

## Designing Outside the Box

I whole-heartedly agree with the premise of author Michael W. Allen that instructional designers should focus on the desired on-the-job behavior, rather than merely the end-of-course learning outcomes. In fact, to emphasize performance behaviors rather than just learning objectives, I have found it useful to define performance in terms of what behaviors should workers start doing, stop doing, and strengthen.



### Where in the World Is Allison Rossett?

They say that the chase is what spices up the experience, but I was disappointed to see my friend Allison Rossett featured prominently on your cover, and then not mentioned in the TOC. Much like the milk at the back of the grocery store, I was forced to impatiently wade through your other articles until I arrived at page 82. But it was worth it.

She's exactly right that the risk of allowing learners to choose their own paths is that they will ignore the resources we provide—virtual, physical, or ephemeral—and just blithely go ahead and fail. At some point, as teachers, we probably need to let go of responsibility for people's success or failure. All we could ever do was provide them with access to information. Even whacking knuckles with rulers didn't drill those multiplication tables into their heads after all.

And next time, see that Allison gets a prominent listing up front. Nothing less for the Grand Old Lady of e-learning. Tee hee.

Dick Carlson  
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Dear Dick,  
I'm sorry you had such a difficult time locating Allison's article. She was listed in the "In Every Issue" box in the Table of Contents.

Paula Ketter  
Editor, T+D

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There are other notions in the article, about which my more than 40 years as a training and development professional have caused me to form different opinions.

Development budgets customarily falling below what is required to fulfill demands.

The fact that designers should think about the real lives of learners and develop approaches that minimize detracting influences.

Preparing participants to become learning ready is desirable and should become a standard part of the instructional design.

Designers should provide learning experiences for both the target learning audience and their managers within each training program.

Extensive research conducted throughout several years, has established for us that there are nine major contributing causes to the persistent and expensive problem of "learning attrition." Like Allen, we have learned that developing and

implementing the optimum solution to this challenge requires thinking outside of the box. It took many years for our firm to modify our primary focus from program improvement to learning climate improvement.

We have found that managers have greater influence on the learning climate than all other factors combined. Surveys indicate that managers think they are successfully supporting learning outcomes. Surveys with employees show they feel that managers are not effective in influencing transfer of learning into job performance. We should be teaching managers how to efficiently and effectively perform this important process.

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