

DECLARATION OF MODERN LEARNER RIGHTS

We, the designers of online corporate learning experiences, do hereby proclaim this declaration of modern learner rights as a common standard for the design of all technology-enabled corporate learning programs.



Because learning initiatives must be good for both the learner and the business in order to actually be good for the business:

All adult learners are endowed with reason.

A designer shall not create artificial impediments to freedom of movement within the borders of course content for reasons of mere tradition, false imperatives, or bureaucratic fear, for all adult learners are endowed with reason which helps them pick the content most relevant to them. This is essential if a corporate learner is to be compelled to learn for any reasons other than threat of compliance requirements.

ARTICLE ONE

1

Ruthless relevance is a justified demand.

The purpose and function of the program design shall be clearly and deliberately aligned with the learner's role within the organization and their actual job. This shall include but not be limited to content, assignments, design themes, external communications, and feedback. Ruthless relevance is a demand of the modern corporate learner, and it is justified.

ARTICLE TWO

2

Expectations shall be clearly communicated.

Expectations for learners to participate in or complete any learning program must be known to all and be easily findable within the learning experience. When, which, how much, how often, what will be the result or reward, and what, if anything, happens if a learner doesn't meet the expectations, must be understood by all from the beginning.

ARTICLE THREE

3

A learner's contributions shall be acknowledged.

When participating in a collaborative online learning experience, a learner must be able to immediately feel that they are part of a vibrant community. Their contributions shall be acknowledged by moderators, and/or through reward structures like points and badges for participation, and past contributions must be easily findable again.

ARTICLE FOUR

4

All learners should be allowed freedom of opinion and expression as it directly relates to professional matters.

Discussion forums and feedback options shall be open and safe environments for professional opinions and questions, with learners having received guidance to ensure they do not violate their company's legal policies.

ARTICLE FIVE

5

No learner shall be compelled to do work that does not further the learning objective.

For although exploration and creativity in learning are strongly encouraged, wasting learners' time is decidedly not. No learner shall be compelled to post to a discussion or share information in an assignment that does not further the learning objective.

ARTICLE SIX

6

Learning does not happen if brains are overloaded.

The beauty of modern learning is the leveraging of micro-content, spaced repetition, and convenient access, all of which counteract the detrimental effects of modern workloads on available time to learn and reflect. Therefore no formal online learning program shall require a learner to devote more than 3 hours per week to complete content, collaborate with peers and execute assignments. And no technology-enabled learning experience should take more than a few minutes to figure out how to navigate.

ARTICLE SEVEN

7

Instructional designers must always ask "why."

Because designers must first make sure a constraint is real. Once the designer has determined that a constraint is not merely a function of unexamined tradition or fear of new approaches that require trusting learners, only then should they embrace those real constraints and create innovative solutions within them. This design act is equivalent to holding out a hand to the learner to "shake on it" — "it" being the agreement that everyone's time is important and should be respected.

ARTICLE EIGHT

8

Every learner has the right to a dynamic and balanced learning experience.

Every learner has the right to a balance of opportunities to apply, discuss, or contribute to what they are being asked to learn, in discussions appropriate to the specific program. Furthermore, the learner has the right to abandon or forgo any learning experience which denies them the right to ask further questions.

ARTICLE NINE

9

No one involved in designing tech-enabled corporate learning shall forget that people are at the heart of it.

No instructional designer, course owner, or internal stakeholder shall ever assume that the application of technology without conscious design effort and human interaction will ever solve every problem in a manner akin to magic. Businesses are made up of people, and online corporate learning must be designed for and in service of people, for only then shall those people have a positive impact on the business.

ARTICLE TEN

10

With the above articles firmly in mind, every instructional designer, subject matter expert, and course owner shall design their courses to promote respect for their people, and in so doing empower adult learners to use their learning on the job immediately as well as in the future.