



Managing Learning

Making learning more strategic

L&D Professional Resource:

125 Learning and Development quotes

Collated by Juliet Adams as part of the
Campaign for Strategic Learning

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Learning and Development Quotes

These quotes have been collected and collated as a resource for L&D Practitioners by Juliet Adams, Managing Learning as part of the Campaign for Strategic Learning.

Strategic learning starts with strategic imperatives – the direction the organisation is taking, its purpose, its vision, its mission, its strategic goals. Strategic Learning helps the L&D function become “a first thought rather than an afterthought”, ensuring corporate strategies are embedded and business goals are delivered.

The Campaign for Strategic Learning aims to provide CEOs, Senior Managers and L&D Leaders with the data and resources needed to increase the value that L&D teams add to the business, ensuring higher ROI and increased impact on the bottom line.

Visit www.managing-learning.co.uk for further Information on Strategic Learning

Please note: The quotes in this document have been gathered from a variety of sources. In many cases they have been provided by third parties. We therefore cannot verify the accuracy of any of the quotes or attributed authors in this document. If you have any concerns, please research them before quoting them.

Learning and Development quotes (listed by author)

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| Alan Loy McGinnis “There is no more noble occupation in the world than to assist another human being - to help someone succeed” |
| Albert Einstein “The only thing that interferes with my learning is my education”. |
| Albert Einstein “Wisdom is not a product of schooling but of the lifelong attempt to acquire it.” |
| Alfred North Whitehead “Not ignorance, but ignorance of ignorance, is the death of knowledge.” |
| Alison Tucker, Buckman Laboratories "Learning is a process not an event" |
| Alvin Toffler "The ability to learn faster than your competitors may be the only sustainable competitive advantage" |
| Anatole France “An education isn't how much you have committed to memory, or even how much you know. It's being able to differentiate between what you know and what you don't.” |
| Andy Warhol "They always say time changes things, but you actually have to change them yourself" |



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| <p>Angel Rampy "If you are not being educated in your job today, you may be out of a job tomorrow... Employee education is not growing 100 percent faster than academia, but 100 times - or 10,000 percent - faster... Over the next few decades the private sector will eclipse the public sector and become the major institution responsible for learning."</p> |
| <p>Annon "Any training that does not include the emotions, mind & body is incomplete; knowledge fades without feeling"</p> |
| <p>Anon. "When the student is ready, the teacher will arrive"</p> |
| <p>Anthony J. D'Angelo "Never stop learning; knowledge doubles every fourteen months."</p> |
| <p>Anthony Robbins Successful people ask better questions, and as a result, they get better answers."</p> |
| <p>Aristotle "It is the mark of an educated mind to be able to entertain a thought without accepting it."</p> |
| <p>Aristotle "The roots of education are bitter, but the fruit is sweet."</p> |
| <p>Aristotle "We are what we repeated do. Excellence, then, is not an act, it is a habit."</p> |
| <p>Arnold Bennett "Any change, even a change for the better, is always accompanied by drawbacks and discomforts."</p> |
| <p>Association of Colleges Research November 2008 "82 per cent of bosses reported uplift in staff productivity as a direct result of training's impact on the bottom line – translating to an average nine per cent increase in company turnover following staff training."</p> |
| <p>Association of Colleges Research November 2008 "Three quarters of company directors (77 per cent) believe it is important to invest in staff training in the current economic climate."</p> |
| <p>ASTD 2005 "BEST (Award Winning) Learning Organizations have formal processes to align short and long-term business strategies with competency, learning, and performance solution needs and priorities."</p> |
| <p>ASTD 2005 "Possessing sustainable learning cultures, processes and procedures is a consistent characteristic of ASTD BEST (Award Winning) organizations. Most of the BEST have a chief-level learning officer and involve leaders as teachers and role models."</p> |
| <p>ASTD 2005. "ASTD BEST (Award Winning) organizations always maximise the efficiency of the learning organisation by centralisation, internal process improvement, use of technology and strategic outsourcing".</p> |



