



THE POWER OF SMALL THINGS & BABY STEPS:

7 REASONS BITE-SIZE LEARNING WORKS TODAY!



OPENING BITES

We share this planet with 7.6 Billion people, and 51 percent of the them have access to the internet¹—a cornucopia of information unlike the world has ever known. Add to this fact the breathtaking pace of technological advancements and a growing “just-in-time,” or “I want it now,” mentality, and you can see why our attention spans are getting shorter and shorter.

In fact, the average person’s attention span has declined to less than 10 minutes, according to a 2017 microlearning study from the Association for Talent Development.² Given the choice, learners will pick podcasts over books, do-it-yourself YouTube tutorials over lecture, and just-in-time mobile reinforcement over days-long training.

Even though technology and the internet have played significant roles in the perpetuation—and accessibility—of learning opportunities, our quest for knowledge is nothing new. It’s been central to the human condition since the first man walked the earth. And based on what we know about brain science he has always wanted knowledge served up in small chunks, with time in between servings to absorb and apply it.

Microlearning, or bite-size learning, speaks to what science has long known about the brain’s inner workings, and helps learners focus—despite their diminishing attention spans—by providing information in a manner aligned with their brain’s wiring.

But what has this got to do with the Learning and Development (L&D) space? And what can those in L&D be doing differently because of what we know about microlearning? These are some of the questions I hope to evoke in this eBook.

1. OUR BRAINS ARE WIRED FOR IT



Almost ten years ago author Nicolas Carr reflected on how he felt Google was making us stupid:

“Over the past few years I’ve had an uncomfortable sense that someone, or something, has been tinkering with my brain, remapping the neural circuitry, reprogramming the memory. My mind isn’t going—so far as I can tell—but it’s changing. I’m not thinking the way I used to think. I can feel it most strongly when I’m reading. Immersing myself in a book or a lengthy article used to be easy. My mind would get caught up in the narrative or the turns of the argument, and I’d spend hours strolling through long stretches of prose. That’s rarely the case anymore. Now my concentration often starts to drift after two or three pages. I get fidgety, lose the thread, and begin looking for something else to do. I feel as if I’m always dragging my wayward brain back to the text. The deep reading that used to come naturally has become a struggle.”⁶

I don’t know about you, but this is absolutely true for me today. Have you ever wondered why your mind starts to wander, even when you are committed to learning something new? Or why no matter how much you try, sometimes you just can’t focus anymore? The good news is you’re not alone, it just happens to be how our brains are wired.

3. THE INTERNET ENABLES IT

We are all familiar with how the internet has permeated our lives and given anyone with a network connection access to a world of possibilities and information. But what makes this fact even more amazing is that 90 percent of all the data on the internet today has only been created since 2016.¹⁵ In other words, we **have a front row seat to this Digital Revolution** that is just beginning its world takeover. So, while I will not beat the internet-is-so-big-and-awesome drum anymore, I will share how it enables bite-size learning.

Josh Bersin, in his paper “**The Disruption of Digital Learning**,” put the connected world and bite-size learning into context: “Consider how quickly corporate learning has evolved. In only one generation we have gone from traditional corporate universities to e-learning, blended learning, talent-driven learning, and then continuous learning. Tools like Google, YouTube, Workplace by Facebook, Slack, and others have totally changed the learning landscape, so our job now is simply to “deliver learning to where people are.”¹⁶

6. THE MODERN LEARNER DEMANDS IT

This reason alone requires our immediate attention. When you take into account demand, along with all the other reasons bite-size learning works today, you realize there is no turning back. This shouldn't surprise you. You have likely read the studies, articles, and headlines I've read on how digital natives function and learn. It's right there in black and white, paper after paper: Millennials do not like to be lectured or told there is only one way of doing things. They want to discover and experience and innovate while doing their day job, not watch PowerPoints at a hotel conference room away from their functioning reality. The truth of the matter is Gen Z and Millennials were born learning on the fly. And if you think these younger generations are not going to impact learning, think again. By 2025, Millennials will make up 75 percent of the workforce.³⁷

