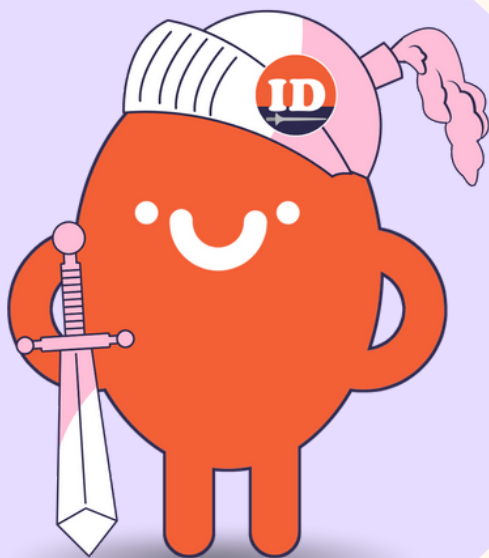


NOT ANOTHER AI REPORT

How Learning Teams Are Using AI in 2025

HEY
THERE!



Another AI report? Yep. We can practically hear the collective moans and groans. HEY! Did someone just throw a tomato? Not cool, guys. Not cool.

The internet is drowning in think pieces, hot takes, and clickbait about artificial intelligence. It's exhausting, right? We know we're feeling it. And it seems like we're not alone!

[According to research by LinkedIn](#), 41% of people say the pace of change is hurting their well-being. A third of us admit we feel embarrassed by how little we know. And 35% are nervous even talking about AI at work. That's not exactly a recipe for confident adoption.

When things feel like a mess, the best move is to lean on your people. That's why we put this report together.

If you're leading a team, think of this as a chance to peek over the fence at what others are implementing or quietly avoiding. Sometimes you don't need a playbook. You need the reassurance that you're not the only one trying to figure this sh*t out.

We've got to compare notes, share what's working, and keep each other grounded. So consider this report us pulling up a chair at your kitchen table and whispering, "Did you hear what's going on with AI?"

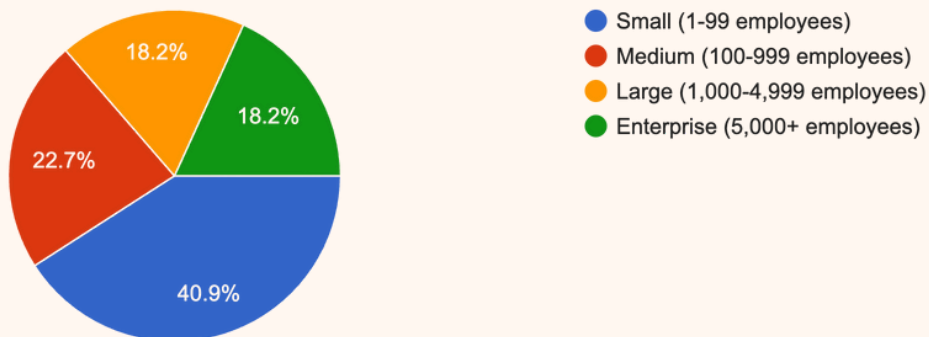
We do love a little gossip. Thanks for reading!

TEAM IDLANCE

Who Responded to This Survey

Before we break down the meat and potatoes of the data, let's take a peek at who actually responded to our survey. We heard a rumor that Tom Hanks responded. But it was probably just a rumor.

► Organization Size



What the data says:

Respondents came from a wide range of organizations:

- **Small (1–99 employees):** 40.9%
- **Medium (100–999):** 22.7%
- **Large (1,000–4,999):** 18.2%
- **Enterprise (5,000+):** 18.2%

What this might mean:

Nearly half of responses came from small organizations, which suggests that much of the insight here reflects teams working with lean structures and tighter resources. That doesn't mean the enterprise perspective is absent, though!

Roughly a third of participants represent large and very large organizations, but it does tilt the lens. So definitely keep that in mind as you read these survey results.

The overall picture here leans toward scrappier teams that may see AI less as a shiny experiment and more as a potential force multiplier for limited capacity.