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| <p>ASTD 2005. “ASTD BEST (Award Winning) organizations map learning resources to competencies, individual development plans, jobs and corporate goals.”</p> |
| <p>Auguste Rodin “Nothing is a waste of time if you use the experience wisely.”</p> |
| <p>Barbara Sher “You can learn new things at any time in your life if you're willing to be a beginner. If you actually learn to like being a beginner, the whole world opens up to you.”</p> |
| <p>Benjamin Disraeli “To be conscious that you are ignorant of the facts is a great step to knowledge.”</p> |
| <p>Benjamin Franklin “An investment in knowledge pays the best interest.”</p> |
| <p>Bertolt Brecht “Because things are the way they are, things will not stay the way they are.”</p> |
| <p>Bill Watterson “Why waste time learning, when ignorance is instantaneous?”</p> |
| <p>Brian Tracy “When you develop yourself to the point where your belief in yourself is so strong that you know you can accomplish anything you put your mind to, your future will be unlimited.”</p> |
| <p>Carl Rowen “The library is the temple of learning, and learning has liberated more people than all the wars in history”.</p> |
| <p>Charles Handy “The biggest obstacle to innovation is thinking it can be done the old way.”</p> |
| <p>Charles Kettering “The world hates change, yet it is the only thing that has brought progress.”</p> |
| <p>Chinese Proverb “Teachers open the door, but you must enter by yourself.”</p> |
| <p>Chinese Proverb “Learning is a treasure that will follow its owner everywhere.”</p> |
| <p>Chuck Ferguson, Sun Microsystems “The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn and relearn.”</p> |
| <p>CIPD Recruitment and Retention Survey, 2007 ‘The CIPD’s latest learning and development research found that 74% of organisations did not have a well developed plan for talent management.’ ‘Just 30% of organisations say they make use of talent banks (ready candidate details saved electronically) before looking to recruit externally.’</p> |



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| <p>Clark Aldrich, Gartner Group "In your career, knowledge is like milk. It has a shelf life stamped right on the carton. The shelf life of a degree in engineering is about 3 years. If you're not replacing everything you know by then, your career is going to turn sour fast."</p> |
| <p>Claude Bernard "An organization's ability to learn and translate that learning into action is the ultimate competitive advantage."</p> |
| <p>Claude Levi-Strauss "The wise man doesn't give us the right answers, he poses the right questions." Claude Levi-Strauss</p> |
| <p>Confucius "What I hear, I forget, What I see, I remember. What I do, I understand"</p> |
| <p>Confucius "Learning without thought is labor lost; thought without learning is perilous."</p> |
| <p>Daniel J Boorstin "Education is learning what you didn't even know you didn't know."</p> |
| <p>Dave Ulrich "Athletes may want to develop all of their muscles, but the reality is that a sprinter needs different muscles than a miler. It would be nice to develop all of our individual, team, and organisational muscles, but we do not need all muscles in equal proportions; it's also impossible to focus on everything at once. ("Muscles" include knowledge, expertise, skills, abilities, capabilities, competencies, know-how...)</p> <p>We have to understand which muscles--which skills or capabilities--are mission critical. We have to develop precisely those individual, team, and organisational capabilities that will most help us:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conquer critical business challenges ▪ Enhance competitive advantage ▪ Increase value delivered to customers (and all key stakeholders) ▪ Translate strategy into action ▪ Formulate new strategy and identify & leverage new opportunities ▪ Develop future leaders <p>Developing more talented employees is not the end, but the means to the end of creating a competitive organisation."</p> |
| <p>Dave Ulrich "Learning & development add value to the business only when they help a business achieve its primary goals & create new opportunities".</p> |
| <p>Dr. Donald E. Wetmore "Not so many years ago training, beyond showing employees the basics of doing the job, was an option for most organizations. Today it is no longer an option. If any of us continues to do what we do the same way, within five years most of us and our organizations will become obsolete. Why? Because our competitors are helping their people to become more effective through training. If we look closely at companies that are doing well in the long run, they almost always have in place a well thought out and executed training program for their people. They understand that the price for not</p> |



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| training is the real expense of training.” |
| Dr. Seuss "If you always do what you have always done, then you will always get what you have always got" |
| Eric Hoffer “The learners shall inherit the earth while the learned will be beautifully equipped to live in a world that no longer exists.” |
| Erich Fromm “Why should society feel responsible only for the education of children, and not for the education of all adults of every age?” |
| Frederick Douglas “If there is no struggle, there is no progress.” |
| Gail Godwin “Good teaching is one-fourth preparation and three-fourths pure theatre.” |
| Gail Sheehy “If we don't change, we don't grow. If we don't grow, we aren't really living.” |
| George Santayana “Knowledge is not eating, and we cannot expect to devour and possess what we mean. Knowledge is recognition of something absent; it is a salutation, not an embrace.” |
| Gypsy Proverb "If people don't know much, do not laugh at them, for everyone of them knows something that you do not." |
| Harold Wilson “He who rejects change is the architect of decay. The only human institution which rejects progress is the cemetery.” |
| Harry S. Truman "It's what we learn after we know it all that counts" |
| Henry Ford “If money is your hope for independence you will never have it. The only real security that a man will have in this world is a reserve of knowledge, experience, and ability.” |
| Henry Ford - Automotive Pioneer “The only thing worse than training your employees and having them leave is not training them and having them stay.” |
| Herbert Spencer “The great aim of education is not knowledge but action.” |
| Herodotus “The only good is knowledge, and the only evil is ignorance.” |
| Ian Cunningham 1999 (Author of The wisdom of strategic learning) |



