

## How learning is changing?

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### LEARNING RATHER THAN TEACHING

The main evidence that learning is changing is the increasing reference to learning rather than teaching. This has a number of implications:

- A focus on teaching as a process for facilitating learning, rather than a set of skills for transmitting knowledge.
- An emphasis on learners as individuals with differing needs, rather than a homogeneous group of people with similar requirements.
- The learner as one who is expected (and empowered) to make decisions about what their learning needs are, both in terms of content, style and continuing professional development.

### NEW TECHNOLOGIES

As a result of this change of perspective, there are emerging organisational frameworks aimed at facilitating learning that is individual, delivered at the point of need, at a place that is convenient, in a manner that is interesting and engaging and can deliver immediate results to the organisation. IT and web-based technologies are providing tools for the development of online learning environments that are more flexible than classroom based learning.

### DIFFERENT FORMS OF ASSESSMENT

Rather than simply checking the understanding of material studied or skills learned at points in the course, or immediately after in some form of summative assessment, the emphasis is shifting to the concept of probing understanding. Understanding is being probed, not simply in terms of short-term understanding but the longer-term appropriate application of the knowledge or skills in context. This is becoming known as evidence-based learning.

### COLLABORATIVE LEARNING

It has long been recognised that learners learn a great deal from each other - and are an important source of support and encouragement. Learning environments are now being structures to facilitate peer collaboration, often in the form of asynchronous online conferences mediated by an e-moderator.

### THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

There is now a much-improved understanding of the need to create a welcoming, inclusive, encouraging and supportive learning environment that promotes trust and collaboration. The lack of these attributes can set up barriers to effective learning that can affect an individual's self-esteem for a long time. Linked to this is the importance of effective preparation for learning that is likely to be very different from that experienced

**in school situations.**

**A CAUTIONARY NOTE**

**One of the concerns about individualised learning is how to provide the inspiration, enthusiasm and excitement about a topic that good teachers and lecturers can impart.**

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