PDP Communiqué

# Training in Our Digital Age

Eugene J. Monaco, Executive Director and Public Service Professor
Professional Development Program

Those of us in the fast-paced global work environment of our digital age have different needs and expectations for training than those before the mobile-learning and social-media oriented workplace. In our current digital workplace, we are presented with a constant stream of data, which necessitates our having instant access in order to transform the data into information that produces results.

In response, training professionals at PDP have dramatically changed methods for delivering training to be more quickly and easily accessible. As a result, we are challenged to reshape the design and development of our curricula to adapt to the newer, faster digital delivery. One major challenge is incorporating and adapting sound adult learning theory—theory that has not changed fundamentally from what it was before the digital age—into the current methodology. Learners still need to experience the stages of adult learning: readiness, orientation, and motivation to learn.

Meeting this challenge has moved us towards digital delivery that emphasizes microlearning. Applying microlearning has had an immense impact on the way in which we conduct our training. Effective microlearning builds continuous experiences that enable employees to learn principles and content, practice, and apply the material successfully in the work context. Microlearning "chunks" material into small units that are accessed and engaged in on the learners' own time and at their own pace. At PDP we have found microlearning design to be extremely effective when the training need is to provide consistent information to large populations across many locations. Furthermore, when delivered digitally, it reaches those populations quickly and efficiently. In addition, it is highly scalable and easily updated.

Our ability to move away from classroom, instructor-led training has increased measurably as technology has become more widespread and easier to use since the beginning of the 21st century. This direction is likely to continue as evidenced by the trends seen over the last decade. The Association of Talent Development's (ATD) 2017 State of the Industry Report noted that 45% of learning hours in 2016 were technology-based. This is an increase from 10% reported a decade ago.

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A Newsletter from the
Professional Development Program, Rockefeller College

UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY
State University of New York

ED KIRCHGESSNER

Technology-based training takes many forms. Whether self-paced, instructor-led, or in a blended learning environment, a sound basis in adult learning theory is still a must to enhance learning, learner engagement, and motivation.

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# Training Showcase

**The following articles highlight training programs PDP has designed to reach large, diverse audiences. Using technology as a means to effectively deliver training, target audiences can number from hundreds to hundreds-of-thousands. Implementing adaptable online training is important for timely delivery of content and specific information. However, at times classroom training is a more appropriate mode to deliver training to large audiences when human interaction is important to support the content. Regardless of the mode of delivery, PDP remains committed to designing its trainings based on the principles of adult learning theory accompanied by sound instructional design.**

## PDP's Early Childhood Education and Training Program

Colleen Faragon, Manager
Darina Mayfield, Senior Education Specialist

PDP's Early Childhood Education and Training Program has a number of online options for a diverse audience that includes childcare providers looking for training opportunities to assist them in meeting their training requirements for state issued licenses and registrations. By using webcast and e-learning technology, PDP was able to reach over 335,000 childcare providers and other early childhood education professionals in 2017.

Training opportunities include three webcasts per year, which broadcast to approximately 70 sites and 2,000 childcare providers. These webcasts focus on timely topics that are important for child care professionals.

In addition, there are 22 e-learning courses available on specific topics shown to be a consistent need. These courses are either self-paced or instructor led, and include:

- *Foundations in Health and Safety* (available in English, Spanish, and Chinese)
- *Infant Brain Development*
- *Supervision of Children*
- *Managing Challenging Behavior*
- *Infant Feeding Practices*

For more information about these e-learning courses, please visit https://www.ecetp.pdp.albany.edu/elearn_catalog.shtm

## Instituting e-Learning in Kenyan Government

Erica Hunter, PhD., Senior Education Specialist
Nathan Allen, Senior Programmer/Analyst

The Professional Development Program (PDP) partnered with the SUNY Center for International Development (SUNY/CID) to assist the Kenya School of Government (KSG) to jump-start their e-learning initiatives. KSG's goal is to convert its existing *Ethics* curriculum from a classroom model into web-based modules. KSG wants to use an online model to reduce costs and increase flexibility in providing ethics training to 150,000 employees in non-managerial positions throughout Kenya. PDP's Eugene Monaco, Nathan Allen, and Erica Hunter traveled to Nairobi, Kenya in September 2017 to assist the KSG team with this task.

