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What is the Impact of Blended Learning Including Micro-Learning on Manager Learning and Behavior Change vs. Impact of Classroom Learning?

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What is the Impact of Blended Learning Including Micro-Learning on Manager Learning and Behavior Change vs. Impact of Classroom Learning?

Abstract

Today's learning trends show that with more information and technology available, a globalized workforce, and a changing way we learn, corporate learning particularly manager training needs to meet the following criteria:

1. Knowledge should be on demand
2. Information needs to be tailored to individual's specific needs
3. Learning should be embedded into business processes
4. Employees should be able to collaborate to boost learning
5. There needs to be confidence in the reliability and quality of the information being used.

To meet these needs, successful leadership programs should have a balanced approach. Blended Learning programs include formal training, whether that's classroom, virtual, or micro-learning, along with informal training through on-the-job experience. A synergistic cycle between formal and informal will generate more learning as new concepts are tested in real situations. Consider several approaches for more effective blended learning

Comments

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

RESEARCH QUESTION

What is the impact of blended learning including micro-learning on manager learning and behavior change vs. impact of classroom learning?

INTRODUCTION

Today's learning trends show that with more information and technology available, a globalized workforce, and a changing way we learn, corporate learning particularly manager training needs to meet the following criteria:

1) Knowledge should be on demand
2) Information needs to be tailored to individual's specific needs
3) Learning should be embedded into business processes
4) Employees should be able to collaborate to boost learning
5) There needs to be confidence in the reliability and quality of the information being used.[1]

To meet these needs, successful leadership programs should have a balanced approach. **Blended Learning** programs include formal training, whether that's classroom, virtual, or micro-learning, along with informal training through on-the-job experience. A synergistic cycle between formal and informal will generate more learning as new concepts are tested in real situations.[2] Consider several approaches for more effective blended learning.

BLENDED LEARNING APPROACHES

Classroom Learning – The typical classroom setting allows for face-to-face interaction between managers and professional trainers. This makes use of phenomenal training expertise to hone managers' skillsets. However, the process is time-consuming and can be quite costly considering the necessary preparation and execution. In addition, participant retention of information in this environment is quite low, thus calling in to question the effectiveness of traditional classroom training alone.[3] A modification on this setting is the virtual classroom, which keeps the value of formal training but allows for greater reach as learners don't have to be in the same physical space and can access the training more conveniently.[4]

Informal Learning – Many employers use the classic 70/20/10 model[5] with 70% of learning coming on the job, 20% from mentors, and 10% on formal training. The on-the-job focus is so effective that companies have integrated this idea into their overall learning approach. The Open University of Shell International Exploration and Production (Shell EP), sought to enhance their learning effectiveness with a focus on experiential activities. This approach proved valuable as Shell EP added depth and breadth to their blended learning programs.[6]

Micro-Learning – Otherwise considered the future of training in the workplace, micro-learning can put power into the hands of the manager or employee to take charge of his or her own

learning. This creates smaller, digestible content that is within the average attention span of adults[7] and is often delivered in video format. The optimal length for videos depends on the content, but audiences typically disengage after only a few minutes[8] (see Appendix A) and may not complete more than six minutes[9] of the video no matter how long it is[10] (see Appendix B and C). Gamification of micro-learning, has evolved the standard video training into a more interactive approach with friendly competition, a spirit of achievement, and a bias towards action.[11]

When developing micro-learning video content, consider three keys from the Association for Talent Development:
   1. Keep it Short – between three and five minutes
   2. Keep it Visual – favor pictures and infographics over talking heads
   3. Aim for High Technical Standards – poor production distracts from true intent.[12]

CREATING A LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The most successful training organizations operate as if their businesses are changing all the time, even if they are not.[13] To avoid getting stuck in one approach to training, create a learning environment. One way to do this is by incorporating all types of informal learning into everyday processes. This can mean including collaborative, social learning activities; self-study or on-demand learning experiences; and embedded learning, where employees have job aids to refer to while they accomplish their work.[13]

Educational experts often refer to this concept with the FLIP acronym that can be easily translated to the work setting through blended learning:
   • Flexible learning environments – offering multiple options for learners
   • Learning culture – normalizing learning among employees
   • Intentional content – quality, prepared videos and other training sessions
   • Professional educators – external consultants or internal experts.[14]

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The modern learner is overwhelmed, distracted, and impatient[7] (see Appendix D). With so many ways learning managers can spend their time, your company should create a blended approach to learning, as blended learning is better than other modalities done on their own.[15] Start by partnering with IT to create high quality and valuable micro-learning content. Divide your learning segments into 15 minute videos at most, with most of your content coming in around six minutes.[9] As you create opportunities for managers to learn, incorporate lessons learned from their trainings into their day to day activities, focusing on experiential activities that they will actually see in the course of their work. Formal classroom training as this can serve as added incentive for leadership development.

