A Beginner's Guide

# Moving Learning Programs Online

**CLANED®** 





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#### Introduction

Maybe you're eager to take your trainings online and need a simple roadmap to help you along. Or maybe, you want to catch up with the conversation around online learning platforms so you can make the right choice.

Either way, you're already on the right track!

The digital transformation wave sweeping over industries has made its way to the world of organisational learning, too. Today, the \$250 billion online learning industry marks a new, exciting era for upskilling, reskilling and professional learning programs for companies everywhere.

And a profitable one too! Companies with comprehensive online training programs <u>report</u> 218% higher revenue per employee and 24% higher profit margins.

But despite all its benefits, the 'newness' surrounding online learning often proves to be its biggest roadblock. There's so much potential and yet, so much mystery surrounding the topic. Where do you even begin?

Well, we hope this ebook might be a good place to start! To anyone new to the world of online learning, this resource serves as a little guided tour along all the main attractions.

#### Here's what you'll find here:

- A gentle entry into the world of online learning with a myth-busting session and a handy jargon-glossary.
- → A close look at the three pillars of online learning: platform, learning design and learning analytics.
- Loads of tips on how you can make informed choices and explore solutions in online learning for your organisation.

Online learning is an adventure that our team at Claned has been on since 2013, and it continues to teach us new lessons every year.

We hope that by the end of this ebook, you'll be all caught up with the basics of online learning and ready to set out on an adventure of your own!



#### Chapter 1

## Easing Into Online Learning

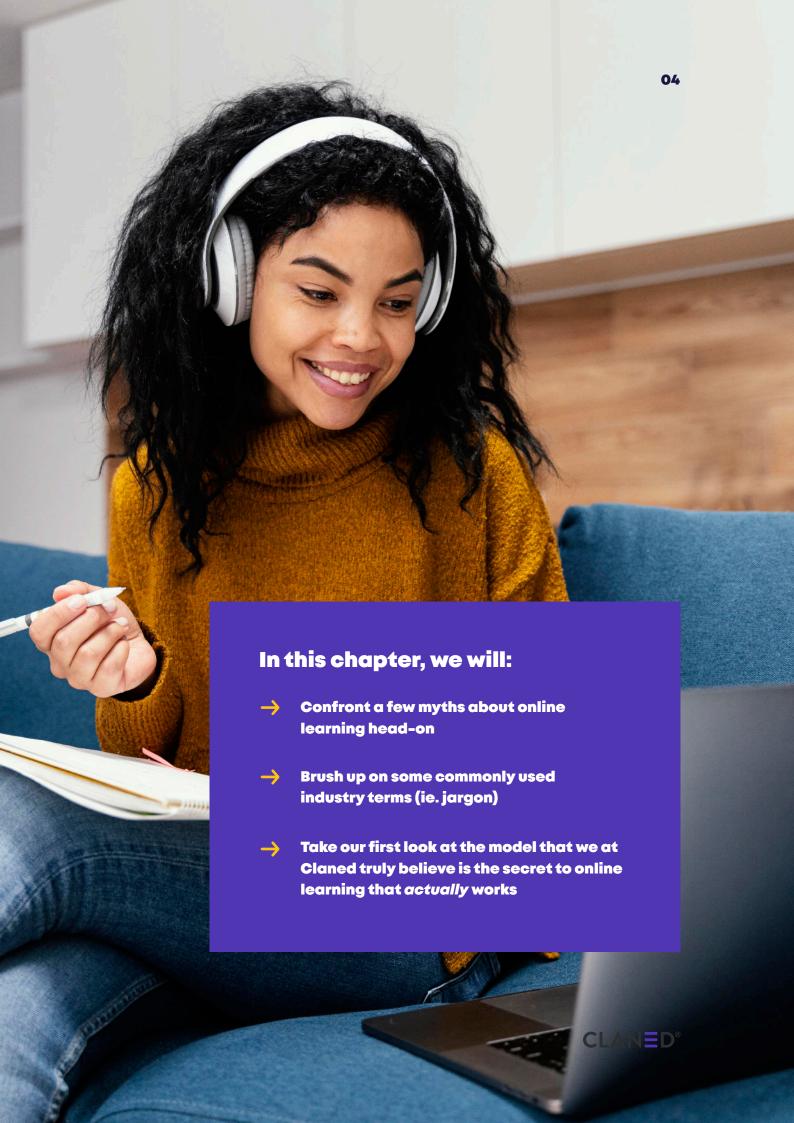
#### What Online Learning Is – and What It Isn't

Online learning is sometimes made out to be somewhat of a mysterious, mythical creature. It's also often covered by a mist of jargon, hesitations and misconceptions, which certainly doesn't help matters.

