

What is learning experience design and why do we need it?

 By [Shan Raddiffe](#)

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The events of the past year created a tipping point for the education industry, accelerating the necessity for online learning overnight. Whether schools, universities or other institutions were ready or not, they were suddenly expected to repackage educational content into an online format - with some managing better than others. Those who were most successful owe it to good learning experience design (LXD).



Kira Koopman, founder of Elevate Learning

For those looking to enhance their learning experience design skills, Elevate Learning in partnership with Studio Zafari recently launched its LXD Essentials course, which aims to equip learning and development professionals, academics, teachers and course creators with a modern learning mindset, and the skills and tools to design and develop interactive, engaging learning experiences.

Here Kira Koopman, founder of the digital learning consultancy Elevate Learning, tells us more...

■ ***What is 'learning experience design' and why is it so necessary in the world of education?***

Kira Koopman: Learning experience design, or LXD, is an interdisciplinary approach to designing courses, programmes, academies, webinars or workshops that are learner-centred, goal-oriented and design-focused. It's a way to merge the art and science of learning that caters to modern learners who are digitally savvy, pressed for time, and who make decisions about whether to engage with content within nanoseconds. And in a world that is ever changing, we need to ensure that learners can adapt, and that they have the skills to learn, retain and practically apply skills and knowledge they learn about.

For a long time, L&D professionals focused so much on the content that they ended up creating courses that don't have the learner at the centre of it. This means content is pushed to learners with little understanding of their individual contexts, their ability to access the content, the time they have to learn. But to do this, we need a different way to design learning. LXD provides a practical framework and approach to designing learning experiences that are relevant, engaging and impactful.

■ ***What are some of the fundamental mistakes that are currently being made in LXD that developers may not even be aware of?***

Koopman: I don't think learning designers are necessarily making mistakes unknowingly, but the reality is that the field of

LXD is relatively new, so the focus has been on outdated or quite linear modes of instructional design. We're also only just beginning to understand more about how the brain learns. Research into the fields of educational and cognitive neuroscience, as well as behavioural science and motivation has only come to light in the past decade or so, and we're just starting to see the impact of this research being translated into how we design learning experiences. Current trends in learning like microlearning, gamification, social learning, are all a result of what we're learning about in other fields, so it's this interdisciplinary approach to understanding more about how to design learning experiences that has resulted in the evolution of learning experience design.

■ ***Tell us how the partnership between Elevate Learning and Studio Zafari came about and what each party contributed toward the project?***

Koopman: Elevate Learning and Studio Zafari have worked collaboratively on many projects in the past, from developing close to 100 videos for a high school maritime economics project to developing programme style guides, motion graphics and other types of multimedia for UCT, Viridian, Old Mutual and other organisations. We've built a symbiotic relationship over the years. It then made sense to partner with them on the Learning Experience Design Essentials course.

Elevate Learning are thought leaders in learning design, strategy, course design and development, while Studio Zafari are experienced in educational multimedia design and development. So we have developed the course content and are managing the implementation and rollout, while Zafari are managing the development of all multimedia content and branding.

■ ***Who is this course primarily aimed at and what outcomes could they expect?***

Koopman: This course equips learning and development professionals, academics and teachers, course creators and digital learning enthusiasts with a modern learning mindset and the skills and tools to design and develop interactive, engaging learning experiences.

This is course is for you if:

- You're a learning and development manager who's looking to upskill in the latest LXD trends and make the case for why your organisation should invest in digital learning experiences.
- You're a teacher who wants to take your school's approach to learning to the next level.
- You're a lecturer who wants to learn how to best navigate the online learning context and get the most out of your virtual sessions with your students.
- You're an Instructional Designer looking to transition to LXD.
- You're an entrepreneur with an array of course content, but who needs some guidance on how to design the optimum learning experience.
- You have a great idea for an online course and are looking for best practice tips on how to design this.
- You're an HR consultant who wants to equip themselves with the latest knowledge of online learning trends.
- You're looking to upskill yourself in the modern learning mindset and the thinking behind designing impactful and engaging learning experiences.

By the end of this course, participants will be able to:

- Reflect on the impact of digital, neuroscience and behavioural science trends on how we learn.
- Create learning experiences that are user-centered, goal-oriented and design-focused.
- Create user-centered learning experiences based on the design thinking process.
- Use competence-based learning design to set attainable learning goals.
- Use microlearning and gamification tactics to motivate and engage learners throughout the learning experience.
- Draw on various user experience and user interface design principles to create memorable learning experiences.
- Draw on different evaluation models to track learners' performance and attainment of the learning goals.
- Reflect on future trends in learning.

See the full [course overview here](#). [PDF]

■ ***The Covid-19 pandemic created a sudden and radical shift to online learning last year. What kind of impact has this had on the development of this course?***

Koopman: If anything it's accelerated our development. In between other projects and client work, we'd been conceptualising and designing the course long before Covid officially hit, but we realised with the influx of requests from clients last year to help move their content online or develop a digital learning transformation strategy, that there was a far greater need to help L&D professionals, academics and teachers and course creators themselves to develop high impact learning experiences.

“ The reality is that it's not enough to simply put content online and expect learners to engage with it in the same way that they do in a classroom environment. Digital learning requires a different approach and design, not just a platform to upload content or a Zoom license. ”

This course aims to provide participants with the skills to design learning experiences that result in improved engagement and measurable transfer of learning.

■ ***Your subscription fee offers a three-month or lifetime access to the course content, which includes updates and iterations. How do you see this course evolving over the years?***

Koopman: As we come to understand more about how the brain learns and the impact of the knowledge economy and digital communities and platforms on the way we acquire new skills and competencies, so the course will also be updated. And as new learning models and experts emerge in these fields, we'll draw on those and create contextually relevant course content.

For more information on the course, visit: <https://lxd.elevatelearning.org/>

ABOUT SHAN RADCLIFFE

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