

VIDEO TRANSCRIPT

Paul Matthews interview on Learning Now TV 2019

This is the third time Paul was interviewed on the Learning Now TV channel.

TRANSCRIPT

Kim Edwards: We're welcoming back a friend of Learning Now TV. Actually, somebody who appeared on our very first episode, so it is only apt that Paul Matthews joins us for our fourth birthday episode today. Thank you, Paul.

Paul Matthews: You're welcome.

Kim Edwards: Welcome back. You're here to talk about your new book, Learning Transfer at Work. Little plug there. I'd love to know more about it and how it came about.

Paul Matthews: Well, I started writing about learning transfer at work and realized it was really about elephants.

Kim Edwards: Tell me more.

Paul Matthews: And actually, it's the third elephant. What I was saying was that I got interested in it for all sorts of reasons, partly because we've got some software in that space, but I noticed that so many people were doing so little about it and it seemed to be the elephant in the room when people were talking about learning. They were doing the training, doing the numbers of bums on seats, all the rest of it and how to promote it and get it out there, but they weren't dealing with what happens afterwards and how do you make sure it gets implemented. So that was the elephant in the room. At that point, I realized that my previous two books are also elephants, so I started talking about the third elephant. So, we've now got three books in the trilogy.

Kim Edwards: And why not? Please explain the process of learning transfer. What does it mean to you?

Paul Matthews: Well, there's some steps involved, there's clearly a knowledge acquisition phase, perhaps in the training room, perhaps through e-learning or some formal intervention. Following that, people obviously have to go from where they are, where they've done their learning to where they're going to use it and apply it. In an educational context, that knowledge acquisition is perhaps all that's required, maybe examined afterwards with a test, but in a work or organizational context, you need to then go and apply it

afterwards or basically your training course was mostly worthless.

Kim Edwards:

And that's what's missing, and that's the big elephant.

Paul Matthews:

Yeah, it's the behaviour change afterwards. So really it's about how are we going to make sure that what we're paying for in terms of learning does get implemented, activated, used, operationalized, whatever word you want to use, and becomes the new behaviour, proficiency, you know, business as usual.

Paul Matthews:

It's that whole process, and it's a process because a training course is maybe a one-day event, but it needs to be maybe a four day program spread over six months, because there's lots of things to do before and after. Unless you say to someone, "We've got a four day a program, one day of which happens to be in the classroom," then all they're going to set aside in their mind is one day for the event and then they're going to not do the program and not do the follow up, and therefore not get the behaviour change.

Kim Edwards:

We need the sustainability; we need the application.

Paul Matthews:

All of that stuff, yeah.

Kim Edwards:

What's your key advice in this area?

Paul Matthews:

You've just got to pay attention to it and do something about it. What's interesting is that when I'm talking to senior people, they are now under increasing scrutiny, these are senior L&D people, about whether their L&D programs are having an impact. And of course, they start to think, well actually, the only way we can do that properly is to ensure learning transfer. But one guy I was talking to from a big bank was saying, "That's on my radar now, but I've got a huge team of L&D people, most of whom still think of themselves as a service deliverer, as delivering an event or a training, and I've got to fix that."

Paul Matthews:

It's very topical right now. It is right on the front of where the senior people are going with their learning right now.

Kim Edwards:

It's a real change of mindset, isn't it?

Paul Matthews:

For many it is, yeah. We're no longer an order taker, a shopkeeper, we don't just deliver what people ask. We're now much more involved over a period of time with the program. And of course, how well you are able to implement and will depend on the maturity of the organization from a learning perspective, will depend on all sorts of things, but you've got to start doing something, and there's lots of... In fact, there's 168 tips in the book on things you can do.

Kim Edwards:

Ideal.

Paul Matthews:

It's a hugely practical book.

Kim Edwards: So very bite-sized, that section?

Paul Matthews: Very bite-sized. I even say, get a highlighter pen and make a mess of it. You don't have to take it back to the school library pristine. Use it. I gave it to a guy this morning at a meeting actually, and he opened it up and immediately put a fold in the page saying, "That one I've got to use." The very first page he opened was something in there he wanted. But the first piece of the book is a piece that has more about, the first 70 pages, about the philosophy, the thinking, some of the theory behind it, some of the ideas, and that will help learning people explain to non-learning people why it's necessary and some of the ways to go about doing it. In the back end of the book, the major part is all about the practical applications.

Kim Edwards: Perfect.

Paul Matthews: Plus, it's got lots and lots of tips from, there's 27 other contributions in there from other people that have been crowdsourced a little bit, and there's some really senior people who've added their take on this whole thing. So it's not just me, there's lots of other stuff in there as well.

Kim Edwards: I was going to ask; did you consult with anybody? Are there any examples and case studies, et cetera, in there?

Paul Matthews: Yes, there are some case studies in there from other people, and when I consulted, I've been, just a pile of books. My desk was quite daunting when I was trying to set a study for this and I had to upgrade my Evernote account because of the amount of stuff that was in it. There's long lists of websites and blogs, and eventually just ploughed through it all and tried to pick out really what was there. I've done a huge amount of that background that will save a lot of people a lot of time, quite frankly.

Kim Edwards: Excellent. It sounds really practical. It does sound like a book that somebody can keep on their desk at work and use to advise others and gain that buy-in, as you say, from senior leaders, which is half the battle.

Paul Matthews: Well, the problem is some of these senior people think that L&D still has sacksful of pixie dust. You don't have any left, do you?

Kim Edwards: I wish.

Paul Matthews: Yeah, I can't find a pixie dust dealer anywhere. What they're expecting is if we send these people on this training course, they'll come back fully operational because L&D has worked their magic and sprinkled pixie dust on them. And of course, we don't have pixie dust left. Well, I don't know of anybody anyway, so we've got to help those senior people understand

that there's more to changing behaviour than just putting people on a training course.

Kim Edwards: Absolutely.

Paul Matthews: And that's the challenge in some ways that we have is, it's changing that perception of what L&D is all about.

Kim Edwards: Definitely. What's next for you, Paul? You did once say you would never write a book again and now you have. So what does the future hold?

Paul Matthews: I don't always keep my word, do I? I'm actually working with an amazing woman from Austria called Dr Ina Weinbauer-Heidel who's also written a book on learning transfer. She did a PhD on gathering the research, which actually goes back over 110 years, would you believe. Learning transfer is not new, and the academics have been looking at it for a long time, but there's this mass of information and she distilled it out and came down with what she calls the 12 Levers of Learning Transfer.

Paul Matthews: One of the projects she and I are talking about is how we can look at those 12 levers, add in some of the strategic viewpoints that I have and that I've got on the book, and join the two models together in a way that then looks at that together with the learning maturity of an organization to give a very definite, "Okay, this is where you're at, so here's what you need to be thinking next about learning transfer."

Kim Edwards: Brilliant. Well, thank you very much for that overview. That's really insightful and it truly sounds a very practical, useful book. All the best.

Paul Matthews: Thank you very much.

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.

+44(0) 1908 325 167

hello@paul-matthews.com