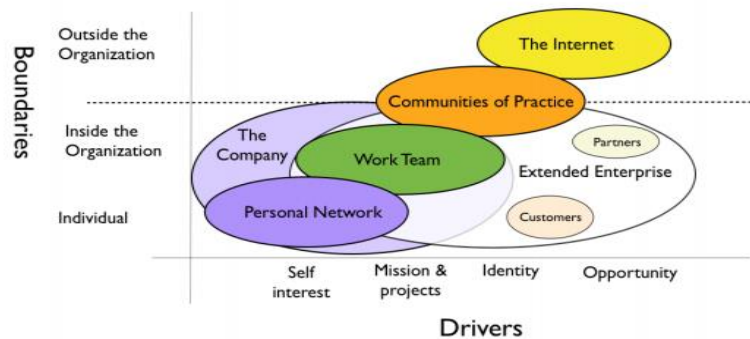
GTU offers its staff, faculty, and students a wealth of information. For example, the training and education provided its 1,800 plus "employees is just as rigid as its recruitment process and focused on student and staff development to enable access to the tools to better manage the needs of students with little to no disruption" (Rosenberg, 2006, p. 128-129. *Georgetown University: A virtual reality Needs Assessment* will discuss the current learning climate and its need for a more social or networked learning structure that focuses on job tasks and skill enhancement.   The diagram below provides a basis for the areas of competencies and expertise needed to structure on demand learning, any place and time and outline knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to achieve effective instructional design and development that focus on today's technology-mediated learning (Sims & Koszalka, n.d.).

Learning Networks
Networks are not only the environment of learning; they're also the place where problems are solved, discoveries are made, and new knowledge is created.

Social Learning Networks

Boundaries

Outside the Organization

The Internet

Communities of Practice

Inside the Organization

The Company

Work Team

Partners

Extended Enterprise

Individual

Personal Network

Customers

Self interest | Mission & projects | Identity | Opportunity

Drivers

This way of looking at learning platforms builds on the work of Harold Jarche and the Internet Time Alliance.

Georgetown University's learning and development professionals' (L&D) role is shared by Human Resources and the Student Affairs Department via a technology-enhanced infrastructure to ensure the university's mission and values are aligned to the structure and course offerings (Mission and Values below).

GTU's Mission Statement & Values

... is to support Georgetown by helping employees do their very best work and fully realize their individual potentials.

We believe that all employees have within them the potential for doing their very best work. We want Georgetown to be the place where our employees realize their ambitions

University Training & Development offers learning and development opportunities and solutions for individuals, teams and organizations. Our courses cover personal, professional, managerial, and career development.

Organizational need Analysis

GTU uses a combination of instructional delivery methods. Rosenberg (2006) contends that training modules [should be] structured in a way that is easily accessible and navigational with little to no disruption in the work flow (p. 128).   The L&D and Human Resources aligned the training content by roles and functional areas which limit the opportunity to share expertise and knowledge across disciplines and schools.   It is this learner's opinion that the structure of training at GTU would be more conducive to learning if the delivery modality was more attuned to a virtual collaborative learning model that utilizes portals, and smart learning enterprise, and knowledge management interfaces.

To achieve this mode of delivery**,** Kirkpatrick suggests that the training structure all participants to achieve certain knowledge, skills and attitudes to reach desired behavior as dictated by the institution.   Therefore, this learner suggests goal-oriented modules that are more open and collaborative to encourage employees and faculty to connect expertise and learn from each other not just rely on Lynda.com and other content-focused training and learning infrastructures. The list below outlines the types of subject-matter training developed at GTU; consequently, the way training modules are arranged at GTU requires a staff member to click several links inside and outside of modules to find a specific topic, whereas in a learning enterprise or knowledge management structure training topics would be readily accessible.

Lynda.com

All Georgetown employees have access to a full suite of self-paced, on-line learning through Lynda.com, brought to you by the Georgetown University Library. Access (netid and password required) is found at **library.georgetown.edu/lynda**. Below are some of the many courses available through Lynda.com that may be of particular interest (you will find them in the Business Courses and Training section):

- Management Fundamentals
- Performance Review Fundamentals
- Rewarding Employees
- Managing Employee Performance Problems
- Delivering Employee Feedback
- Embracing Change
- Coaching and Developing Employees
- Conflict Resolution Fundamentals
- Customer Service Fundamentals
- desktop publishing
- Having Difficult Conversations
- Onboarding New Hires
- Managing Your Career
- Managing Stress
- Motivating and Engaging Employees
- multimedia development
- Project Management Simplified
- statistical programs, and
- Time Management
- Web design and HTML, and
- the most commonly used software applications and operating systems
- Respect Training (about discrimination, harassment, sexual misconduct and employees, student, and faculty roles, rights and responsibilities)