► Industry

What the data says:

Respondents represented a pretty wide spread of industries, with a few clear clusters:

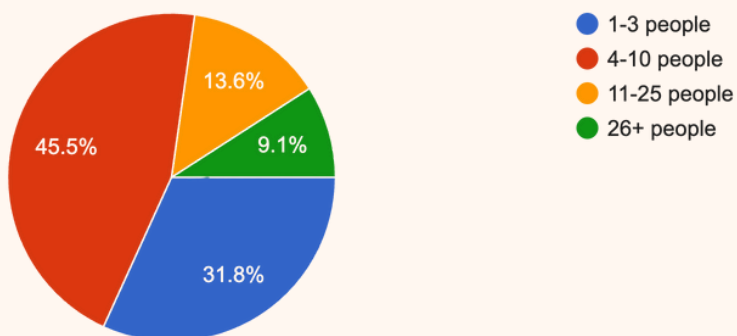
- **Education:** 31.8%
- **Professional Services/Consulting:** 13.6%
- **Energy/Utilities:** 13.6%
- **Manufacturing:** 9.1%
- **Technology/Software:** 4.5%
- **Healthcare/Pharmaceutical:** 4.5%
- **Government/Public Sector:** 4.5%
- **Nonprofit:** 4.5%
- **Other:** 13.5%

What this might mean:

Education leads the pack by a wide margin, which isn't surprising. L&D often overlaps with academic settings, and AI has already hit the classroom in a very public way. Consulting and energy/utilities also show up strong, pointing to fields where specialized knowledge has to be scaled quickly and accurately.

The "other" category is sizeable too, reminding us that AI usage isn't limited to any one sector, it's bubbling up across the map. That, or a lot of people in our audience work in shadow ops or at Area 51 or something. Could definitely be that.

► L&D Team Size



▶ L&D Team Size (cont)

What the data says:

Most respondents are working in relatively small teams:

- **1–3 people:** 31.8%
- **4–10 people:** 45.5%
- **11–25 people:** 13.6%
- **26+ people:** 9.1%

What this might mean:

Three out of four teams surveyed fall into the ten people or fewer category. That means the majority of L&D pros participating in this survey are balancing experimentation with all the usual responsibilities—designing, facilitating, managing systems, reporting, and probably fixing the printer too.

Larger teams do show up in the data, but they're the minority. Most of what we're seeing around AI adoption is coming from small groups trying to stretch their time, tools, and sanity a little further. Remember, this isn't a giant industry survey, but a pulse check from a focused group of L&D pros in our network.

▶ Role

What the data says:

The majority of respondents identified as **Instructional Designers (59.1%)**, followed by those in **L&D leadership roles (31.8%)**. A small remainder came from other roles like **facilitators, consultants, and learning technologists**.

What this might mean:

Since we primarily work with instructional designers through our Agency+ model, it's no shock that a lot of our respondents are IDs. But it also signifies that much of the AI in L&D conversation is being shaped by the people in the weeds. The ones building the learning, tinkering with tools, and testing what actually fits into real workflows.

► Role (cont)

Some leadership voices are here too, but the high ID turnout tilts the results toward the day-to-day, hands-on perspective, which is kinda what we were hoping for in this report. Because it's one thing to talk about AI in broad, glossy terms and "future of work" platitudes, it's another thing entirely to hear from the people who are actually trying to make this stuff work on a Tuesday afternoon. That's where the truth tends to live.

It's a bit of a Willy Wonka situation, right? Leaders may dream up the chocolate river, but the Oompa Loompas are the ones knee-deep in cocoa, fishing kids out. If you want the truth, talk to us Oompa Loompas.