Finally, for these type of blended learning approaches to be successful, foster a learning culture in your organization. To do so, empower employees to take charge of their own development. As they do, they can support the shift in focus away from rigid trainings to the everyday learning culture.[1] When your content is prominent for employees to use and modeled by top leaders, the rest of the organization will fall in with the new learning culture.

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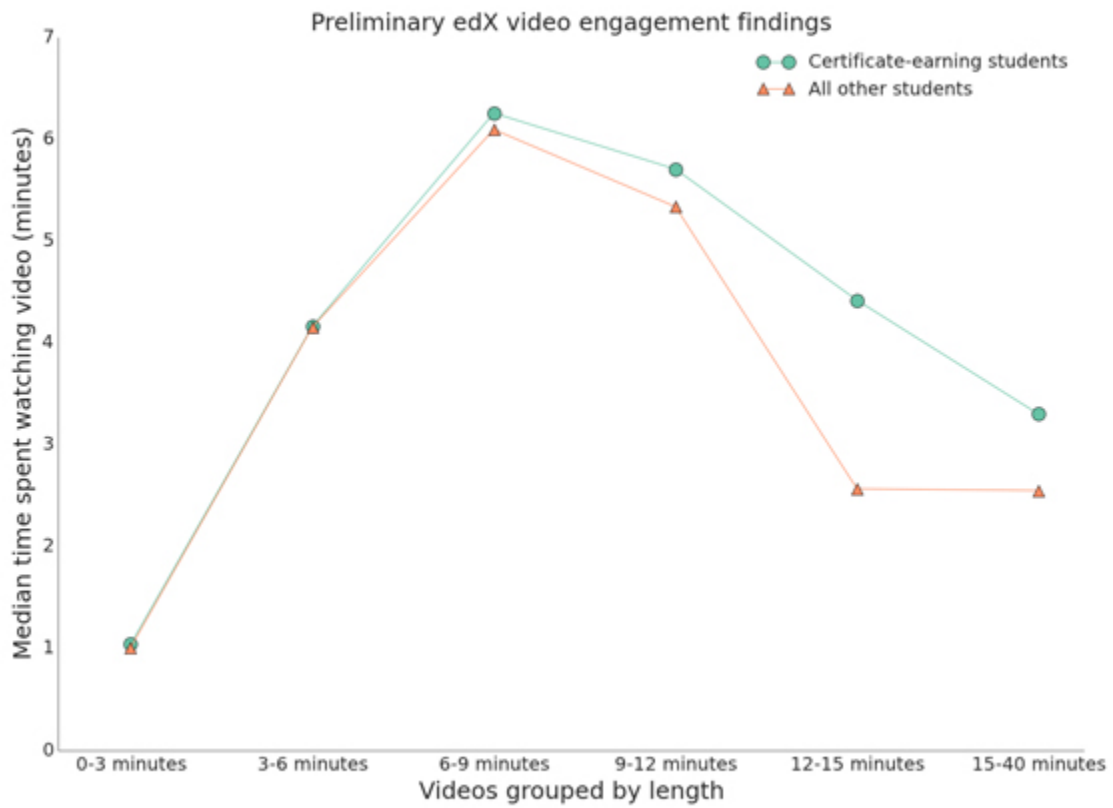
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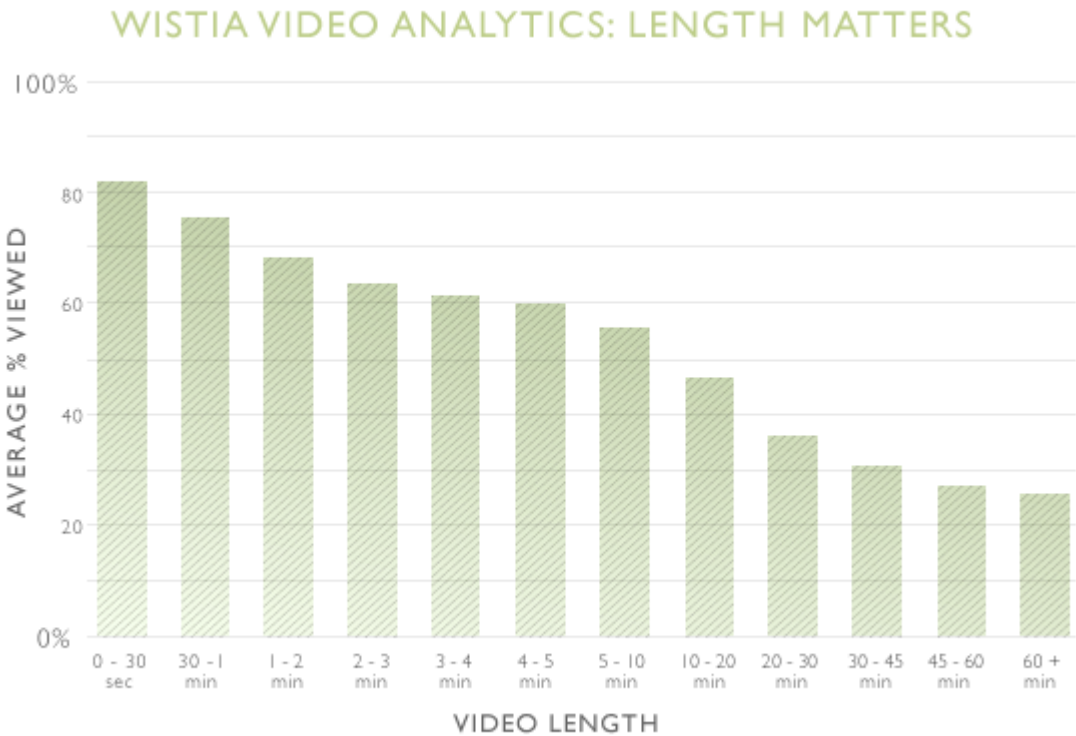
APPENDIX A: Audience Engagement by Video Length[8]