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| <p>"The concept of "strategic learning" is an all-encompassing strategic approach to learning. Strategic learning starts with strategic imperatives – the direction the organisation is taking, its purpose, its vision, its mission, its strategic goals"</p> |
| <p>Jack Welch "An organization's ability to learn and translate that learning into action is the ultimate competitive advantage".</p> |
| <p>Jack Welch, ex-CEO, GE "Companies will never have a truly sustainable advantage that's based on products or prices. You need to focus on the rate at which people learn. It's the learning speed of the slowest many, not the learning speed of the brightest few, that will set the pace for your company."</p> |
| <p>Japanese Proverb "Vision without action is a daydream. Action without vision is a nightmare."</p> |
| <p>Jay Cross, writing in CLO Magazine "Adapting to one's surroundings is still the goal of learning"</p> |
| <p>Jim Botkin and Stan Davis, The Monster Under the Bed "It's what we think we know already that keeps us from learning."</p> |
| <p>Johann Wolfgang von Goethe "Life belongs to the living, and he who lives must be prepared for changes. "</p> |
| <p>John Chambers, CEO, Cisco Systems "It's not e-learning or c-learning; it's learning"</p> |
| <p>John Chambers, CEO, Cisco Systems "The next big killer application on the internet is going to be education. Education over the internet is going to be so big it is going to make e-mail usage look like a rounding error."</p> |
| <p>John Denham, Skills Secretary (2008) "Investing in training is essential to any business but it is more important than ever in the current economic climate. We know that those businesses who invest in the skills of their staff do better than those who don't."</p> |
| <p>John Dewey "Education is a social process. Education is growth. Education is, not a preparation for life; education is life itself."</p> |
| <p>John Fitzgerald Kennedy RT "Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other"</p> |
| <p>John Wooden "If I am through learning, I am through."</p> |
| <p>Joseph Joubert "He who has imagination without learning, has wings and no feet."</p> |
| <p>Juliet Adams, Strategic Learning Specialist, Learning in a Recession, 2009 "Research suggests that organisations that strategically align their learning and development activities</p> |



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| fare better than competitors in a recession” |
| Kathy Morris (Hays) "Engage, Educate, Encourage, and Embed" |
| Leonardo Da Vinci “Knowing is not enough; we must apply. Being willing is not enough, we must do” |
| Lillian Smith "When you stop learning, stop listening, stop looking and asking questions, always new questions, then it is time to die." |
| Madame Chiang Kai-Shek "I am convinced that we must train not only the head, but the heart and hand as well." |
| Mahatma Gandhi “Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever |
| Mahatma Gandhi “Be the change you want to see” |
| Malcolm Forbes “Education's purpose is to replace an empty mind with an open one. “ |
| Malcolm Pickup, TNT “The Learning & Development function should be included in all strategic initiatives as a first thought rather than an after-thought” |
| Marianne Williamson "Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented and fabulous?" <small>(Note: this quotation is often attributed to Nelson Mandela's inaugural speech – but this is incorrect- it is a quote from Marianne Williamsons book).</small> |
| Maya Angelou “If you don't like something, change it. If you can't change it, change your attitude.” |
| Michael Yacobian , internationally renowned trainer "You have to stop worrying about all the training metrics of how many people you trained and what your completion rate is. Only training people care about those numbers. You wouldn't walk into the boardroom and have that discussion. They'd fall asleep or throw you out. The best thing you could do is to imagine the CEO and the senior staff - what do they talk about? They don't talk about training. They talk about sales. They talk about customer satisfaction. They talk about inventory. Those are the problems training people have to solve in order to move from the classroom to the boardroom." |
| Michelangelo in his 80s "Ancora Imparo (I am still learning)" |
| Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi “Through learning we grow, becoming more than we were before, and in that sense learning is unselfish, because it results in the transformation of what we were before, a setting aside of the old self in favor of a more complex one.” |



