

# VARIOUS L&D APPROACHES IN TIME OF RESTRICTIONS

This period of isolation and economic restrictions gives us an new opportunities of E-Learning and Distance Learning. Keith Quinn (UK), with more than 25 years' experience in the social service sector and learning & development, is dealing with this. Various approaches show very strongly what works.

We share with you what works and what doesn't. And if you want to meet Keith, this will be possible in 2021 at L&D Talks.



## **How did Corona influence the methods of E-Learning, which practices did work good, and which did not give satisfaction at all?**

We've always designed our learning resources with the knowledge that staff in services have very limited amounts of time available for learning as part of their working week. As a result most of our resources are broken down into short pieces meaning that learners can work through one section and then put the resource aside and return to it later once they have more time. Each section of the resources has an associated open badge which means that the assessment load is spread over time too.

Regarding the pandemic, our sector had a sudden and significant need to redeploy staff to frontline services, bring in volunteers to paid job roles and reintroduce people who had previously retired from the sector back into work. This meant in three days we had to audit all of our digital learning resources and provide guidance about core learning required to ensure these workers could operate safely.

Also, with workers in day care services for children (nurseries/kindergartens etc) being furloughed (= A Government funded leave of absence granted to an employee due to the pandemic) and being told to use their time at home to improve their knowledge and skills and instructor-lead (face-to-face) training becoming impossible, the demand for digital learning increased massively

## **How many more E-learning have been used, even for the professions not ready for E-Learning before? What type of new experiences did start?**

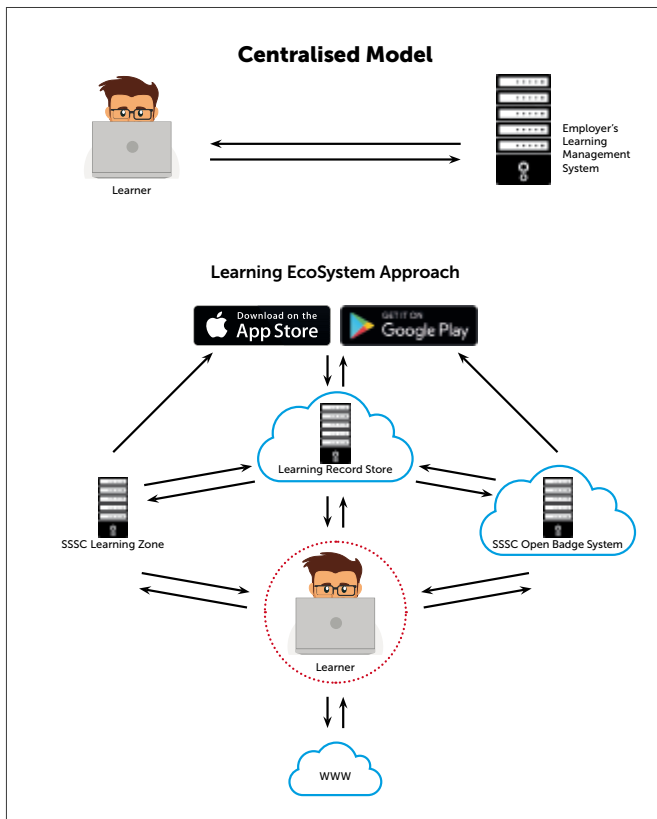
Since the beginning of our lockdown six weeks ago, we have added 3,517 new learners to our systems (we operate independently of universities and colleges. Our systems are our Learning Portal ("The Learning Zone"), our Open Badge Platform and our about to be released "My-Learning" system) (which is a huge increase) and have received and assessed 5,235 Open Badge applications (an increase from 500-600 per month) and as each badge is directly linked to our learning resources, this means we've had a huge surge in use of our digital learning resources.

We have also noticed that there are many more operational managers using our resources and systems than pre-pandemic and have had reports from some organisations regarding their intention to mainstream the use of our learning resources for all staff.