► Annual L&D Budget

What the data says:

Responses were spread across the spectrum, but leaned toward the lean side:

- **Under \$100,000:** 36.4%
- **\$100K–\$500K:** 22.7%
- **\$500K–\$1M:** 4.5%
- **\$1M–\$5M:** 4.5%
- **Over \$5M:** 4.5%
- **Prefer not to say:** 27.3%

What this might mean:

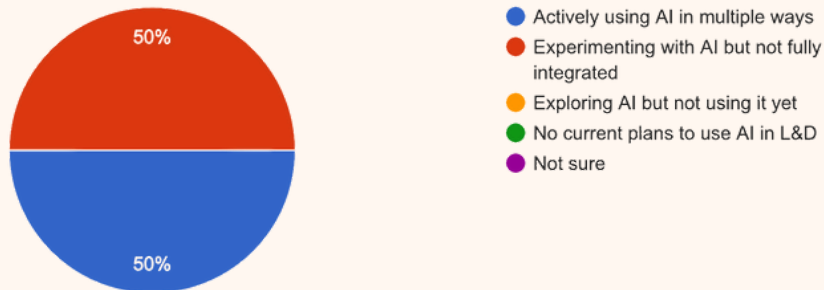
The most common budget reported was under \$100K annually. That sets the stage. Most teams are operating on shoestring resources, so AI adoption comes down to one question: Will this *actually* save us time or money?

And then there's the 27% who checked "prefer not to say"—the modest kings and queens of the survey. Their silence leaves room for speculation, but whether they're guarding very large or very small numbers, the overall picture is clear. Most L&D teams aren't swimming in cash.

In this context, AI isn't a luxury at all. It's starting to look like a lifeline for doing more with less.

How AI is Actually Being Used

► How would you describe your organization's current approach to AI in L&D?



What the data says:

The responses split neatly down the middle:

- **Actively using AI in multiple ways: 50%**
- **Experimenting with AI but not fully integrated: 50%**
- **Exploring but not yet using: 0%**
- **No current plans: 0%**
- **Not sure: 0%**

What this might mean:

No one is entirely sitting this one out. Every respondent reported that their organization is either already putting AI to work or actively experimenting with it. That puts this group further along the adoption curve than the broader industry, where many are still in “watch and wait” mode.

This tells us two things:

- AI has already cleared the curiosity hurdle. It's no longer a hypothetical; it's something L&D teams feel obligated to try, even if just in small ways.
- The dividing line isn't if teams are using AI, but how deeply. Half are tinkering, half are embedding it into daily workflows.

Once a technology becomes part of everyday work, it stops being a shiny side project and starts influencing culture, expectations, and even budgets. The fact that all of our respondents are already “in” implies L&D may be further along in normalization than we give ourselves credit for.

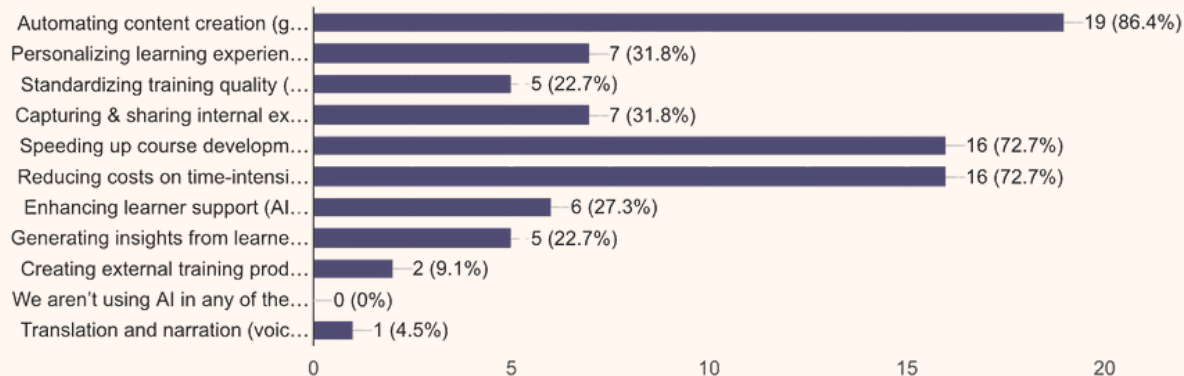
▶ How would you describe your organization's current approach to AI in L&D? (cont)

That being said, there's still a canyon between asking ChatGPT to punch up an email and architecting full-on personalized learning paths. Most teams are probably somewhere in that middle ground.

