

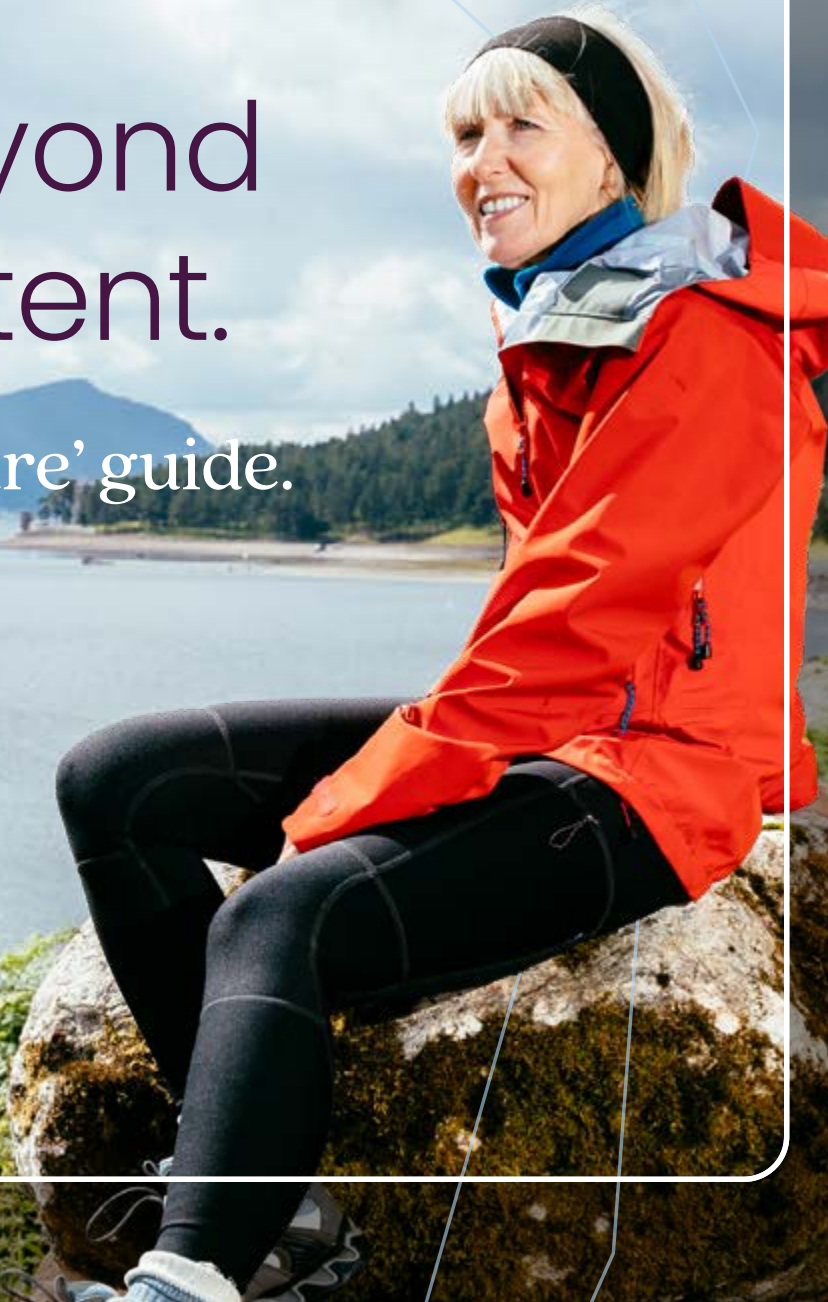
Journeying beyond elearning content.

A 'choose your own adventure' guide.

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Unforgettable learning



About the guide:

This guide is designed to inspire new thinking about what learning at your organisation could look like.

Learning content, while important, should always be thought of as a facilitator – not the be-all and end-all in a learning solution. By navigating through different pages, readers can make choices, uncover valuable insights, and discover tailored approaches to create impactful learning experiences.

Throughout the adventure, readers are encouraged to explore additional resources, including bespoke learning services, learning consultancy expertise, technical delivery support, and inspiring case studies. Coupled with the guidance provided throughout this interactive guide, these resources offer inspiration to enhance your learning initiatives.

About the author:



Nate Bannister.

Nate is a Learning Strategist at Sponge.

He specialises in learning strategy and solutions and consults with global businesses in tech, pharma, retail and manufacturing. During his tenure in the industry, Nate has designed a digital replacement for the world's most iconic onboarding experience and a learning campaign for the highest profile cybersecurity awareness programme.

Leading our team of learning innovators, *The Practice*, he works closely with our clients to ensure they receive learning initiatives that truly are unforgettable.

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Introduction.