You can see more about our open badge platform at [www.badges.sssc.uk.com](http://www.badges.sssc.uk.com) (QR1). And the videos on [vimeo.com](http://vimeo.com) (QR2) will give you a lot more information.

## **Which platforms are growing for Learning?**

We don't really rely on any one platform and I have, from the outset, worked on developing and building on a learning ecosystem approach rather than relying on one platform for delivery and assessment of learning. We're trying to serve the needs of 205,000 paid staff employed by 2,500 employers and 450,000+ informal (unpaid) carers (Our organisation is the regulator for the Social Services Sector: all staff from pre-school kindergarten, Care for adults with disabilities etc, Social Work, Care services for elderly people. the informal carers is a catch all for volunteers and family members who care for relatives), all with huge variations in the level of digital skills they have. So, one platform was never going to meet the needs of such an audience.



Our resources include video and interactive video based learning (QR3), audio material, multi-media scenario-based learning and simulations in HTML format (QR4), eBooks (QR5) and HTML learning (eg 23 Digital Capabilities (QR6) and 23 Things for Everyday Leadership (QR7)).

Given the range of skill levels, we are keen that learners develop the general skills to work and learn online and the tacit learning opportunities presented by this learning ecosystem approach encourages this. By only expecting learners to use one platform, they only ever learning how to use that one system, and when it's not available they are unsure how to proceed.

#### Did people learn more during this period?

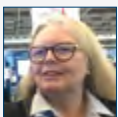
The evidence from the uptake and from the applications for Open Badges submitted by learners would suggest their is a lot more learning going on at the moment. We are currently surveying the 3,517 new learners to seek feedback on their experiences of using our systems and so far the responses are positive and encouraging.

#### Which communities give the most important experiences, interactions and shared approaches?

That depends on how we're defining "important". For us, the group who made the biggest impact on citizens are the main grade care and support staff (eg in care homes, home care services and childrens' services) so we'd consider their ability to apply what they have learned is highly important. We don't just want them to work safely, but want them to provide the best care possible to the people who rely on them for support.

Our learning ecosystem (see diagram) = Instead we have a range of learning resources in a range of formats available either from our Learning Zone (which is more of a portal to find learning material rather than a platform) or from public distribution channels, like Apple Books, Apple App Store, GooglePlay, Spotify Podcasts, Apple Podcasts and so on. We give credit and recognition for learning by using Open Badges which are awarded via our Open Badge platform and we're about to launch a new service, "MyLearning" which uses the xAPI protocols to track learning and allow our learning resources, Learning Zone Portal and Open Badge Platform to exchange information and allow learners to plan and record their learning including informal learning and create reports on the CPD for themselves, their employers an/or their regulator.

So, as much of our learning as possible is designed to support learning transfer. It's not enough for us to give learners information and hope that it helps them do a better job. Our learning activities and assessments are designed to encourage them to apply what they have just learned to their work practice as soon as possible after learning and to do it consistently on an ongoing basis, until it becomes part of their work routine. So many of our designs are based on Situated Learning models and reflect the Learning Transfer Evaluation Model developed by Will Thalheimer. ■



**Ann Le Roy** is L&D Specialist, interested in New Technologies, such as AI and Scaled Agile Framework, and passionate about New Learning Opportunities to enhance Performance and to improve Competences.

#### USEFUL / INTERESTING LINKS

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|---|---|---|---|
| 1 |  | 2 |  | 3 |  | 4 |  | 5 |  | 6 |  | 7 |  |
|   | <a href="http://www.badges.sssc.uk.com">www.badges.sssc.uk.com</a>                  |   | <a href="#">videos on vimeo</a>   |   | <a href="#">interactive video based learning</a>                                    |   | <a href="#">simulations in HTML format</a>  |   | <a href="#">eBooks</a>   |   | <a href="#">23 Digital Capabilities</a>   |   | <a href="#">23 Things for Everyday Leadership</a>                                     |