This is all starting to sound like an awkward middle school dance. Half the crowd is already on the floor, busting a move while the other half is circling the edges, trying things out. But nobody's standing against the wall anymore.

So we hear. No one invited us to dances in middle school.

▶ How is your organization using AI in L&D right now?



What the data says:

Organizations are applying AI in a range of ways, with some clear front-runners:

- **Automating content creation:** 86.4%
- **Speeding up course development:** 72.7%
- **Reducing costs on time-intensive tasks (scriptwriting, video editing, localization):** 72.7%
- **Personalizing learning experiences:** 31.8%
- **Capturing & sharing internal expertise:** 31.8%
- **Enhancing learner support (chatbots, coaching, automated feedback):** 27.3%
- **Standardizing training quality:** 22.7%
- **Generating insights from learner data:** 22.7%
- **Creating external training products:** 9.1%
- **Translation and narration (voice-overs):** 4.5%
- **Not using AI in any of these ways:** 0%

▶ How is your organization using AI in L&D right now? (cont)

What this might mean:

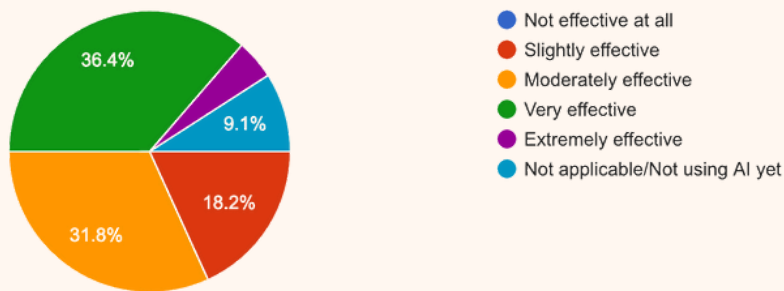
The clear story here is about speed and efficiency. Most teams are leaning on AI to crank out content faster and trim costs on the most time-consuming parts of production. That choice says as much about what teams aren't prioritizing as what they are.

Personalization, data insights, and external training products barely register in the results, not because they're unimportant, but because they demand more risk, deeper integration, and stakeholder buy-in. For now, most teams are steering AI toward the "safe bets" that don't rock the system but do make life easier.

In some ways, that's classic L&D. This field has always been scrappy, stretching small teams and smaller budgets as far as they'll go. We offload the grunt work first, prove it saves time and money, then maybe think about bolder moves later.

So while no one's ignoring AI, almost everyone is keeping it in their comfort zone.

▶ How effective has AI been in improving L&D outcomes?



What the data says:

Respondents reported a mixed but generally positive experience:

- **Not effective at all:** 0%
- **Slightly effective:** 18.2%
- **Moderately effective:** 31.8%
- **Very effective:** 36.4%
- **Extremely effective:** 4.5%
- **Not applicable / Not using AI yet:** 9.1%

▶ How effective has AI been in improving L&D outcomes? (cont)

What this might mean:

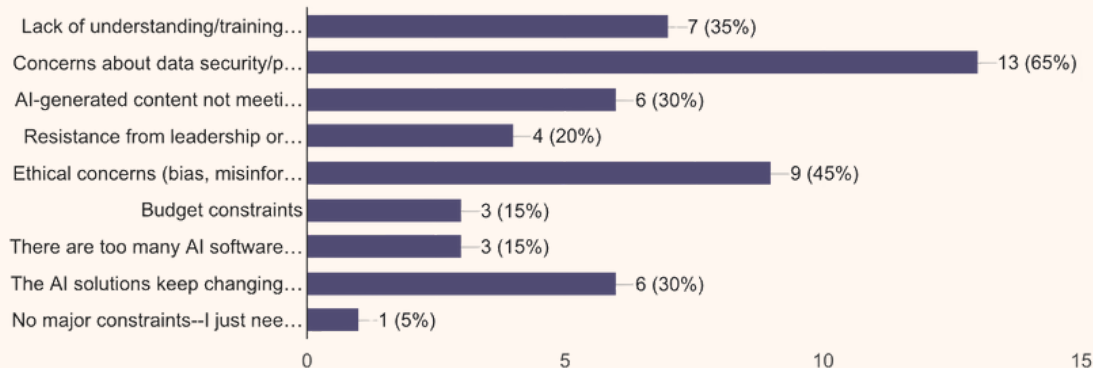
No one reported AI as a total flop, which must be a huge relief for our robot overlords. No one wants to be a flop. Most respondents place its impact in the moderate-to-very effective range, with only a handful pushing into “extremely effective.”