But we're here to tell you that beyond the myths and misgivings, the world of online learning centres around simple, solid principles from **pedagogy** and **technology**.

It aims to bring together the best of both these worlds to create learning experiences that don't just function as usual, but actually work. That reimagines traditional learning to innovate new ways to engage learners and help organisations create impactful learning programs that deliver exactly what they need.

Sounds exciting, doesn't it?



## Myths About Online Learning

Wherever there are new emerging trends, there are also new hesitations. Which also means a whole new set of half-truths and misconceptions going around. These are the dreaded 'myths'.

Sure enough, even as online learning becomes more prevalent, it has already become shrouded in a fog of myths. But as an online learning company, we're in the business of dispelling misinformation. Which is why we think it's time to take a little peek behind the screen and bust some commonly heard myths!





Let's face it: Online learning is nowhere as effective as in-person learning.



Online learning might be the new way of learning, but it is still firmly grounded in pedagogical research and principles.

All the elements that go into creating an effective face-to-face learning experience – materials, discussions, assessments – are essential to online learning programs as well. If anything, online learning even offers an edge over traditional learning as it offers new tech-integrated ways of gathering and sharing knowledge!



Online learning must be lonely. There are no peers to talk to and no one to discuss topics with.



Many online learning communities would beg to differ!

Online learning doesn't seek to recreate the experience of being in the same room as your peers. But it can be thoughtfully designed to foster active communities and encourage social learning. Much like social media, online learning platforms can be home to comments, opinions and insights from learners that can lead to impactful conversations and discussions.





Switching to online learning for the first time? Good luck with that! There's a lot of confusing technical know-how and jargon to trudge through.



This one usually stems from old hesitations around jargon and other technological aspects of online learning. But today, online learning has only evolved to become more beginner-friendly than ever. Here's what helps: choosing a platform that has technology intuitively working for you rather than against you!

For a quick peek at the most commonly used terms in online learning, check out our glossary in the next section!



Psst! Online learning is actually easier than in-person learning.



This one often sets new learners up for failure!

Online learning certainly allows you more flexibility and autonomy over your learning journey. You are often given the option to study the materials or complete activities at your own pace. But it doesn't change the amount of work or effort needed to complete the course and master the subject of the learning program.

#### Claned's Glowing Glossary of Online Learning Terms

How do you find your destination when the signposts are in a language you can't quite understand?

Navigating the world of online learning in search of a platform can feel a lot like that at first. But the more you delve into the jargon of online learning, the more you realise that it captures ideas that are ingenious in their simplicity. All they usually need is a friendly introduction.

In that spirit, say 'hello' to these common online learning terms  $\rightarrow$ 



#### LMS vs LXP

Before we begin, here's a look at the two most common terms used to describe online learning platforms:

#### **LMS**

Learning Management
System. The more traditional approach to creating training programs. An LMS will typically handle the more administrative and organisational aspects of learning programs, rather than focusing on learner experience.

#### **LXP**

Learning Experience
Platform. The newer, more
evolved approach to
building learning programs.
LXPs are all about the
learners and creating an
interactive, personalised
learning experience for
them.

#### Tip 👃

Your organisation might not have to choose between the two! To enjoy the best of both worlds, opt for a platform like Claned that offers the capabilities of both an LMS and LXP.

Content

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#### **Learning Design**

All about making thoughtful decisions for the learners. Creating an experience that helps learners learn in the way that suits them best. Using a combination of strategies and design approaches to decide the content, structure, assessments and other details of the learning journey.

Learning End Goal

Interaction

#### **Pedagogical Scripting**

The 'script' part gives it away! Creating a learning narrative with instructions and activities that point the learner exactly where they need to go while gently nudging them along the way.

Narrative Structure Data

#### **Learning Analytics**

The exciting junction where data science and online learning cross paths. Learning analytics is about measuring, collecting, analysing and reporting the data collected during learning programs. And then, making sense of it in a way that's useful for both learners and organisations!

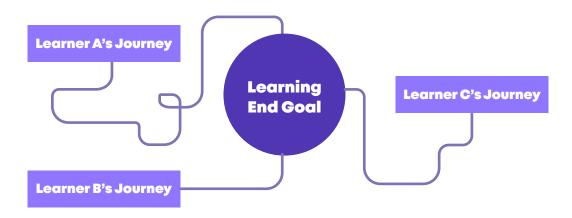
#### **Social Learning**

The wonderful, organic form of learning that takes place when learners learn from each other. Through comments, discussions and interactions, learners get to validate their knowledge and gain new perspectives. And contrary to popular belief, social learning is achievable in online learning programs, too!



#### **Asynchronous Learning**

The sigh of relief for learners worldwide. In other words, the type of learning that allows you to learn at your own pace, on your own schedule. Sometimes within a fixed timeframe. But always with the promise of more flexibility and autonomy than traditional learning.