The visit consisted of two parts—a needs assessment and a set of recommendations. The team spoke with managers and potential students in two counties, Embu and Kakamega. PDP explored their interests and concerns to determine the gaps between their current conditions and their online training goals. The PDP team suggested strategies to help KSG organize the content into daily segments and develop new, interactive content to support the existing material. On the technological side, PDP recommended using KSG's existing learning management platform, Moodle, to host the training materials. Moodle's features allow the team to deliver simple and flexible online courses with options for mobile and offline viewing.

PDP will continue to work with the KSG team in a supportive role as the *Ethics* course is developed and launched. PDP also hopes to discuss next steps with the team, including the development of additional trainings to help support and improve the skills of public employees in Kenya.

*Dr. Erica Hunter (4th from left) and Nathan Allen (far right) with the KSG Team*



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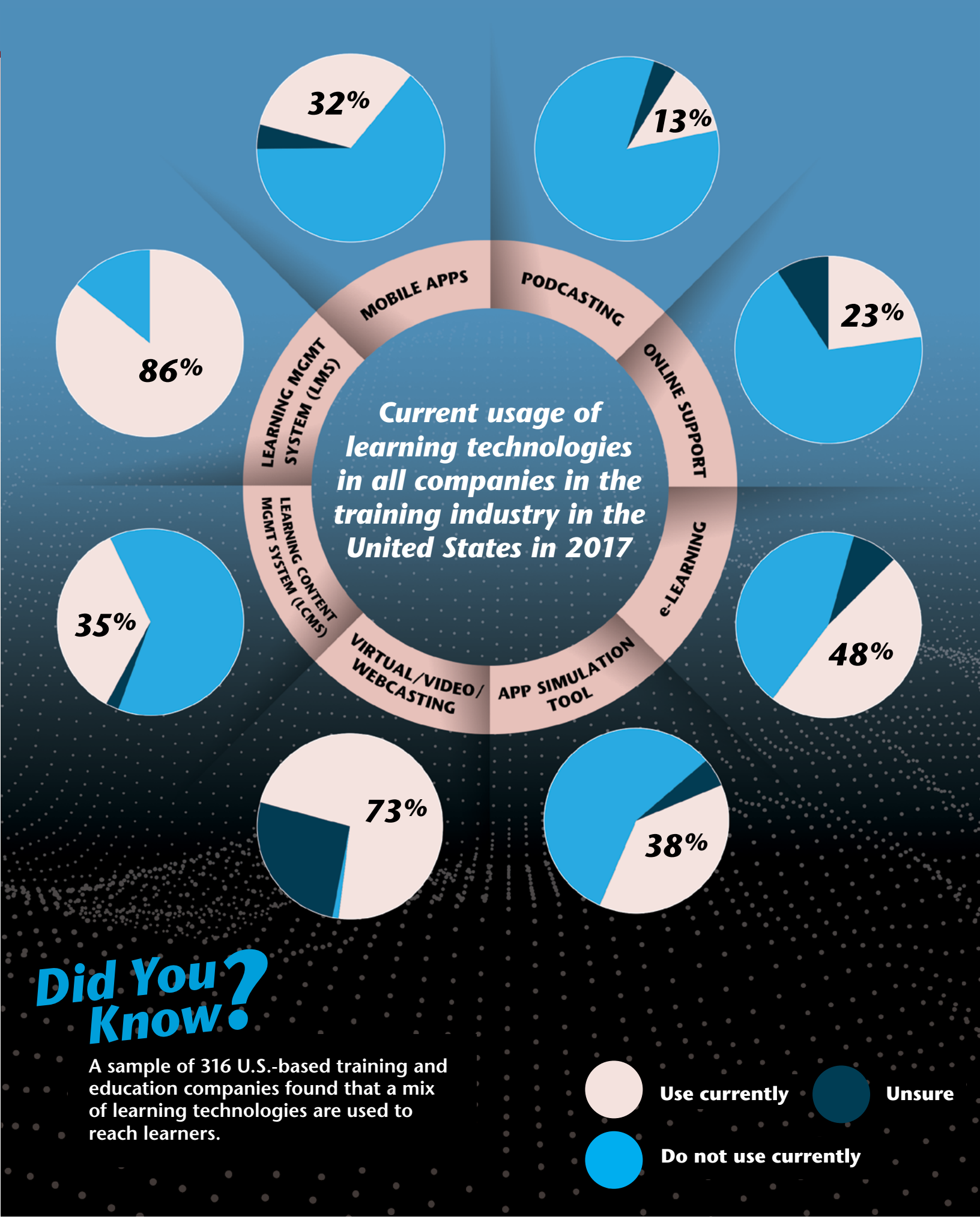


## Did You Know?

A sample of 316 U.S.-based training and education companies found that a mix of learning technologies are used to reach learners.