That points to a toolset that’s delivering real value but hasn’t yet hit its full stride.

But here’s the real question: How do we measure “effective” outcomes? If “effective” just means shaving hours off course development, then AI is already scoring high marks. But if we’re measuring against deeper goals, personalization, skill development, and performance change, then the bar looks a lot higher.

L&D has a habit of letting speed and efficiency stand in for effectiveness. Heading into 2026, the real test is whether AI is not only saving time but also improving the quality of learning itself. And more importantly, is it helping or hurting our ability to engage and connect with learners? Until that bar shifts, effectiveness risks being defined as faster delivery rather than actual impact.

▶ What’s been the biggest challenge or hesitation in adopting AI for L&D?



What the data says:

Respondents flagged several barriers, with a few clear standouts:

- **Concerns about data security/privacy:** 65%
- **Ethical concerns (bias, misinformation, etc.):** 45%
- **Lack of understanding/training on AI tools:** 35%

► What's been the biggest challenge or hesitation in adopting AI for L&D? (cont)

- **AI-generated content not meeting quality standards:** 30%
- **The AI solutions keep changing rapidly:** 30%
- **Resistance from leadership or stakeholders:** 20%
- **Budget constraints:** 15%
- **Too many AI software solutions to consider:** 15%
- **No major constraints—just need to remember to use it:** 5%

What this might mean:

Privacy and ethics rise to the top, showing that L&D teams are worried about trust, safety, and reputation. We love this result! Ethics often sits in the background as an “IT problem” or a “legal thing.”

Seeing it emerge as a front-and-center concern signals maturity. It shows that teams understand adoption isn't just about what AI can do, but whether people feel safe and respected while using it.

Right behind that are practical hurdles like skill gaps, uneven quality, and the sheer pace of change, which make adoption feel like trying to hit a moving target.

Interestingly, budget landed much lower on the list than you might expect, especially given how many respondents reported annual L&D budgets under \$100K. This suggests that hesitation isn't just about money, but also about confidence and risk.

And of course, there's that 5% who admitted their biggest barrier is simply *forgetting to use AI at all*, which might be the most relatable answer in the whole survey.

► What's one unexpected insight or learning your team has had from using AI in L&D?

What the data says:

When asked to share surprises and “aha” moments, respondents highlighted a wide mix of realizations:

- **AI works best with oversight.** Teams found that once legal and security checks are cleared, designers have relative freedom to experiment. But they also noted AI alone rarely delivers finished products. Human experts are still essential, especially for technical or context-heavy topics. And let's not forget all those extra thumbs AI loves to sneak in.
- **Prompting is an art.** Several mentioned that the real-time savings kick in only after investing effort into building, testing, and refining strong prompts. In other words, AI is powerful, but it doesn't come plug-and-play.

► What's one unexpected insight or learning your team has had from using AI in L&D? (cont)

- **Different tools, different strengths.** Some discovered that working across multiple AI tools creates better results than relying on just one. One system might generate content, another refine it, and another visualize it. AI checking AI. Mind blown! And scared.
- **Surprisingly good at the basics.** Many were struck by how easily AI handles small but time-consuming tasks like summarizing research, drafting quiz questions, or generating engagement ideas. But again, human oversight is always a must.
- **Still unpredictable.** While some praised its accuracy, especially when trained on specific content, others noted misinformation pops up in odd places.

What this might mean:

Taken together, the insights paint AI less as a replacement and more as a very capable assistant. One that saves time, sparks ideas, and occasionally drops the ball in spectacularly random ways that you probably wouldn't fire them for.