#### **The Claned Model**

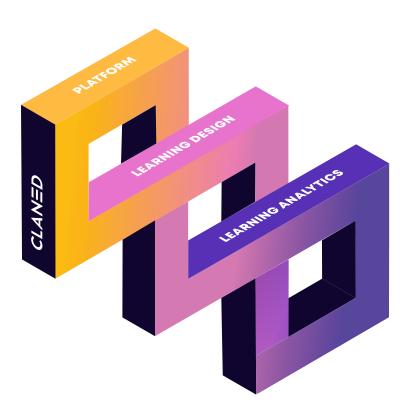
As a solution, online learning comes in so many different forms. The basic ingredients of pedagogy and technology remain the same. But they can be combined together in countless recipes to problem-solve for different online learning purposes. Some successful, some not so much.

At Claned too, we've done our own share of combining and experimenting. And after years of research and insight-gathering, we've formulated the **definitive recipe for online learning** that helps us create cracking learning programs for our clients every single time.



#### Here's the Claned Model ↓

The Claned model combines 3 elements essential to building an effective and impactful online learning experience.



#### ightarrow Pic

#### **Platform**

It's where you build your program online. It's where learners come together with all their hopes and dreams. It's also the make-or-break lifeboat that, when it glitches, lags or falls apart, sinks and takes everyone in the learning experience down with it.

#### Learning Design

It's designing the course and the learning experience. It's designing the maps before you set your learners out on their learning adventures. And as with any adventure, they'd be grateful to know exactly where they're going — and why!

#### Learning Analytics

Good ol' data and hard numbers. Even after a learning adventure ends, there's always more to know and explore! This is how you collect what you need to make the next one even more successful. And prove why the adventure was worth it in the first place.

All three of these elements are great for your learning program when mastered on their own. But they're downright incredible when you can get them to work together, on the same team, **as part of the same solution**. And that's what the Claned model represents: an online learning solution that is whole and complete — with all three elements not just fitting together but **feeding into each other**.

Want to know more about the three elements and how they work together?

In the chapters to come, we'll better understand how to choose a platform that works for you, incorporate learning design to build better programs and use analytics to entirely transform trainings at your organisation.