Training Magazine. "Learning Technologies Current Usage in All Companies in The Training Industry in The United States in 2017." Statista—The Statistics Portal, Statista, www.statista.com/statistics/796024/learning-technologies-current-usage-in-all-companies-in-the-training-industry-us/

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# PDP Develops Online NYS Ethics Training

### Jim Bonville, Manager

NYS Governor's Office of Employee Relations (GOER), on behalf of the New York State Joint Commission on Public Ethics (JCOPE) and the Governor's Office, asked PDP to develop an online ethics training that would ultimately become mandatory training for potentially hundreds of thousands of NYS employees.

The training objective is to inform employees of the NYS ethics rules established by Public Officers Law § 73 and § 74 and their obligation to abide by those rules. By launching the course online in the Statewide Learning Management System (SLMS), employees can access and complete the course as their schedules permit. This delivery format ensures that all employees receive consistent information and training, which is important when providing training based on NYS law.

The instructional design team worked with JCOPE to develop engaging scenarios that apply the different sections of the law to real-life public workforce examples. Scenario-based training allows learners to see the relatively complex legal standards applied to everyday workplace situations. Realistic and relatable scenarios reinforce learners' understanding of the content.

*Ethics for New York State Employees* was successfully launched with other annual mandated online training in January 2018.

# Poverty and Trauma Training

### Paige Pappianne, Senior Education Specialist

At the start of 2017, PDP began work to develop training for OTDA program developers and implementers on the effect of poverty and trauma on public assistance clients. Throughout the year, PDP project staff worked diligently to design, develop, and implement a new one-day classroom training titled *Program Development and Implementation Considerations for People Affected by Poverty and Trauma.*

Through the curriculum design process, PDP considered the significant increase in evidence-based research on how the chronic stress of living in poverty alters brain development, especially in children. Research by the Mayo Clinic and the Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University revealed that chronic stress causes excess production of the fight-or-flight hormone cortisol. This alters how the brain develops executive functions, or the skills responsible for critical

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# News & Views

## PDP Staff Retire

ED KIRCHGESSNER

*Pamela Potter-Reger*

**Pamela Potter-Reger** retired on December 29, 2017, after 15 years with PDP. Pam joined PDP as the Department of Child Welfare Training Manager in 2002. During her tenure, she assisted PDP in securing numerous contracts, including Coordinated Children's Services Initiative and Getting to Outcomes with OCFS, and was instrumental in PDP being awarded contracts with NYS Higher Education Scholarship Corporation, the NYS Department of Health AIDS Institute, and Bureau of Tobacco Control. She creatively juggled available resources and had excellent rapport with staff and sponsors. PDP thanks Pam for her dedicated service, hard work, and many contributions to furthering PDP's mission. ***PDP***

ED KIRCHGESSNER

*Susan Mullen Kalafut*

**Susan Mullen Kalafut** retired on January 5, 2018, after more than 24 years with PDP. Susan joined PDP in 1990 and in her tenure she held many roles, including a field-based position working on the State's Central Register Redesign Project, an Education Specialist in the Department of Temporary Assistance Training, a Principal Education Specialist working on the initial rollout of CONNECTIONS, and as manager of the Department of Computer Training Services. Known for her dedicated professionalism, extremely sharp wit, and can-do attitude, Susan made an impact on those she worked with by always going the extra mile to get the job done right. PDP thanks Susan for her dedicated service and her support in helping PDP grow into a leader in continuing professional education. ***PDP***

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thinking, memory, and decision-making. This can result in individuals having a difficult time navigating the complicated processes of public assistance programs.

The training includes information on poverty in New York State (NYS), the latest neurological research, the Social Empathy Model policy framework, and best practices from the field. A unique design component of this training is the use of vignettes to give a face to individuals living in poverty in NYS.