Today they are 80 million strong and the largest demographic segment in the United States, "and they are seeking interactive relationships and authenticity from brands and products."³⁸

A CEO explains why he hired a Millennial to help him keep a learning mindset: "Every minute counts, and not everyone on a sales staff (or in any function) wants to learn exactly the same things. Each individual has different strengths and weaknesses. People aren't looking to waste their time sitting through long explanations that don't necessarily apply to them. They're able to get just what they need from modular courses and video tutorials online, and they've come to expect the same from live instruction. I know my industry is moving away from multiday on-site training, and more into "just-in-time" learning, and Morgan (the Millennial intern) is going to be a big part of helping me stay on top of that trend."³⁹

For the new generations, learning in bite-sizes is no longer an option, it's how they operate. The question is, how quickly can we adapt our traditional long-form training to meet their needs?





AUTHOR TREION MULLER

The Author

Treion has spent the past two decades helping some of the largest Learning & Development companies in the world with their behavior change and digital transformation initiatives, including serving in the following roles: Solutions Architect, ELB Learning; CEO & Founder, The Modern Learning Architect; Chief Product Officer, Korn Ferry; Chief Product Officer, Strategy Execution (Formerly ESI); Chief Product Officer, TwentyEighty (Private Equity holding company made up of some of the largest L&D companies—Miller Heiman Group, ViltalSmarts, Strategy Execution and Achieve Forum); Chief eLearning Architect, FranklinCovey (Key contributor through digital transformation phase).

Treion is also a go-to expert, author, and problem-solver, who can align market and customer demand with successful product creation, CX, and go-to-market initiatives. He knows what your learners want, how they want it, and what to do about it. Treion has a master's degree in Instructional Technology and Learning Science and is currently a Ph.D. student in the same field. Treion is the author of several books and publications, including:

- The Getting Things Done Workbook: 10 Moves to Stress-Free Productivity, with David Allen (Ghostwriter)
- The Power of Small Things and Baby Steps: 7 Reasons Microlearning Works Today!
- The Learning Explosion: 9 Rules to Ignite Your Virtual Classrooms
- The Webinar Manifesto: Never Design, Deliver, or Sell Lousy Webinars Again!
- 7 Consumer Realities That the Learning Industry Can No Longer Ignore
- Mutant Learning: How to Develop a Social Learning Lab

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ELB Learning Learning Solutions Process

Did you know that less than 10% of all learning and development solutions today deliver on the promised behavior changes and business results? While research has shown how technology can improve the way adults learn, retain, and apply information, many organizations choose not to apply modern learning best practices to their instructional design and solutions. In today's economy, your business can't afford to provide training that doesn't work. You need effective learning solutions and technologies that change behaviors, reduce costs, and deliver results.

ELB Learning can help! We can help you design, develop, and launch effective learning strategies, technologies, and solutions for the modern learner using our 3-Step Learning Solutions Process.

If you need to address one or more of the following L&D needs, challenges, or opportunities, let's talk!

- Short-term training emergencies & deadlines
- Long-term learning strategy & roadmap
- Transform your learning solutions for the modern learner & digital native
- To show ROI and business impact on your L&D initiatives
- Help getting senior management buy-in
- Assistance launching your L&D initiatives internally & externally
- A quarterly or annual review

Learn more and schedule an appointment with Treion and his team:

[LET'S TALK](#)

3-STEP LEARNING SOLUTIONS PROCESS

1. **ASSESS:** We start with a FREE assessment of your existing training plan, offerings, and technologies and identify training needs, objectives, and behavioral change gaps.
2. **ARCHITECT:** We design a custom learning plan for your specific training needs and objectives based on what is discovered. This includes selecting the right solutions, technologies, partnerships, and modern learning approach.
3. **ACTIVATE:** We launch your modern learning training solutions, accountability processes, and success tracking system to assure your goals are achieved.