#### **Chapter 2**

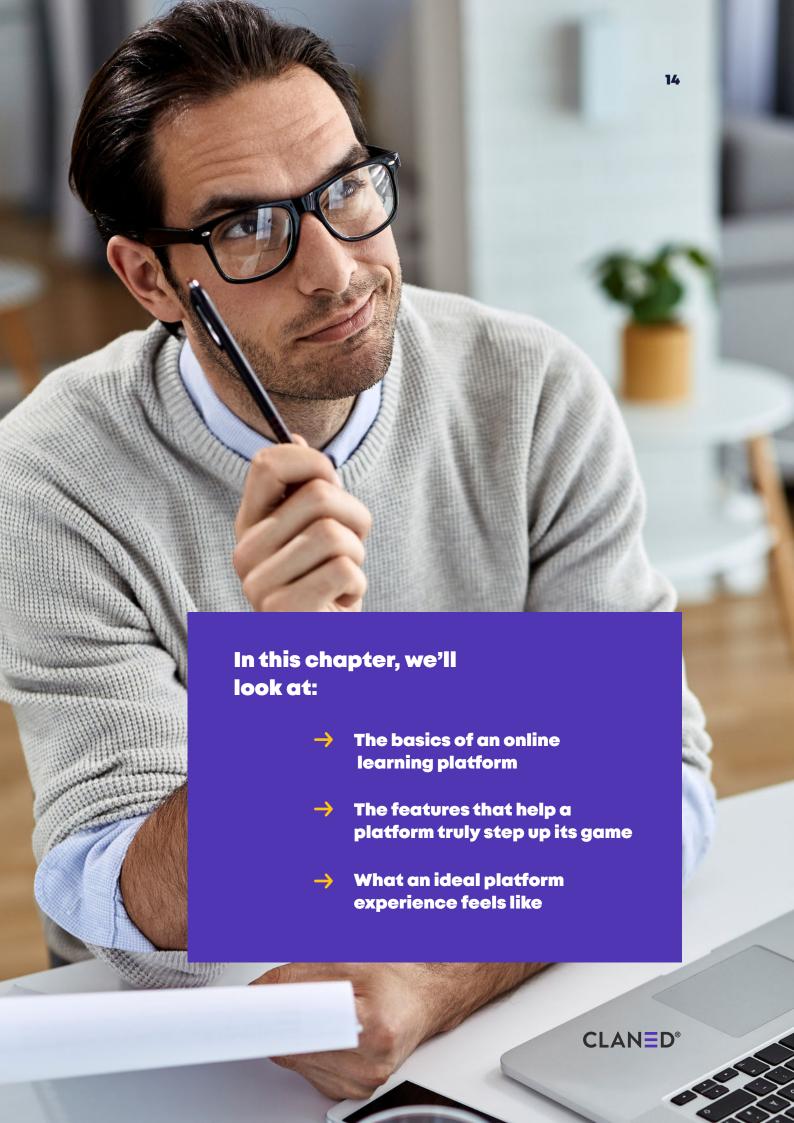
## Choosing the Platform

#### How hard can choosing a platform be? Well, harder than it seems!

When you're drowning in a sea of features and functionalities, and are faced with an endless series of platform options, the process can be... perplexing, to say the least.

The good news is that the more you learn about exactly what to look for in your platform, the easier the platform-hunting becomes. Amidst the host of features in the market, which of them would help your organisation achieve its goals?

That's what we're to help you discover!



## Platforms: The Bare Minimum Version

Let's move over the bells and whistles of online learning platforms for a moment.

Imagine a platform that fulfils only the bare minimum expectations of an online learning platform. A stripped-down version, if you will. What would that look like?

## Here's what the most basic platform would allow you to do:

- Upload your learning resources
- → Store the resources online
- Use basic functionalities to organise learning materials
- → Host the learning program

Straightforward? Yes.

Exciting? Effective? Customisable? Not quite.

And the worst part? The lack of features and functionalities doesn't always pay off in other areas, like user experience. Even the most basic, stripped-down online learning platform can be riddled with frequent glitches, lags and crashes.

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All of that is to say that when it comes to online learning platforms, 'basic' doesn't necessarily translate to 'classic'.

Having a place to store online course material, and the functionality to organise it is fine. But storage and organisational features only ever scratch the surface of a platform's potential. Which is why the resulting learning program experiences lack the interest, engagement and interaction that superior platforms can expertly generate.

So what's on the other side? Let's look at what happens when you choose a platform that prioritises **building a** "learning experience" rather than a simplistic learning program. The difference can be game-changing for your organisation.



## What a Powerful Platform Looks Like

With some things in life, you expect a steep learning curve. We believe that your online learning platform shouldn't be one of them.

At the end of the day, the right platform should be able to do all the hard work for you.

It's true: the course material you upload and the learning design approach you take play a big role in the overall process. But when it comes to most aspects of the learning experience, your platform should be leveraging pedagogy and technology to do the heavy lifting.

So what exactly should you be looking for? Here's what makes a platform *actually* work



#### **Course Builder Friendly**

Great learning platforms are designed to leverage technology to intuitively guide you in the learning program building process. Even if you've never built a learning program before.



#### **Pedagogically Sound**

Online learning is incomplete without the foundation of pedagogical research. A good learning platform understands how learning works and offers learning design features that deliver effective learning. All while keeping your learners interested and engaged.



#### **Collaborative**

Research shows that learners learn better when they learn together. It's incredibly valuable to have a platform that harnesses the power of social learning and integrates chats, discussions, content sharing and social notifications into the experience rather than *outside* it.



#### **Versatile and Intuitive**

The needs of every organisation – and every learner are different. The right platform should be able to leverage technology and customise itself to suit these needs and offer a unique, personalised experience every time.



#### **Smart Analytics**

Deep data about all things learning is one of the best things to come out of online training programs. But that's only half of the story. Opt for a platform that doesn't just give you the data but also offers you customised analytics reports and suggestions on how to put that data to good use.



## What the Right Platform Can Do for You

So what exactly does it feel like when you find that perfect online learning platform for you? Well, we think the best way to know the feeling is to step right into the experience itself. Here's a peek.

#### **Happy Organisations**

As the organisation crafting a learning program, you find a platform that allows you to build new learning programs in just a few clicks. No hassle, no complications. An effortless course building experience intuitively guides you along and expects no tech know-how or IT support from your end.

You find a platform that is already created with pedagogical principles and research in mind. Which is why you can also find a library of pre-made course templates with basic structures that you can easily customise to suit your requirements.

After running an iteration of the learning program, the platform gives you deep, detailed points of information about the experience. This information can then be fed right back into the platform to improve future iterations of the programs. It can also be used to make informed judgments about the overall impact of the learning initiative as a whole.

#### **Happy Learners**

As a learner, you find yourself in an online training experience that is simple and easy to navigate. But it's also intuitive, anticipating your questions and gently guiding you on what to do next. No lengthy scrolling or clicking around to find the page, topic or material you are looking for. The program experience is clean, organised and follows a structure that feels natural.

You find a community of learners just like you, excited to share their opinions and perspectives. A thoughtfully crafted interactive learning experience encourages you to learn and express yourself not only in webinars but in online discussions around every section you cover.