Source: Retrieved from **http://hr.georgetown.edu/fsap**

Learning structure

Although, GTU offers online learning that is intentional and consists of information streams that can be accessed with technology and social networking tools such as Facebook, twitter, and various internal learning portals; however, to achieve the greatest impact, organizations have to make learning intentional and informal. The L&D professional's must equip employees with the tools to make these opportunities personal and meaningful (Emelo, 2012). This will also provide staff, students and faculty with real-time, on-the-job learning perspectives, which currently needs more development.

L&D Competency(s) required

- instructional designer and delivery expertise to not only structure the learning environment, but integrate various technologies to create learning cultures that encourage collaboration

- planning and analysis competencies to determine first that organizational needs are met/ addressed and that student learning outcomes are measurable

- learning assessment competency to address needs of management and staff and determine rationale for proposed course, or technology, instructional environment, and business alignment

In addition, as GTU continues to expand its global horizons; therefore, it will be necessary to explore more global connections or informal means to learning through collaborative learning networks where employees can have "firsthand experiences that are applied directly to the employee's situation and job." This is not the current structure of courses. University Information System (UIS) offers training in multimedia development, Web design and HTML, desktop publishing, statistical programs, and the most commonly used software applications and operating systems, as well as career development options. First, job skills focused on respective job responsibilities are crucial to meet GTU's mission, staff training is not currently focused this way. The training platform is Lynda.com and offers over 1500 tutorials on multimedia production, design, professional skills, and more, and is available through the Georgetown University Library. When training is not available, as indicated in the graphic below, staff, faculty and students should have virtual access to ensure no disruptions in learning and job success.

Competency(s) required

- Global mindset to address needs of cultural and diverse staff, students, and

  faculty. This is incorporated in training design, course management, and subject

  matter content

- multicultural leader to meet needs of diverse student and staff population

- Ethical and legal implications of design in the workplace and in academia, i.e.,

  copyright, etc.

Source: Georgetown University

GTU has several departments with like positions and functions that warrant processes to

provide high scalability using the web and wireless networks that manage and update content and

features quickly—to reduce variability in the way people in like jobs complete the same or

similar tasks (Rosenberg, 2006, p. 197). An Electronic Performance Support System (EPSS)

would put topics and content closer and reduce the number of clicks to access; therefore, saving

work time. EPSS also puts at the user's fingertips troubleshooting tools, as well as put expert

knowledge closer to end users workplace.

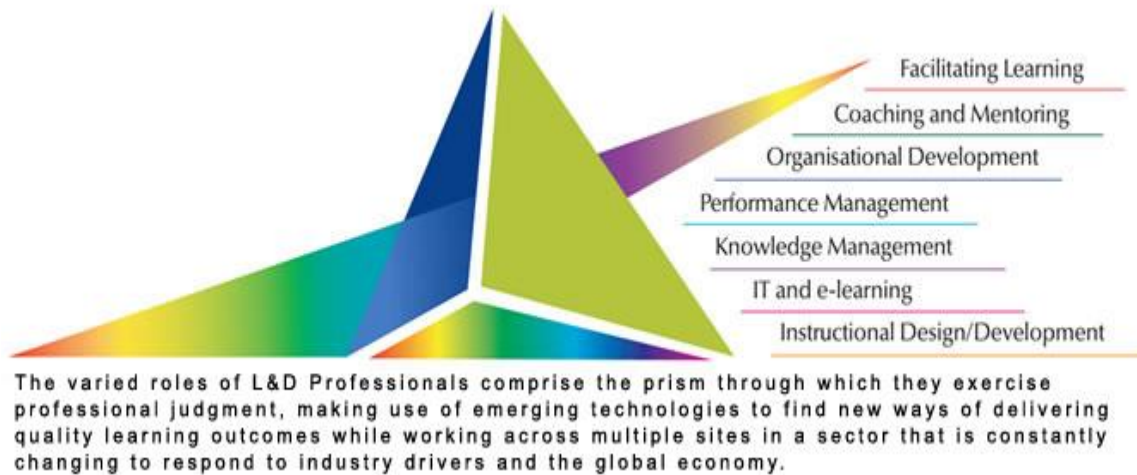**The role of the learning and development professional**

GTU's learning & development professionals have developed a series of classes (list

above) and webinars to provide best practices and processing guidelines for a solid knowledge

base geared to ensure student success. This makes it possible for workers to be part of several

learning networks (see table below) to gain access to learning and development context.