WISTIA VIDEO ANALYTICS: LENGTH MATTERS
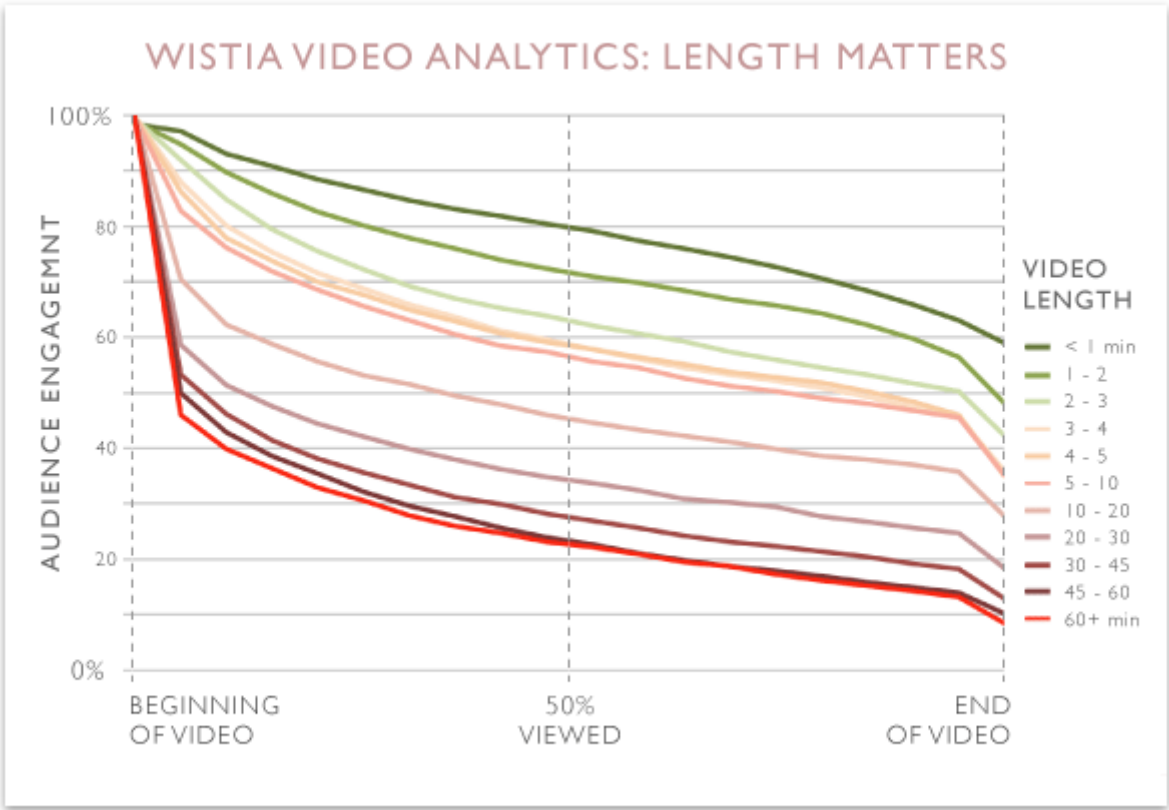
APPENDIX B: Time Spent Watching Videos by Length[9]

Preliminary edX video engagement findings

Analysis by Philip Guo (pg@cs.rochester.edu)

APPENDIX C: Percentage of Video Viewed by Length[10]

WISTIA VIDEO ANALYTICS: LENGTH MATTERS

APPENDIX D: The Modern Learner Infographic[7]