Your learning experience isn't just limited to reading long, boring blocks of text. All the tools and resources you'll

need are integrated so you don't have to

move or switch around to other apps

to complete the program.

There are gamified elements, podcasts, videos, 360° experiences and various other forms of media providing a multi-sensory learning environment.





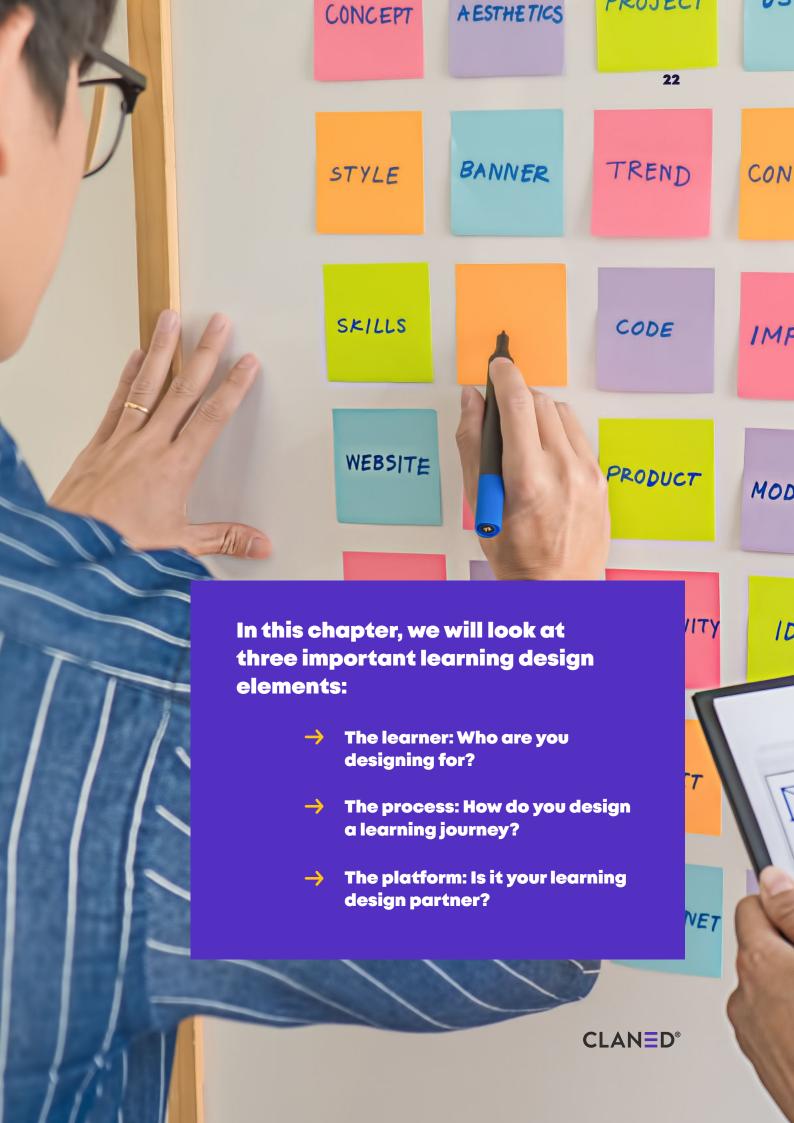
#### **Chapter 3**

## Designing the Experience

## Ever found yourself driving around not knowing which direction to go in? Learning design helps your learners avoid that fate.

With a deep understanding of how and why learning works, learning design charts a clear, engaging pathway that tells your learners exactly where they need to go – and have a great time along the way! No overwhelm, no confusion, no needless driving around.

And if you're new to learning design, no problem. When you choose the right platform (see Chapter 1), you also choose the right learning design partner! And just like that, the course building process becomes all the more effortless and enjoyable. For everyone involved.



## Who Are You Designing For?

When an organisation hopes for the success of a learning program, it's actually pinning its hopes on the success of the learners. To create a learning program that actually works, the first question we must ask is: **who** is it supposed to work for? That's why the first principle of learning design is to understand the learner and their unique needs.

Often, this is achieved by building a simple learner profile. But even without a set profile in place, jotting down a few important considerations about the learners can be a valuable step – such as:



## How Do You Design a Learning Journey?

#### **Learning Goals**

Of course, getting to know the learners is only one half of the learning design process. The other, more important part is to know just what the learners are supposed to take away from the experience. Basically, if we liken learning design to map-making, this is where X marks the spot.

This means charting out all the knowledge, skills and competencies you want the learner to achieve by the end of the program. The more well-defined the objectives, the better. Not just for the learners, but for the organisation, too.