However, this learner did not find a collaborative learning culture for staff, faculty, and

administrators. To address this issue a suggestion is to expand or integrate the knowledge

repository system to complement hands-on training, which is limited and not always available

(see message from portal below). The personal contact and collaboration is not transparent

looking through the website. Consequently, training materials are currently organized by role

and functional area.

In spite of the structure, "learning should consist of formal, informal and social

components, according to van Dam. L&D professionals and learning leaders should determine

what the right balance is then provide "pre-planned and structured formal learning (Hartley,

2013). To balance learning the L & D should mix formal, informal—accidental and incidental

learning to "ensure [that] employee development is comprehensive and complete (Emelo, 2012).

The table below list type of learning network, activity associated and how integrated into the

learning structure.

Workers are members of multiple, interconnected networks.

Learning Network	Primary Activity	Conversations about...
Personal Network	Connecting	Discovery, sharing, & personal
Work Team	Collaboration	Projects, co-creation
Communities of Practice	Cooperation	Common interests, new developments
Company Social Network	Coordination	Company-wide activity feed, locator, knowledge store
The Internet	Currency	Diverse opinions, news, pointers, "the Commons"
Extended Enterprise	Coherence	Co-learning keeps all on the same wavelength

Competencies Required

The varied roles of L&D Professionals comprise the prism through which they exercise professional judgment, making use of emerging technologies to find new ways of delivering quality learning outcomes while working across multiple sites in a sector that is constantly changing to respond to industry drivers and the global economy.
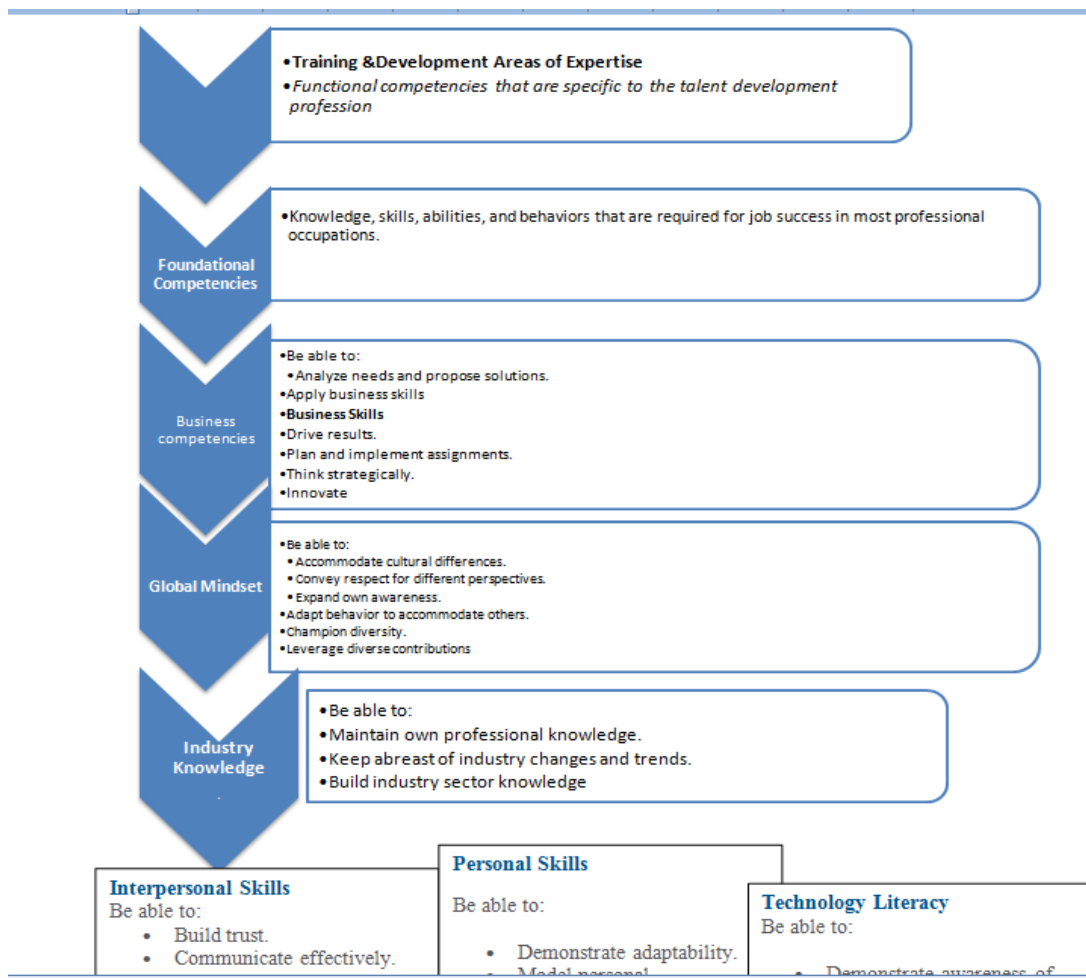
L & D professionals should be competent in various learning and course management designs. For example, Rosenberg (2006) states that EPSS solutions allow L&D professionals to