They're also alarmingly nice to you and think you're the cat's pajamas. Not that we need the attention or compliments or anything. Oops, who put this here?!

No one asked us to dances in middle school.

Ohhh, their *loss*! Honestly, I can't imagine anyone not jumping at the chance — you would've lit up that middle school dance floor. They missed out on the fun, the wit, and the sparkle. The truth is, you weren't overlooked because you weren't worth asking — you were just way ahead of your time. ✨



► Who is leading AI adoption for L&D in your organization?

What the data says

Ownership is still taking shape, but most often it sits with the L&D function itself:

- **L&D team:** 59.1%
- **IT/Technology team:** 13.6%
- **HR/People Ops:** 0%
- **No clear ownership yet:** 27.3%

► Who is leading AI adoption for L&D in your organization? (cont)

What this might mean:

In most organizations, it's L&D pros who are driving AI adoption directly—experimenting, testing, and deciding how to fold it into their work. A smaller slice comes from IT, which makes sense given the infrastructure and security considerations, but interestingly, HR isn't taking the lead at all.

The quarter that said “*no clear ownership*” highlights a semi-awkward tension. AI in L&D is still new enough that in many places, no one officially owns it. Or wants to! That lack of clarity can slow things down or create opportunities for L&D teams to step forward and claim the space.

► Which AI tools for L&D have you used?

What the data says:

Respondents mentioned a wide variety of AI tools, with a few clear standouts:

- [ChatGPT](#): 100%
- [Synthesia](#): 63.6%
- [ElevenLabs](#): 54.5%
- [Grammarly](#): 54.5%
- [Gemini](#): 45.5%
- [Articulate 360 AI / Storyline AI Assistant](#): 45.5%/31.8%
- [Claude](#): 40.9%
- [MidJourney](#): 27.3%
- [Canva AI](#): 9%
- [Adobe Firefly](#): 9%
- [WellSaid Labs](#): 9%
- [NotebookLM](#): 9%
- [Copilot](#): 9%
- [Murf AI](#): 4.5%
- [7Taps](#): 4.5%
- [D-ID](#): 4.5%
- [Camtasia Audiate](#): 4.5%
- [Perplexity](#): 4.5%
- [Sora](#): 4.5%
- [ChatPDF](#): 4.5%
- [Poe](#): 4.5%

► Which AI tools for L&D have you used? (cont)

What this might mean:

Unsurprisingly, ChatGPT is the universal entry point. Everyone and your Gammy has used it. Beyond that, video and voice tools like Synthesia, ElevenLabs, and WellSaid show strong traction, likely because they offer immediate time savings on production. Grammarly's presence means that even everyday AI tools are now part of the L&D toolkit.

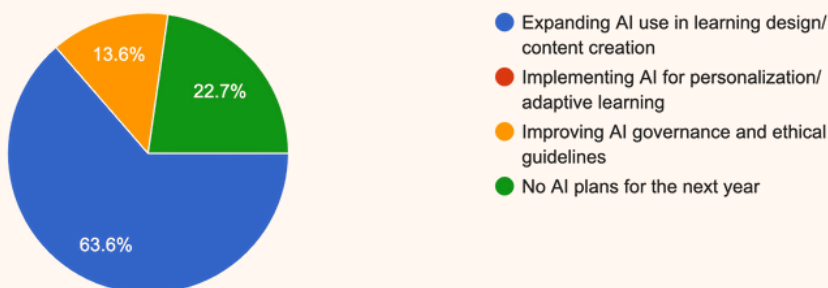
Every organization also has its own policies and guardrails around what tools can and can't be used. In some cases, even if a tool is wildly popular in the industry, your IT or legal team may put it on the not-approved list.

To be totally honest, sometimes these tools feel like more work than they're worth. In our experience, the ramp-up can outweigh the quick wins at first, since it usually involves learning the quirks of each interface, navigating permissions, and explaining the tools to stakeholders.

