500 WORDS ON
LEADERSHIP & DEVELOPMENT

YOU CAN LEARN EVERYTHING ONLINE EXCEPT FOR THE THINGS YOU CAN'T

"Learning is no longer the collection of knowledge alone;
rather, it's a struggle with one's own preconceptions, patterns and biases."

This 500 words on Leadership Development is for all leaders and managers interested in learning why learning - and specifically Leadership Development - is most effective as a blended learning approach.

Webinars, online courses, microlearning, virtual supervisions, videos and online games, and soon virtual reality learning, are becoming more and more popular in Leadership Development. And rightly so – web-based technology has a dramatic impact on learning and development.

New technology facilitates new ways of working and learning and we can make good use of it, saving time for travel and budget, learning when we want and what we want, and focusing on the needs of individual learners.

For example, if you want to learn about Design Thinking, I suggest first watching a [TED talk with IDEO CEO Tim Brown](#). Later, you might watch some tutorials and learning clips from [Linkedin](#) and, finally, read some well-written and comprehensive Design Thinking [books](#) and Playbooks (on your Kindle) to become a 'Design Thinking expert'.
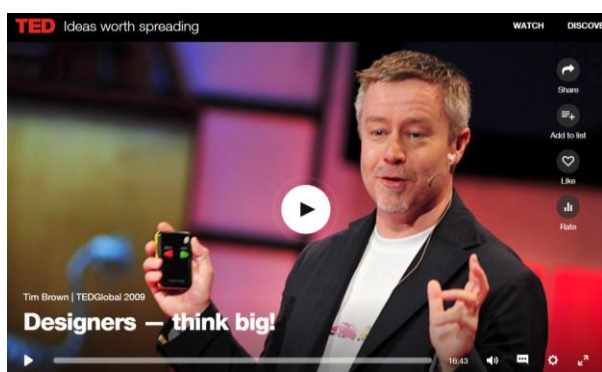
> **Learning is no longer the collection of knowledge alone; rather, it's a struggle with one's own preconceptions and the preconceptions of others.**

So far so good, but **learning is a contact sport**. It needs experimentation and collection of experience as well as reflection of the new experience and a modification of an existing abstract concept; this can hardly be done alone.

Today, learning is closer to change of attitude and mindset than knowledge. The latter you can collect on the Internet. The former needs a capable mind to change one`s own belief system and thus one's set of behaviours.

To add here, e-learning may negatively impact on the socialisation skills, as well as communication skills, that are ever so important in today's world of constant change.

Think if you would build a house. Online learning is like gathering all materials you need to create the structure: bricks, cement, water, mortar, wood and millions other things.

Face-to-face learning is like taking your materials and starting to actually build: mixing cement, laying the brick onto the spread, pushing it down to get your bed joint, measuring accuracy, etc.

Knowing your material and tools is one thing, doing millions of mistakes while actually building it is another.

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This needs the **full cycle of learning**: concrete (pardon the pun) experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation and, lastly, active experimentation. We know that effective learning only occurs when a learner can execute all four stages of this model (Kolb's Learning Styles and Experiential Learning Cycle).

I am a big fan of online education and appreciate its various advantages. And it is true, you can learn all theories online. As a leader in leadership development, you should learn online daily.

No one wants to sit in a classroom and listen to 'boring' theory. **Theory should be acquired at home or at the office and leadership development programmes should be run 'blended' or 'adjunct':** e-learning is employed as an assistant in the traditional classroom, providing relative independence to the learners.

Alternatively, the delivery of course materials and explanations is shared between a traditional learning method and e-learning method in the classroom setting (Arkoful, 2015).

Leadership Development focuses on discourse with others. It should, further, focus on experimentation and reflection. Leadership Development is a contact sport with one aim only: a shift in your preconceptions and patterns to find new and better ways of building your house.

Yours,
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CEO at CLP

Arkorful, V., Ghana, N. A. (2015). The role of e-learning, advantages and disadvantages of its adoption in higher education. INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY AND DISTANCE LEARNING, 12(1), 29-42.

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