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| <p>Muhammad Ali "I hated every minute of training, but I said 'Don't quit. Suffer now & live the rest of you life as a champion.'"</p> |
| <p>Nelson Mandela "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."</p> |
| <p>Nick Shackleton-Jones (BBC) "The difference between learning and not learning is emotion"</p> |
| <p>Oscar Wilde "Experience is one thing you can't get for nothing."</p> |
| <p>Pablo Picasso "Action is the foundational key to all success."</p> |
| <p>Peter Caeldries (Fujitsu Siemens) "Be your own chief learning officer"</p> |
| <p>Peter Caeldries (Fujitsu Siemens) "People have to learn to make time to learn"</p> |
| <p>Peter Dricker "When a subject becomes totally obsolete we make it a required course."</p> |
| <p>Peter Drucker "What is the task? What do we try to accomplish? Why do it at all?" We dedicate our business to this mission - helping people to understand exactly What they need to achieve, How and Why."</p> |
| <p>Peter Drucker "If you think training is expensive, <i>try</i> ignorance "</p> |
| <p>Peter Senge, Fifth Discipline "We need to bring learning to people instead of people to learning."</p> |
| <p>R.D. Lang "We live in a moment of history where change is so speeded up that we begin to see the present only when it is already disappearing."</p> |
| <p>Ralph Marston "Excellence is not a skill. It is an attitude."</p> |
| <p>Ralph Waldo Emerson "what you do speaks so loud I can not hear what you say"</p> |
| <p>Reed Consultancy 2007 A survey of 6,000 workers by HR consultancy Reed Consulting found in nearly half their main reason for leaving was because they did not believe their organisation had provided them with sufficient opportunities for personal and career development.'</p> |
| <p>Richeek Kanjilal Roy "What's common between a good course and good coffee? Both should awaken your senses"</p> |



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| <p>Robert Quillen “Discussion is an exchange of knowledge; an argument an exchange of ignorance.”</p> |
| <p>Samuel Butler “A little knowledge is a dangerous thing, but a little want of knowledge is also a dangerous thing.”</p> |
| <p>Samuel Johnson “Knowledge always desires increase: it's like fire, which must first be kindled by some external agent, but which will afterwards propagate itself.”</p> |
| <p>Seymour Papert "X-Generations demand X-cellent training in an X-celerated speed."</p> |
| <p>Socrates “True knowledge exists in knowing that you know nothing.“</p> |
| <p>Sophocles “Success is dependent on effort.”</p> |
| <p>Stanislaw Lem “Do not trust people. They are capable of greatness.”</p> |
| <p>Sydney J Harris “The whole purpose of education is to turn mirrors into windows.”</p> |
| <p>Tom Peters "Divas do it, golfers do it, pilots do it, violists do it, sprinters do it, soldiers do it, surgeons do it, astronauts do it...only business people think it isn't necessary to train."</p> |
| <p>Unattributed "Tell them what you're going to tell them; Tell them; Tell them what you've told them".</p> |
| <p>Unattributed “CEO: What if I train my employees, and they resign? Trainer: What if you don't train your employees, and they stay?”</p> |
| <p>Unattributed "Training is not important, learning is....Learning is not important, performance is....Performance is not important, achievement is....Achievement is not important, happiness is....Happiness is not important, self-awareness is....Self-awareness is not important, continued learning is....Continued learning is not important, effective training is....."</p> |
| <p>Unattributed It's 'ok' to make mistakes, however don't make the same mistake twice, Make 'New Mistakes'</p> |
| <p>Unknown source “Amateurs practice until they get it right, professionals practice until they can't get it wrong.”</p> |
| <p>Unknown source When leaders enter training as an "act" it is generally meaningless. When they take it on as a practice...then excellence occurs.</p> |



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| <p>Victor Hugo “The learned man knows that he is ignorant.”</p> |
| <p>Victor Hugo “He who opens a school door, closes a prison.”</p> |
| <p>W Edwards Dering "Learning is not compulsory ... neither is survival."</p> |
| <p>Will Durant “Education is a progressive discovery of our own ignorance.”</p> |
| <p>Winston Churchill "I am always ready to learn, although I do not always like being taught."</p> |
| <p>Yogi Berra (Hall of Fame Major League Baseball player). “You can observe a lot just by looking around.”</p> |
| <p>Zig Ziglar “The only thing worse than training good employees and losing them, is not training your employees and keeping them “</p> |

