# FROM TOP-DOWN TO BOTTOM-UP

On the 24th of October Stimulearning organizes the ninth edition of the L&D Talks. This event is a highlight for L&D in Belgium, as for once top speakers come to us rather than the opposite. One of the six international speakers is Katrina Marie Baker.

May 1st, 2019. For most of us this means holiday.

However, I had the pleasure of interviewing Katrina Marie Baker, Learning Technology Speaker and author of The LMS Selection Checklist (2018) and LMS Success (2018): books with smart links to online support material. Katrina also authored Corporate Training Tips & Tricks (2017) and maintains the Learn Tech Collective YouTube channel.
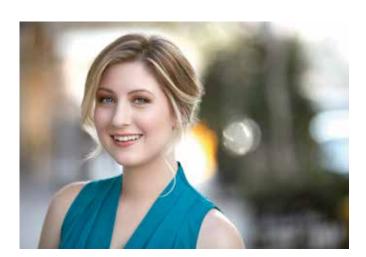
Katrina is a Senior Learning Evangelist at Adobe and former Director of Technology with the Association for Talent Development. She has worked in global training capacities for Fortune 500 retailer Whole Foods Market, and Global 100 law firms Cooley LLP and Latham & Watkins LLP. Previously, Katrina worked in music and video production for clients such as Disney Channel and Adult Swim.

Her independently operated consulting firm, Resources of Fun Learning, has advised organizations in aerospace, construction, healthcare, legal, retail, technology, and transportation.

Impressed by het amazing curriculum, I felt the need to have a few questions prepared. However, the interview quickly turned into a fluent chat about what's going on in L&D today.

## FORMAL TRAINING VERSUS ONGOING DEVELOPMENT

As technology is opening up a lot of new learning opportunities, I often challenge L&D stakeholders with the following question: why should we still offer training when support can be made readily available anytime, anywhere, and everything evolves continuously.



Katrina agrees that L&D is undergoing major changes. Whereas, in the traditional workplace, training is perceived as administering trainees and offering a course catalogue, future-oriented companies facilitate knowledge sharing and encourage employees to own their learning and development tracks.
In the initial setting, the LMS was a tool to administer trainings and follow up on certifications. In the modern workplace, the LMS should allow content curation and tracking of skills and competencies. It is more about motivating people to take on their own L&D challenges, rather than forcing them to.

## ROLE OF L&D

With the traditional classroom training evolving towards digital learning and a huge content offer online, the role of L&D is evolving as well. Katrina accompanied several companies undergoing this change in L&D, and she generally advises to split up the generalist role into an instructional design role, where L&D is ensuring consistency in curricula and is taking up the role of curator, and a content creator role, for the development of learning material. Instructor-led training is a third L&D role.
Of course, not every L&D generalist will turn out to be – for example –a skilled and creative content creator. However, during her missions, Katrina observed that former L&D generalists tend to naturally gravitate to one of the new job roles, in line with their own talents and motivation.

## INTRODUCING CONSTRUCTIVISM IN L&D

One of the workshops Katrina facilitates, is about applying blended learning & constructivism concepts to training programs. From her point of view, this allows to combine the traditional top-down approach (the trainer provides the knowledge) with a modern bottom-up approach, by bringing in social learning and the active learner. Keeping in mind constructivism as a learning (technology) approach can help L&D in creating interactive learning tracks, and in reflecting on their LMS. How will you involve the trainer and imply the learner? It helps to think broadly and envision different ways to approach learning.

## THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE BUZZWORD

According to Katrina, it is difficult to keep up with the acronyms and make the difference between a learning management system (LMS), a new generation learning platform (NGLP) or a learning experience platform (LXP). It depends more on what you do with the platform and what the roadmap of the company is.

# L&DTALKS
## FOOD FOR THOUGHT SINCE 2011

L&D managers often feel unhappy with their current learning management solution. Administration and reporting seem a real hassle. However, this isn't necessarily due to the complexity of the system, but rather to a lack of strategy. A related phenomenon is that companies go for the whole vendor catalogue and, as it turns out, use only 10%.

A thorough requirements analysis upfront will definitely ensure a better experience for all users: learners, trainers, managers and administrators. Whoever the end-users are, you should first talk to them before you bring up a solution. They know the training needs they have to cover, so they are the specialists in your company.

The final conclusion came naturally with this quote of Katrina's: "You can roll out the most beautiful solution — if you don't involve the end-user it will make no sense". ■

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