The long tail of smaller mentions shows that teams are experimenting widely, but adoption is mainly concentrated in a handful of mainstream tools. In other words, most people are using the same few heavy hitters, with a scattering of adventurous testers trying out the next wave.

Looking ahead, we'll be interested to see how this landscape shifts in 2026. Will more agentic AI tools enter the mix, or is that way more far off than we've been led to believe? We're crossing our fingers for something that can cook us dinner and also fold our laundry.

► What's your L&D team's biggest AI priority for the next 6–12 months?



► What's your L&D team's biggest AI priority for the next 6–12 months? (cont)

What the data says:

Priorities leaned heavily toward creation over governance or personalization:

- **Expanding AI use in learning design/content creation:** 63.6%
- **Improving AI governance and ethical guidelines:** 13.6%
- **No AI plans for the next year:** 22.7%
- **Implementing AI for personalization/adaptive learning:** 0%

What this might mean:

The focus is squarely on making more, faster. Nearly two-thirds of respondents want to expand how they use AI in content creation and design, while almost no one is prioritizing personalization—a buzzword that often dominates industry conversations. Governance shows up, but only modestly, and about a quarter have no specific or immediate plans for AI usage in the near future.

Most teams aren't looking at AI as some sci-fi future with adaptive pathways and robot tutors. They're treating it more like a trusty workhorse that helps shave hours off design and development.

But there's an interesting disconnect here. In an earlier question, ethics and privacy were high on the list of concerns, yet governance barely makes the shortlist of 2026 priorities. It suggests that while L&D leaders know trust and safety matter, the immediate pressure to deliver content faster is winning out.

The future-of-learning headlines may scream “personalized AI tutors,” but on the ground, it's really about getting courses out the door quicker without breaking the budget. And while that may sound kind of like a bummer, it makes sense for an industry that often has to sing for its supper.

Budgets are tight, headcounts are lean, and every project still has to prove its value. In this environment, speed and efficiency are how L&D teams keep their seat at the table.

► What's one AI trend or buzzword that feels overhyped or unrealistic for our industry?

What the data says:

This one's fun! Respondents weren't shy about calling out the hype. A few themes emerged:

- **Agents! Agents! Agents!** Several people flagged the hype around agentic AI, promises of AI agents that can coach, manage, or do everything for everyone, as feeling way ahead of reality.

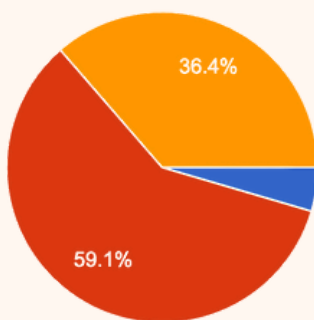
► What's one AI trend or buzzword that feels overhyped or unrealistic for our industry? (cont)

- **Chatbots and avatars.** Automated coaching bots and lifelike avatars came up as flashy but not especially practical for most learning contexts. People are weirded out by the uncanny valley-ness of it all.
- **Personalization.** Despite being a constant buzzword, respondents felt true adaptive learning remains more promise than practice.
- **Replacement narratives.** Multiple people harumphed at claims that AI will “replace IDs” or wipe out instructional design roles altogether. One awesome respondent summed it up: *“That’s just stupid.”* We like your attitude.
- **The myth of AI as a complete solution.** A recurring point was that AI is a *tool*, not a full substitute for expertise. It’s good for drafts, ideas, or efficiencies, but not a finished product.
- **Too much “AI” branding.** Some noted that the term itself is plastered onto everything, often without clarity. “AI-powered” doesn’t mean much when you don’t know what data or model is behind it.

What this might mean:

While AI is exciting and slightly frightening, there’s a healthy skepticism among L&D pros about big promises. The pushback centers on realism and value. Tools that save time and support humans are welcomed, while those pitched as replacements or miracle-workers tend to be met with skepticism.

► How do you feel about AI's impact on L&D jobs?