This is because when you know exactly where to lead the learners, the program-building process becomes easier. What's more, clearer goals mean a clearer idea of the program's success and impact!





#### **Design Approach**

Now that we've covered the 'who' and the 'where to' parts of learning design, let's take a look at what we believe is the most exciting part of all: the 'how'.

In the world of learning design, there are a plethora of ways you can go about crafting a journey for the learners. You might be surprised at the number of strategies and approaches you can take based on who the learner is and what the goals of the programs are.

Concepts like **pedagogical scripting** and various types of learning models like **asynchronous learning** and **flipped classroom** come into play here. (You can refer to the glossary to know more about these terms!)

This is where pedagogical expertise can be a valuable asset to have. It can often be the critical difference between a standard learning experience and a thoughtful, tailor-made one. That's why at Claned, our team of pedagogical experts offers support and recommendations to companies looking to create specific types of learning experiences.

But what if you don't have pedagogical expertise on board? Does it mean all hope is lost?

Not really, because that's where a good platform saves the day!

## Is Your Platform a Learning Design Partner?

We know that learning design is crucial to creating a learning experience in any medium. But in the context of online learning, learning design becomes all the more essential.

In the absence of a traditional facilitator, online trainings have to account for a host of queries, doubts and requirements on behalf of the learners. Which is why your learning design approach needs a supportive partner to help it along – the platform!

And 'partner' really is the crucial term here, because learning design and the platform experience must go hand in hand.

No online learning platform can compensate for the lack of effective learning design. And no amount of smart learning design can ever make up for an uncooperative platform experience.

But in the very best of cases, you have a platform that not only **allows** you to integrate your learning design decisions, but actively **supports** them.

The difference is remarkable!



#### Allowing vs Supporting Learning Design

Imagine a platform where you have to make learning design decisions offline, organise and upload them, and then run the program as a standard, unoriginal, cookiecutter experience.

Now, imagine a platform that actively analyzes program data and recommends smart learning design decisions for your program – often even making them on your behalf!

If you already use Claned, you must be familiar with the Learning Path feature that creates personalised learning experiences for learners based on their knowledge level, interest and preferences. Instructors and facilitators use these Learning Paths to track progress and make necessary tweaks and adjustments to the program.



Even if you are a first-time course builder, the platform intuitively uses pedagogical principles and data to help you make the best learning design choices for your programs. It also offers options and suggestions to enhance or customise the learning experience.

When your platform doubles up as a partner in your learning design experience, it allows you to get creative and actually have fun building courses. Instead of being a chore, learning design becomes an opportunity for an organisation to help its learners grow, learn and succeed.

And isn't that the point of it all?



