

70-20-10 Model for Learning and Development

What is 70-20-10?

The Center for Creative Leadership identified the 70-20-10 Model for Learning and Development in the 1980s. 70-20-10 refers to the idea of improving learning by extending traditional training into the workplace. It captures a reality of workplace learning that has been often ignored. Learning professionals have traditionally focused mainly on formal training events. In this paradigm, formal learning events only make up the 10%.

At General Dynamics IT we choose to take a holistic approach in our recommendations, and look outside the traditional training paradigm. For example, in most workplaces informal coaching, mentoring and social networks play a big part in transferring knowledge to workers. If you start a new job and need to learn how to use the phone system, for example, you might ask someone sitting near you to show you how to dial an outside number and place a call on hold. This is recognized as the 20% (developmental relationships) in the 70-20-10 model. We can now plan, design, and account for this segment of the learning landscape.

Finally, the model estimates that 70% of what is needed to learn to do a job includes workplace learning and performance support. Back to our example around learning a new phone system, faced with this challenge it would be common for there to be a small card attached to the phone that summarizes key functionality (performance support) as well as a small manual with complete instructions related to the phone system.

We don't think of 70-20-10 as an exact ratio. It varies from industry to industry, organization to organization, and situation to situation.

Why 70-20-10?

In today's work environment content is fluid and cannot always be captured for a classroom session or via development of a web-based course. Today, more than ever, workers have the means (and expectation) to reach out around the globe for the information they need at the time they need it. Our learning solutions aim to facilitate those connections.

To summarize, our learning solutions:

- Emphasize what a learner can do rather than what they know;
- Recognize the increase (in volume and complexity) of information for which learners are responsible;
- Scale for a variety of budget and schedule needs (face-to-face classroom training often doesn't scale well)
- Plan for the fact that information is dynamic and changes rapidly;
- Account for the fact that learners may prefer not to leave their working environment for training as well as may learn better in their actual workspace;
- Count on the fact that very often there is a need to manage and find information, not memorize it; and
- Utilize technology in a variety of ways to offer more options for learning.

What does this mean for our learning solutions?

As instructional designers we are shifting our focus on the design, development and delivery of static information embedded within courses to a broader vision which includes approaches that work in this dynamic, information-rich world. This means moving our solutions to blending learning that combines classroom training, virtual instructor led training, self-paced eLearning, and performance support elements that include on demand audio and video, curated performance support portals, and so on. It is an acknowledgment of the power and scope of informal learning, which has always been an important part of workplace learning, but hasn't received much attention.



In summary, some blended learning solutions are still part of the 10% coursework and formal training when they are designed to achieve specific learning objectives. However, we recognize that learning often takes place with on-the-job practice and via informal means. Rather than ignoring this fact, we recommend recognizing, planning for, and even measuring these types of activities given how key they are to business learning.

What kinds of activities might be included in a 70-20-10 blended design?

70% Learn & Develop Through Experience (Informal)

- On-the-job application activities
- Small group work
- Stretch assignments
- Meetings and presentations with senior management
- Day-to-day research, web browsing
- On demand eLearning and video vignettes
- Research and apply best practice
- Apply standards and processes, e.g. Six Sigma
- Work with consultants or internal experts
- Interviewing experts
- Performance support via mobile device (smart phones, tablets)

20% Learn & Develop Through Other People (Informal)

- Informal feedback and work debriefs
- Observation activities that include rich feedback from peer, supervisor or expert
- Seeking advice, asking opinions, sounding out ideas
- Coaching from manager/others
- 360 feedback
- Assessments with feedback
- Structured mentoring and coaching
- Learning through internal teams/networks (virtual or in person)
- Social networking via Twitter, blogs, wikis
- External networks/contacts
- Professional/Industry association involvement or active membership
- Facilitated group discussion including using web-conferencing
- MOOCs

10% Learn & Develop Through Structured Courses (Formal)

- Courses, workshops, seminars (In person and virtual)
- Self-paced eLearning
- Professional qualifications/ accreditation
- Certification
- Formal education, e.g. college or university
- Web-conferencing makes more frequent, shorter sessions an option

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