Imagine you want to learn to use a map and a compass to trek independently across a local beauty spot.

How might you do it?

Here's how I might go about it...

First of all – and maybe this was implied – but I need to want to learn how to use a map and compass.

Next, I would probably engage with some 'content,' which could probably do a pretty good job of guiding me in buying the right equipment, and a base understanding about how to use them.

Then I'd get my boots on and get out there. I might think about a shorter, simpler trek to begin with, aided by a video or a guide of some description in case I forgot what I was doing.

I'd make mistakes on that first trek, and probably on subsequent treks. But if I stuck with it, eventually I probably wouldn't need the video or guide, and I could manage treks of increasing difficulty.

There are probably some variations on this approach. But I'd wager that most people do something similar:

1. A need to learn.
2. Some initial instruction and enablement.
3. Then a repeating cycle of practice, feedback and repetition.

I'd argue we follow a process like this for everything we learn.

Which is why it's baffling that we continue to see content – step 2 – as the beginning, middle and end of the learning journey, when it is arguably the least important step. When setting out to design a learning solution, it's easy to get bogged down thinking about what content do we need to create to deliver this learning effectively, whether we need to get subject matter experts on board to make sure the content is correct, if we have the right tech stack to create and host the **content, content, content, content, and more content.** However, the content we create is always there to facilitate learning – it should not, and cannot, be the answer at every step.

That's why, in this pocket guide, we'll explore how we can reframe the role of 'content' from the be all and end all, to the simplest and least important step on the journey.

Click through the pages to see the steps recommended by our experts and kick-start some ideas for your next learning design challenge.

→ Let's get started



Identifying a learning need.

To get started designing your learning, it's important to identify a specific learning need within your organisation.

Reflect on the challenges or gaps that you aim to address through learning, considering the areas where your employees may require additional knowledge, skills, or support to excel in their roles. By identifying these learning needs, you can tailor your learning experiences to effectively meet the unique requirements of your workforce.



*Let's make
some learning.*

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Will people be motivated to engage with it?

As you define the learning need, it's essential to consider whether your chosen topic will genuinely resonate with your employees.

Will it capture their interest and motivate them to actively engage with the learning experience?

This motivation is simple when we're talking about something we want to pick up and learn in our free time but may require more thought when we're trying to apply that to learning in the workplace.

Think about the relevance of the topic to their roles, the potential impact on their daily work, and their personal development goals.



Yes, the topic is interesting and obviously beneficial.

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Not immediately, they might need some motivation from us.

→ Go to next page



Motivating learners to engage.

If you believe that employees may need some additional motivation to fully engage with the learning, let's explore some helpful tips.

Consider techniques such as storytelling, gamification, real-world examples, or providing a clear understanding of how the learning will benefit them personally and professionally.

In moments where we need to create motivation, think about the fact that people usually do things because they want to:

- Make money.
- Increase their status.
- Gain safety.
- Save time.
- Connect with others.
- Explore their curiosity!

Which of these needs could you tap into?

Articulate clearly to your learners how the learning you're creating will help them and – provided that the learning need has been accurately identified – you should start to see an increase in motivation.

So, are they motivated now?

¹ These bullet points come from Egle Vinauskaite, Learning Strategist, Digital Education, EdTech and L&D, Harvard M.Ed – [\(3\) Post | LinkedIn](#)

Yes, they're excited to get stuck in.

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No, there's still issue with motivation.

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Still lacking motivation – revisit the learning need and look at ways to get learners on board.

Perhaps the learning need isn't quite as pressing as you initially thought, or maybe there are other blockers getting in the way of your learner's desire to engage.

Our **Learning Consultancy** experts can help you design engaging learning experiences tailored to your organisation's needs. Download our guide on **avoiding corporate cringe** for additional tips and inspiration.



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What kind of problem are you trying to solve?

Now that motivation is on track, let's determine the type of problem you're trying to solve.

Is it related to a people skill, such as giving feedback, or a system or procedural issue, like learning a new software?



A people skill.

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A system or procedural problem.

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What's your first step?

When it comes to people skills, there are various approaches to consider.

Let's determine the best first step to take.

Put everything we know about it into an elearning module.

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Design a concise guide to the topic.

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You've fallen into the content trap!

Everything we know about how learning happens suggests that people build knowledge and skills in incremental blocks stacked on top of other blocks that we already have locked down.

Prioritise building those blocks in a sensible, scaffolded way. While e-learning modules are valuable, they shouldn't be your sole focus. We should be cognisant of the fact that if the task we're asking someone to practise is not digital, then digital content is a poor emulator for practice. Sure, we can build a branching video scenario that asks people to navigate through a feedback-giving scenario. But it will be a relatively poor substitute for meaningful, real practice.