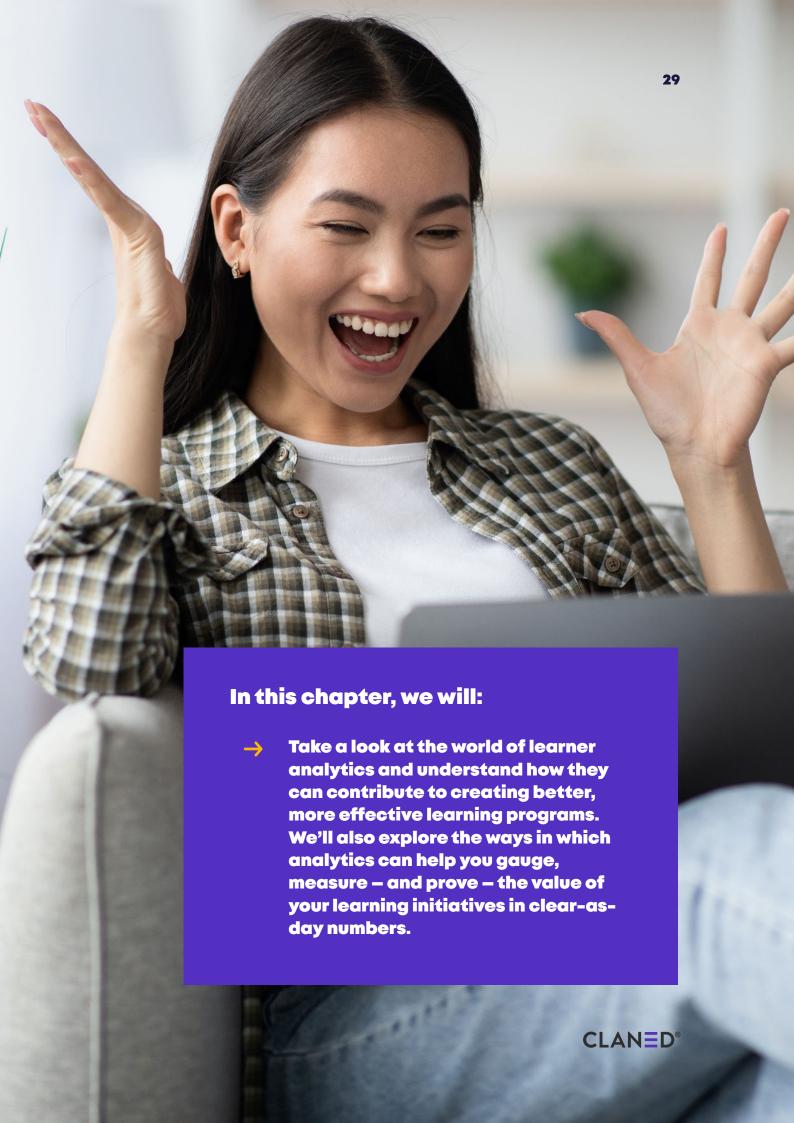
#### **Chapter 4**

## Data: Rooting for Results

Let's come out and state the obvious here: we live in a world run by data. More than 2.5 quintillion bytes of data are being created every day, driving decisions and reflecting trends across every facet of our lives.

So when the smallest, most nuanced detail of human experience can now be read in hard numbers and figures, why should the world of online learning be left behind?

Thanks to learning analytics, the true impact of learning programs is no longer the stuff of speculation. The deep, detailed data that comes out of online programs – and the insights we draw from it – is transforming the face of organisational learning.



#### What is Learning Analytics All About?

You might have gathered all the research you can before launching a learning initiative. But there are some insights you can only gain when a program actually starts its run.

That's where learning analytics comes in. It measures, gathers and reports the data generated during the course of an online learning program.

As with all data, the data gathered from online learning programs typically casts a wide net. You can gather a wide variety of information about the learners, their learning habits, the time they spend on the program, the interest they express in different topics and of course, the feedback they offer.

Data from learning programs can range from generic questions like:

- How many people are participating in the program?
- How much time are learners spending on this particular activity on this particular topic?

In a deep ocean filled with learning information, smart learning analytics can be your lifeline.

When done right, learning analytics can help you cut through the noise and focus on the information that is most relevant to your organisation's goals. Imagine clean, detailed and organised reports that keep your business outcomes in mind and effectively analyse the data to offer solutions and suggestions.

Remember what we said earlier about how the choice of platform has far-reaching consequences? Here's how it influences how you analyse learning data!





#### When Platform Meets Analytics

Most online learning platforms in the market recognise the importance of generating and collecting learning data. Which is why you'll find some form of learning analytics incorporated in many learning platform experiences.

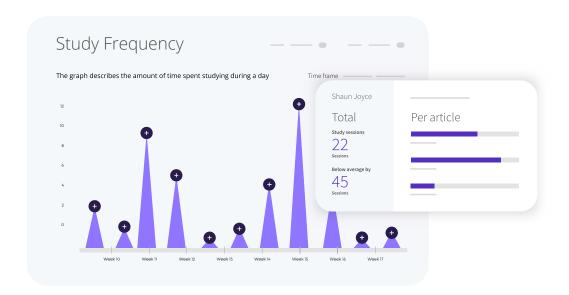
But not all learning data is valuable or relevant. And it all ultimately comes down to the representation of data rather than the data itself. You'd be surprised at how even a long list of data points could be completely devoid of a single helpful insight that you could use or apply to your efforts.

That's why it is essential to have learning analytics as a consideration when choosing a platform.

For instance, online learning platforms that approach data with a pedagogical understanding can offer detailed recommendations to improve learning programs. On the other hand, platforms that prioritise your business goals can offer you keener insights into the impact and after-effects of your initiatives.

At Claned, we offer both. Our in-depth analytics reports are personalised to fit the priorities and objectives of each organisation. And we don't stop at data presentation, either. We also turn the data into actionable pieces of information, be it through the suggestions made by the platform or the recommendations offered by our experts.

Claned also does one more fun thing with learner analytics that most platforms don't – give the data right back to the learners. As the platform recognises learner habits and preferences, it creates individual learning paths for each learner. Based on this learning path, the platform then makes automated recommendations on content and learning strategies that would benefit them best.





## How to Put Learning Analytics to Great Use

There are a lot of reasons to love learning analytics. But probably the biggest one is the opportunity it provides to learn, grow and improve.

You have access to comprehensive learning data. You have smart learning analytics reports telling you precisely what that data means. The only logical next step? Turning these insights into concrete steps you can take for your organisation!

Here are a few scenarios of how analytics can turn into effective action

#### **Course Builder Friendly**

This is where your learning initiative goes from being a 'great idea' to a 'tangible benefit'. Every training program has a business objective behind it. Your learning analytics reports help you bridge that important gap between objective and success – and the bridge between investment and ROI. It also helps your organisation recognise competencies, new opportunities and areas of improvement.

