VIDEO TRANSCRIPT

Paul Matthews speaking at the World of Learning Conference in 2018

Paul co-delivered a session on learning transfer and training impact with Dr Ina Weinbauer-Heidel. This excerpt is the second part of the session delivered by Paul

TRANSCRIPT

This is a picture I've seen around and there's that bit in the middle – "There's magic happens" – and certainly some of that magic is some of the things that Ina's been talking about, but we kind of, we have the sense that we just put them in a training room and then there's pixie dust or something that happens. By the way, has anybody, know any dealers in pixie dust? I can't find any. Yeah? Because somehow the managers seem to think that you guys have got sacksful of it still left in the back of the L&D department and you're going to sprinkle it on people when they get sent to you for fixing. Okay. No? No pixie dust? I'll pay. I'll pay good money.

What this does give us is the sense that there is a journey. There's a process to do and that's one of the key things about learning transfer, is there's a workflow involved. It's not just an event. And one of the things I often say to people is never, ever, ever market a one-day event. Market a three- or four-day program and say one day of that happens to be in the classroom. See, as soon as you say to people, we got this one day event for you to go on, on, I don't know, report writing or rapport skills or something, they will then put aside in their mind one day, and the expectation is the message given from the culture, which is what Ina was just talking about, is that it's one day, that you've just got to turn up for that day and then it's sorted.

It's the wrong message, isn't it? Completely. There are always messages on how you position and do this stuff and we actually shoot ourselves in the foot consistently with the messages we give out in the way that we put training out there for people. And the other word that's interesting there is workflow because there's work to do. You've got to come out of a training room and then you're going to have to go and do some stuff, surely. To practice, to experiment, to try new things, to stretch your muscles, to see if you can get it right. And also because of the informal learning aspects. Until you actually do it, you're not going to know just what's there.

There's this lovely quote from this guy that said it some long time ago. We have to do things.

And that's another way to learn by doing. I quite like that picture. But you see you could give that guy all of the health and safety training in the world on hose etiquette, or whatever it is you're going to do. But until someone actually does that with a hose that... They're going to remember that. So we remember stuff that we do. If you ask most people, how do you learn? They'd say "Oh I learn by doing."

So, I'll keep to the African theme with the elephants. These are the delegates. They're off at the pub at the end of the training day. There's always one clown in every cohort isn't there? Do you know that? If you notice that, there's always one, always one.

So, their next thing is going to have to be to go and practice and do some stuff with what they've be teaching. So just assume you've be teaching something really interesting and this next slide is what they need to be doing.

The training, by the way, was how to bottle feed a tiger cub. But you see, until you have a tiger cub in one hand and a bottle in the other and have to grapple with that reality, you're not really going to learn how to bottle feed a tiger cub, no matter what their training taught you. Do you agree with that? I mean put yourself in that position. It would be kind of fun feeding a tiger cub wouldn't it? Yeah. And you've got to have some spare tiger cubs ready for, you know. So there's got to be that experimentation, that activity phase that follows, learning by doing.

So if you think about learning transfer, we have to deliver activities to people. And I see some people say, "Oh, but we give them more content. We give them more stuff, some more information." I say, "No.... that's not going to work. You've given them a whole lot of information. Just giving them some more in some portal somewhere that they may or may not visit. That's not learning transfer." But I hear this, "Oh, we're doing it." Well, no you're not. There's several things that people do that just simply don't work. Now they can be made to work if you tweak them the right way and that's some of the stuff I'm going talk about next. But a lot of it here is about delivering activities, learning by doing. So you've got to deliver people activities to do.

Now, this is getting interesting. So a chap in the States called BJ Fogg, and he works at Stanford University in their behaviour science labs and he's come up with this model, which is really interesting. It's the Fogg Behavior Model and I've had permission from him to put this stuff in my books and there's a much bigger explanation in the book. But this is one of the things that people consistently get wrong with the activity type stuff they're trying to get people to do after a training course or an initiative with learning transfer, so we'll build this thing.

He has this model, that behaviour equals MAP, motivation, ability and prompt. So basically, a behaviour occurs, according to him, when those three things are

present. There's a prompt or a trigger, an ask, a call to action, and then there's these other two things. The person who receives that prompt needs to have some sense of what ability they're going to need to do that activity and some sense of the motivation they're going to need in order to do the activity depending on its difficulty.

So let's look at the… Oops, we're getting two at the same time here. So there, if I asked you to go and do something for me, like please, Mark, could you fetch me a glass of water? What's going to go through your mind is "Mumble, mumble, mumble." But no the first thing that will go through Mark's mind is going to be, "Oh, how difficult is that to do? Is that going to cause me some problems? Can I do it easily? Is it just awkward and frustrating?" There's a sense of what's it going to take for me to do that? The next thing that's going to go through his mind is, "Do I want to do that? Have I got enough motivation now to do it in the moment given my assessment of its difficulty or my ability to do it?" Does that make sense? He might also ask, "Would I do it for Paul?" That's another story. Okay? So there's this graph that he's drawn up. Okay?

