

NEWS YOU CAN USE

Expanding Horizons

By Eva Kaplan-Leiserson

Learning technology is about more than just e-learning—it's also about e-connecting. People connect using learning technology, and they connect in order to develop it. In countries around the world, learning technology is bringing people near and far together in innovative ways. Here are some examples of note:

Illustration by Claudia Newell

- Dubai, a city in the United Arab Emirates with roughly the population of the U.S. state of Delaware, is building a Knowledge Village of more than 1 million square feet. In it will be an innovation center, a multimedia library, offices of e-learning companies, science and technology institutes, incubators, research and development organizations, and

more. One important goal of the project is to enable the region to not only compete, but also to innovate in the global knowledge economy.

- Universities in Australia are collaborating to develop voice-recognition software that converts an instructor's words into text projected on a screen. The technology, developed with the help of speech-

These innovative learning technology programs
connect people and nations.

recognition experts from IBM's T.J. Watson Speech Science Laboratory in New York, will aid disabled students, migrants, indigenous learners, and anyone whose first language isn't English.

- The Philippine Women's University partnered recently with technology company Unisys Philippines to expand its distance education program and address the "fundamental issue" of classroom shortages. The country needs 17,000 new classrooms each year, says University president Jose Conrado Benitez, and the online initiative "is a good way to tackle that problem" and deliver "proper education." The school also plans to offer its online classes worldwide, taking advantage of Unisys's partnerships with schools around the globe.

- The Internet Medical Exchange program (created by the International Association of Physicians in AIDS Care) uses Centra's Web-collaboration technology to enable health-care workers in remote areas of Southern Africa to collaborate online with top AIDS experts. With the technology, they can share ideas and documents and receive training on the newest therapies.

The possibilities of learning technology are limited only by your imagination. Send examples of how you're using technology to connect people in new and different ways to ekaplan@astd.org.

◀ Sources/gulf-news.com, australianit.news.com.au, newsbytes.com, biz.yahoo.com

Executive Update: Strategic Coaching

How do you give executives ongoing development when they can't get away for off-site training? Bring in coaches to work with them. How do you ensure that coaching not only supports the individual, but also achieves concrete business results? Link the coaching to business goals.

Ellen Kumata, partner at Cambria Consulting, a Boston-based firm that offers strategic executive coaching, explains how coaches can ensure that the goals, leadership values, and competencies of an organization's execs are aligned.

1. **Plan.** Identify problems that coaching will address or strengths that it will leverage. Define how coaching will link with the business strategy and what success will look like.
2. **Match.** Get to know the executives and their unique needs. Then sort coaches in internal and external networks to offer several choices to each exec.
3. **Coach.** Work with executives as well as with the coaches to help the organization achieve business goals.
4. **Evaluate.** Examine the results both quantitatively and qualitatively using rigor-



Teach a CEO New Tricks

How do you ensure a

CEO's ongoing learning? Send him or her *Back to the Floor*. This British TV series convinces CEOs to spend a week working at the bottom level of their organizations, being filmed as they learn what's really going on and what needs to be improved. Look for airings of the show in the United States on PBS.

◀ Source/Fast Company

ous methodology. Report the ROI back to the organization.

Strategic executive coaching can be expensive, but, Kumata says, it offers many benefits:

- People at the top of the organizational hierarchy can speak candidly and receive objective advice.
- Coaches often serve as intermediaries between a company's CEO and senior execs, passing important business messages up and down the chain and helping the CEO check the pulse of the C-suite.
- Executives demonstrate, by buying in to their own development, the value of continuous learning to the entire organization. That helps create a learning culture.

[More info/cambriaconsulting.com/new/files/30212.PDF](http://www.cambriaconsulting.com/new/files/30212.PDF)

How We Measure Up

Did you know that your height can affect your salary? Studies show that each extra inch can increase your pay by as much as \$1000 a year. That makes height as important a wage determiner as race or gender.

Weight matters too. Last year, Professor John Cawley discovered that an extra 65 pounds could cost a white woman 7 percent of her salary. But for men and African Americans, weight

doesn't affect wages.

The reasons for these correlations are still under investigation. In the case of height, researchers believe the keystone may be self-esteem. Your height, specifically in adolescence, affects the way you see yourself and the activities you join. Taller kids tend to belong to more teams, clubs, and social groups; participation in those extracurricular activities as a youth has been demonstrated to increase adult wages from 5.1 to 11.4 percent.

The connection between weight and salary probably has to do with perceptions of beauty. Research has shown that people seen as beautiful earn about 5 percent more than people seen as ordinary-looking. Workers thought to be ugly earn from 5 to 10 percent less than their colleagues. Why does beauty matter on the job? Researchers are still working on that.

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Policy News

A snapshot of U.S. federal legislation and policy affecting workforce development and the HRD profession.

U.S. Department of Labor Holds Workforce Innovation Conference

The U.S. Department of Labor's annual conference, *Workforce Innovation 2002*, takes place July 9 to 11 in Nashville, Tennessee. The event serves professionals in both the private and public sectors who work in or are associated with public workforce development initiatives. Exhibitors include more than 150 companies doing business with the workforce investment system. For more information www.wi2002.org.

Initiative Launched: Preparing America's Future

The U.S. Department of Education's Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE) launched a new initiative, *Preparing America's Future*, to examine how vocational education programs fit into general education reforms at the secondary level. The initiative will also investigate how improved programs can help prepare the 21st-century workforce. *Preparing for America's Future* also focuses on community and technical colleges, career preparation, workforce and economic development, and adult literacy. For more information www.ed.gov/offices/OVAE/paf.html.