When you prompt someone to think about how they got to where they are, or how they learned a skill, you will seldom hear about digital learning content. You will likely hear about practice, about mistakes, and about experiences. So, let's design more of that!

Our **Learning Consultancy experts** can provide guidance on creating effective and engaging learning experiences tailored to your organisation's specific needs. Alternatively, **explore our blog** covering our experts' top tips for creating engaging elearning to get some more inspiration.

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You've introduced learners to the topic – what's next?

Fantastic! You've introduced learners to the topic.

It's vital not to throw people into the deep end with no initial guidance, especially when trying to convey best practice around complex skills.

Now, let's explore the next steps to reinforce their learning and ensure practical application.



Design a text-based branching scenario.

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Design an interactive video scenario.

→ Go to next page

Encourage role play with a colleague, or trying some simple feedback with a close peer.

→ Go to next page



You design a text-based branching scenario.

Designing a text-based branching scenario might not be the best approach.

Text-based branching scenarios (like the one you're in right now!) are great for sparking some initial thoughts about a topic. However, when it comes to learning and embedded complex skills, something which more accurately reflects the real world would be more effective.

If you want to explore how Sponge can help create learning for complex skills, use the links below. Our **bespoke learning solutions** can help you create tailored experiences that resonate with your learners. For a personal touch, check out how our **learning consultancy experts** at The Practice are ready to assist you in developing impactful learning experience. Explore our **upskilling page** for additional resources and information on our online learning libraries. Or look at our **case studies** to see what's worked for our partner organisations across the globe.

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You design an interactive video scenario.

A reasonable suggestion. Designing an interactive video scenario can be a powerful way to engage learners.

However, purely digital solutions rarely afford the best quality learning when teaching someone skills that impact their relationships with other people.

Explore how our **bespoke learning solutions** offer a range of options to create immersive and interactive experiences. Or check out our **learning consultancy** page to see how our experts can provide guidance on creating effective and engaging learning solutions tailored to your organisation's specific needs. Looking for inspiration? Read our **case studies** to see how we've worked with some of the biggest organisations on the planet.



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Great! You've created a blended learning solution that asks learners to apply their skills practically.

Encouraging role play with a colleague or trying simple feedback with a close peer can be highly effective in reinforcing learning.

This hands-on practice allows them to gain confidence, refine their abilities, and identify areas for improvement.

By incorporating role play and peer feedback into your learning initiatives, you create dynamic and engaging experiences that go beyond traditional training methods. These interactive activities allow employees to apply their knowledge in a practical context, build their skills, and strengthen their overall competence.

Our **Bespoke Learning solutions** can help you design blended learning experiences that incorporate role play and practical application. Alternatively, explore our **Blended Learning Design** resources and **case studies** for further inspiration.



Well done!

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What's your first step?

When addressing a system or procedural problem, let's determine the most suitable first step.

Put everything we know about it into an elearning module.

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Record a quick system demo.

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Great! What's next?

By designing a short system demo video, you can enhance the learning experience, improve knowledge retention, and accelerate learners' ability to confidently navigate and utilise the system or procedure effectively.

Design a system simulation or build a sandbox so they can practice.

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Design a quiz to test people on what specific buttons do.

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Nice one! You've created an interactive solution that reinforces useful skills.

Designing a system simulation or building a sandbox environment ensures hands-on practice and real-world application.

It's critical that practice feels meaningful and has some verisimilitude with the task or being trained for and creating a safe environment for learners to experience and play hits that perfectly.

Our **Bespoke Learning solutions** offer technical expertise and guidance to help you deliver effective learning experiences. Discover our **Technical Delivery services** and inspiring **case studies** for more information.

Well done!

→ Go to next page



You design a tick-box quiz, leaving learners uninterested and without practice.

Designing a quiz to test people on specific buttons might not be the most effective approach for solving your system or procedural problem.

While quizzes can be valuable for assessing knowledge retention, they may not address the practical application and understanding of the system or procedure.

By providing learners with opportunities to apply their knowledge in relevant contexts and make informed decisions, you can foster a deeper understanding of the system or procedure. This approach promotes critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and confidence in using the system effectively in real-world scenarios.

Our **Learning Consultancy** experts and **Bespoke Learning solutions** can provide guidance on more impactful approaches. Explore our **case studies** for inspiration.



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Congratulations!

You've started to design a comprehensive learning programme.

This guide highlights the beginning of designing a learning programme.

Now, we can start to consider the next steps that will help you to embed the learning you've created into your organisation, really engage learners, and what further modules might be of benefit.

To get the ball rolling on these next steps, **get in touch** and speak to our team of learning experts today.



*Speak to our team
of learning
experts today.*

[Get in touch](#)

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