#### **Making Programs More Effective**

Even the best-designed courses can use improvements. But instead of shooting in the dark, you can use your analytics reports to identify shortcomings in the program based on the recommendations it offers. Be it improving learner engagement, tuning the difficulty levels, or generating more interaction, you have all the insight you need to step the game up.

#### **Offering Learner Support**

Are the programs not making the impact you hoped they would? Are the learners dropping out? In any other case, these would be head-scratching mysteries. But with learning analytics, you can clearly identify the elements of the program that learners most need help with. You can personalise the experience and also review learner feedback to make real-time adjustments.

As you can see, learning analytics isn't just about the numbers. It's about lessons, and opportunities to make a difference. Not just for the learner experience but also for the overall impact a program can make on your business outcomes.

With the right platform, you access a comprehensive learning solution that combines the powers of a robust platform with the insights of smart analytics.

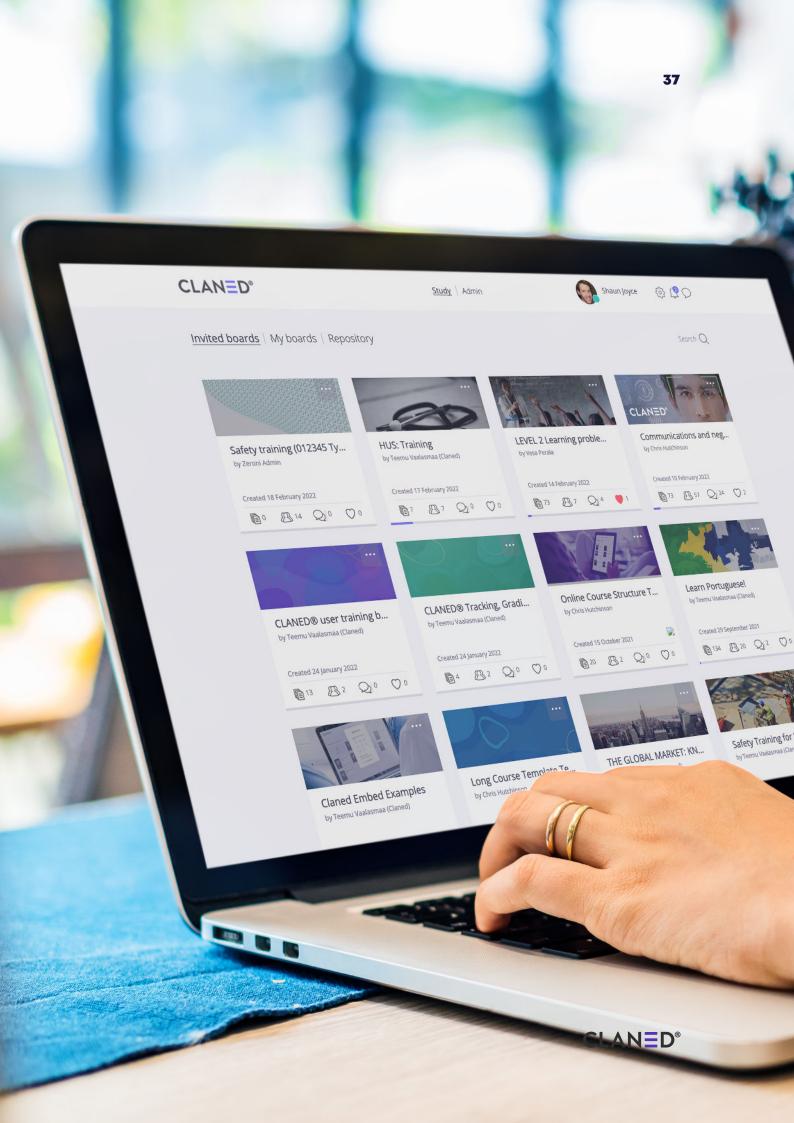


#### **About Claned**

Claned is a complete online learning solutions company. We offer organisations a robust, learning experience platform as well as customised learning design expertise to help you create online learning programs that actually work.

Our team at Claned started out in 2013 with a mission to make online learning engaging and exciting for everyone involved — learners and organisations alike!

Over the years, we've built and perfected an intuitive, easy-to-use, accolade-winning learning experience platform that makes the task of creating online learning programs simpler than ever. We are also home to a team of pedagogical experts who offer complete learning design support and solutions customised to the unique learning needs of our clients.



### Let's Get Started!

As we end our journey into online learning together, care to join us for another one?

Build brand-new online learning programs for your organisation, or update existing ones, with Claned.
Our user-friendly platform and a super team of online learning experts would love to help you out!

Book a demo: sales@claned.com ->

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