Now the next piece of that graph is, now if you think about it, if your motivation is high, chances are you're going to respond to the trigger, the prompt, and do the behaviour, or at least start the behaviour. Yeah? If it's easy to do. In other words, if it's on the right-hand side, chances are you're going to respond with the trigger and do it. So, the further to the top and right you are, the more likely it is that the trigger is going to succeed. So think about this when you're delivering activities to people to do, what's the MAP that I'm giving them? Yeah? And there's ways to fiddle with that by the way, which I talk about a lot more in the book. So towards the top right, the prompts will succeed. Towards the bottom left, they're going to fail. So your triggers, your calls to action are going to fail. So what you get is an action line here. Any prompts, any triggers you give out that are above it to the right, the likelihood is that person will go ahead and actually start that behaviour. If it's down into the left, they will not start it. Okay?

So that gives us this little thing, lots of little activities that cumulatively over time will build up to the one big thing. Now who's ever done this at the end of a training course? Can everybody sit down? I know your brains are mush at the end of two days, but can you just write down three core goals you're going to achieve as a result and I'll put them on a postcard and I'll post them to you in three weeks. So now write these goals. Now if there's only three, they're going to be chunky sorts of things, aren't they? Guess where they're going to sit? Which side of that green line? Bottom left, because they're too big. Now this by the way is also why some people in the industry talk about delivering coaching to do learning transfer because it works because then the coaches, if they're a good coach, can incentivize and motivate and help people to achieve those specific goals and outcomes.

Actually, you can't really afford to do that and scale it at the kind of scale that a lot of companies operate at, so it's much better to break those things down into lots of small activities spread over time. And then all you've really got is a sort of a delivery and debrief session over that and a manager's capable of doing that without great coaching skills. So this is how you can start getting the managers involved. There's a lot more stuff around that as well.

So anyway, BJ Fogg gets his stuff. So as I said, there's a lot more in the book about that and how you can do it, but there's lots of ways to, here's a simple example, the way that you can set the prompt up can then manage and influence the motivation. So for example, I might say to Martin, "We want to go to the movies." I'll use Martin, and okay, I've got a call to action, but it's fairly bland. He may or may not want to go to the movies as a of that call to action. But if I say, "Martin, Tom Hanks is playing. I know you love Tom Hanks. It's a great, great movie. You're going to love this one. Let's go to the movies." I've changed the format of the prompt and I've added some motivation to it. So suddenly, when they start assessing ability and motivation, there's a higher motivational quotient sitting there available for them. So you can see how you start playing with that formula. It starts giving you a way to dig into delivering activities, which is a core part and it's right slam on some of the levers in Ina's model. This is why I was so excited to get this stuff together.

Okay, now if they are going to be doing activities, people learn through reflection, don't they? There's really no learning without reflection. Everybody's nodding. This is the model I came up with based on other people's work, but it's one I've been talking about on the conference stage for many years now, and I did some work on reflection for the Law Society and I kind of came up with this thing that "there is no learning without reflection". So can we influence the quality and quantity of reflection and as a result influence the quality and quantity of learning? And I think there is, and this is what's resulted in this learning stack.

So there's five levels here. At the bottom level, I call it unconscious reflection which sounds a bit like an oxymoron. But if you think about it, if I do something regularly, I will get better at it even if I'm not consciously aware of, kind of like tying a shoelace or even driving a car. It's that skill based practice thing. Practice makes perfect. The next level up is just open thinking about it. So in other words, it's like bringing it up into conscious awareness and I'm asking questions, "Well, what happened? How did that work? Who does it better?" And so on. A questioning approach. Next level up is where I'm questioning, but I'm externalizing it. So I'm putting it out there to maybe a colleague at the next desk or the dog on a walk, or journal or a diary. That's why journaling works, by the way. It's an externalizer. Now the reason that's another little higher up the stack is because in order to externalize it, I have to use a whole lot of new neural networks to convert it into language that's understandable out in the real world. It's not my sort of internal baby talk. You get the difference?

Fourth level is where I'm externalising it with an awareness of consequences. That is, if I put it out there, I might get judged based on what I put out there, so I'm going to think twice before I say that to my boss. I'll think twice before I say that to my coach. Yeah? So that awareness of consequences, it's a big thing actually, so I've done a huge amount of work on it. The fifth level, you've probably all heard that adage, the best way to learn something is to teach it? Yeah, it's not true. The best way is to prepare the lesson plan to teach it, that's where you get your reflective juice from when you're teaching. So there's the five, whoops, there's the five levels. I believe you guys get access to these slides anyway, so that should be fine.

GET IN TOUCH

Paul Matthews is a renowned authority in the Learning and Development space. Whether you want to call on his knowledge and expertise as a skilled keynote speaker, as a consultant or to run a workshop, he'd love to hear from you.

To book Paul for your forthcoming event, enquire about his availability or arrange an informal chat about any of his services, get in touch today.

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