Additionally, a number of SUNY professors reviewed the curriculum and sent feedback to PDP. Dr. Edmund C. Stazyk, Associate Professor and CORD Fellow, Department of Public Administration & Policy, Rockefeller College, University at Albany, sent the following assessment of the course.:

*"The curriculum is thorough and very well done. The structure of the course makes sense to me (e.g., it proceeds in a logical and internally consistent fashion). Additionally, the content appears to convey highly technical information in a way that should be easily accessible to most audiences without sacrificing important ideas."*

# Microsoft Office Training

### Donna DiBuono, Senior Education Specialist

When state agencies, county offices, and New York City's Administration for Children's Services (ACS) required training in Microsoft Office 2013 and 2015, the Department of Computer Training Services (DCTS) developed 10 courses (both classroom and online) that highlighted the key changes between older versions of Microsoft Office and the newer versions. In order to have all 10 trainings available within a short timeframe, DCTS staff:

- Prototyped the 10 new courses.
- Developed comprehensive, step-by-step curricula, training materials, and course evaluations.
- Introduced the new courses to state training coordinators and district staff development coordinators.
- Registered trainees.
- Upgraded software at training labs around the state, including several mobile training labs.
- Printed and distributed training materials for instructors and participants.

As a result of this comprehensive training plan, including a series of classroom, virtual classroom, and self-paced computer-based courses, DCTS was able to successfully deliver Microsoft Office training to over 300 staff in less than two months. This provided state, county, and ACS employees access to the training as soon as they received the new software. ***PDP***


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## *PDP* Presents

The mission of the Professional Development Program is to make a difference in a changing world by linking the learning, applied research, and evaluation resources of the University with the continuing professional education needs of public service employees. One of the ways this is accomplished is through contributions to conferences for professional associations. In the past year, PDP staff presented at numerous conferences, helping link practice to industry knowledge.

- On September 20, 2017, **Carrie Gauthier,** PDP Senior Trainer, along with Adrienne Ostrove from NYS Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS), presented "The Trauma-Poverty Trap: How Attachment, Self-Regulation, and Competency Drive the Cycle of Poverty" at the NYS OCFS Healthy Families Training Institute held in Albany, NY.
- On November 8, 2017, **Susan Gieryic,** PDP Senior Research Scientist, presented "Applying a Logic Model Framework to Guide the Evaluation of your Continuing Education and Training Programs" at the 2017 Continuing Education Association of New York (CEANY) annual conference held in Syracuse, NY.
- On January 25, 2018, **Jeffrey Isaacson,** PDP Senior Education Specialist, presented "Using ASSETS to Increase Performance" at the New York Public Welfare Association's 149th Annual Winter Conference. ***PDP***

## *PDP Communiqué* Wins Award

The Awards for Publication Excellence (APEX) recognize excellence in publishing by professional communicators. APEXs are based on excellence in graphic design, editorial content, and the ability to achieve overall communications excellence. PDP is pleased to share that the *Communiqué* was a recipient of the Print Newsletter Award of Excellence in 2017. ***PDP***

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## Training in Our Digital Age

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ED KIRCHGESSNER

*Eugene Monaco*

We, as training professionals, continue to believe strongly that technology-based training will not entirely replace instructor-led training; instructor-led is still relevant and required in specific areas. Human interaction will remain a component of workplace training in the foreseeable future. We see technological solutions becoming more integrated into the instructor-led classroom experience to enhance learning, learner engagement, and motivation. To this end, we continue our close scrutiny of the benefits that training technologies offer and the ways in which they supplement classroom learning through our solid evaluation practices. We have learned that leveraging the advantages of technology strengthens the classroom learning experience. The growth in our blended learning approaches demonstrates the value that incorporating digital technologies produces. More than one method has proven to be advantageous, particularly when classroom is blended with sound digital experiences.

As our interactive digital learning delivery options have grown, our urge for greater optimization of learning experiences mounts, and our drive for more efficient training solutions increases, our professional training designers and instructional developers will continue the commitment to retaining sound adult learning practices. In addition, we'll remain committed to sound evaluation measures that effectively calibrate learning impact and ensure effecting organizational performance. Regardless of delivery method or instructional design—instructor-led, blended, computer-based or totally digital—we will retain the fundamental principles of adult learning theory in our curriculum design and our evaluation of learning outcomes to ensure that we achieve the desired results for both our contractors and our learners. In this issue of the PDP *Communiqué,* our trainers and instructional designers share some of the ways in which we have used various training delivery approaches to achieve our goals. ***PDP***