focus on the work or tasks that needs to be completed and not only does performance support solutions make the work simpler, it can reduce the level of skill required to perform a task (p. 196). Thereby, learning and knowledge management repositories would not only benefit local employees but those on a global scale as well. Performance support is beneficial in getting the job done, and takes the complexity out of work processes.

- Business competencies are essential for the L & D professionals to demonstrate an understanding of individual learning styles in virtual learning and be able to address cultural differences as well as personal learning preferences and appropriate tools for virtual delivery methods (Nadler, 2012). GTU's business practices, its systems and processes are also part of the business competencies or skills (see diagram below for list of skills needed).

- Technology competency is essential for designing training modules that are easily accessible; right now, GTU's departments with like positions and functions would benefit greatly from social networking tools to provide easy recall to information and job efficiency. An Electronic Performance Support System would provide troubleshooting tools at the users fingertips, as well as expert resources, topics, and content closer to end users; therefore, saving work time and time to complete a needed task.

- Technical and technology expertise are essential to connect diverse learners in the learning culture and structure.

- Interpersonal competencies are significant because team and community are critical to achieve results

o   Skills: necessary to succeed, require that learning leaders not think of learning

first, but performance management; therefore, it should be first and foremost and

aligned closely with GTU's strategic goals and concerns (Lykins, 2012).

The ATD Competency Model, below, is a redefinition of the skills and knowledge

required for trainers to be successful now and in the future and represents changes driven by

emerging technologies, i.e., mobile, digital, and social technology; as well as the demographic

shifts in the workforce, and globalization. These have significant insight to the L&D role and

needs of the organization.

- **Training &Development Areas of Expertise**
- *Functional competencies that are specific to the talent development profession*

Foundational Competencies
- Knowledge, skills, abilities, and behaviors that are required for job success in most professional occupations.

Business competencies
- Be able to:
  - Analyze needs and propose solutions.
- Apply business skills
- **Business Skills**
- Drive results.
- Plan and implement assignments.
- Think strategically.
- Innovate

Global Mindset
- Be able to:
  - Accommodate cultural differences.
  - Convey respect for different perspectives.
  - Expand own awareness.
- Adapt behavior to accommodate others.
- Champion diversity.
- Leverage diverse contributions

Industry Knowledge
- Be able to:
- Maintain own professional knowledge.
- Keep abreast of industry changes and trends.
- Build industry sector knowledge

Interpersonal Skills
Be able to:
- Build trust.
- Communicate effectively.

Personal Skills
Be able to:
- Demonstrate adaptability.
- Model personal

Technology Literacy
Be able to:
- Demonstrate awareness of

In conclusion, the learning structure should support three primary groups: customers, or students, partners, and employees (Rosenberg, 2006) and as GTU continues to expand its partnerships--globally, employees require a different kind of management style to be successful and to engage the learner in the learning process (Nadler, 2012). Therefore, L & D must possess competencies in technologies that promote learning and delivery that ensure continuous access for easy recall and retrieval. Benefits of integrating social networking tools that takes the linear structure of content out of learning and development [is a must] (Salyers, 2015). Technological competencies are critical to understand and apply current, new and/or emerging technologies. This will allow the L&D to demonstrate competencies in design and management of virtual training classes so that they are performance-specific to GTU's learning objectives and tasks.

The ATD Competency Model clearly identifies and describes key skill sets for L&D professionals that must be addressed to enable staff to serve GTU's customers and align the workplace to the organization's mission, meet the organizational goals and objectives, and improve its level of maturity as a learning enterprise. However, Georgetown University would benefit greatly from embedding collaborative learning tools in the workflow to enable employees to do their job faster, simpler and better. Staff, faculty, and students will be involved in his/her own learning because learning will have more of a purpose and meaning.

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