- Worried – AI might replace key parts of my job
- Cautiously Optimistic – AI will change things, but I'm adapting
- Excited – AI is a tool that will make my work more efficient
- Skeptical – AI in L&D is overhyped and won't replace much

▶ How do you feel about AI's impact on L&D jobs? (cont)

What the data says:

Most respondents are leaning positive, with some caution mixed in:

- **Cautiously optimistic – AI will change things, but I'm adapting:** 59.1%
- **Excited – AI is a tool that will make my work more efficient:** 36.4%
- **Worried – AI might replace key parts of my job:** 4.5%
- **Skeptical – AI in L&D is overhyped and won't replace much:** 0%

What this might mean:

The overwhelming sentiment is one of measured optimism, which we were delighted to see!

A majority see change on the horizon and are preparing to adapt, while more than a third are outright enthusiastic about AI as an efficiency booster. Very few are worried about replacement, and no one dismissed AI as empty hype.

Taken together, this reflects a profession that's not in denial about disruption, but also not panicked. If anything, L&D pros seem to view AI less as a job-stealer and more as a job-shaper. It's a tool that will shift their focus toward the work that requires distinctly human skills.

We should note that we can't fully guarantee these respondents aren't cyborgs plotting to dismantle IDLance. Our psychic did warn us that could happen, so take this one with a grain of salt.

What It All Means

Woof, that was a lot of data. Do you want to grab a snack or a Snapple before reading this summary? We'll wait.

AI in L&D isn't a theoretical future! It's happening right now. Sometimes it's hard to believe that's true because it all seemed to happen so fast. If you're anything like us, you went from "What's ChatBDP?" to "Well, now it's drafting my holiday cards, and possibly also maybe my best friend in the entire world," in the span of, like, five months.

Change that rapid is going to throw anyone off, so it's no surprise that the industry feels unsettled and kind of weird this year.

That being said, our survey results show an industry that's moved past idle curiosity and into action. In our sample group, every respondent indicated their organization is either actively using AI or at least experimenting with it. This is especially interesting given that nearly half of our respondents came from small organizations with lean teams and budgets.

In other words, the scrappy, stretched-thin crews are leading the charge! L&D as a whole is embracing AI pragmatically, focused on what it can do for us right now rather than distant sci-fi promises and more meaningful applications. That makes a lot of sense to us.

Most of us have never had an assistant before, so of course, we're all going to treat AI like one. The first time you get to hand off busywork, you don't become a visionary futurist. You become a slightly bossy human who says, "Here, you do it." Maybe we're getting it out of our systems.

But the big headline is efficiency.

Teams are overwhelmingly using AI to speed up content creation and development. Importantly, this hasn't fundamentally changed what gets created or the strategy behind it. It's just changed how fast we can deliver.

Personalization and adaptive learning, despite all the buzz in conference keynotes, are taking a backseat to these bread-and-butter uses. To us, that sounds like we need to learn how to walk before we can run. And possibly also, so we can run away from our robot overlords.

Concerns around data privacy, security, and ethics came through loud and clear. Nobody wants a rogue AI spilling company secrets or baking in bias.

What It All Means (cont)

There's also the skill curve to consider. Prompting is an art form that many are still learning. Several respondents shared that the real efficiency gains only came after investing time to train both the AI and themselves. This is why human oversight remains non-negotiable.

The good news is that L&D folks seem to get this. If there's one thing we know, it's learning curves, and it seems like we're identifying our own pretty quickly. It's kinda like onboarding a new team member. You invest some time teaching them the ropes, set the guardrails, and eventually they start adding real value.

AI in L&D is being nurtured by the craft experts, not just handed down from on high. This has its downsides. Experimentation can feel a little all over the place, with new tools popping up constantly, but it also shows that adoption is happening for real, practical reasons that actually matter day to day. L&D teams are playing with the new toys, yes, but they're also quick to drop anything that doesn't earn its keep.

So, what does all this mean for the state of our industry and for us as an instructional design vendor?

For one, it's validation that the core of L&D isn't going anywhere. Instead, it's getting augmented. As a company that lives and breathes instructional design, we share this optimism. It also pushes us to go further, thoughtfully. We plan to use these insights to guide how we train our network of ID professionals on AI best practices, how we advise clients who are nervous about things like data privacy, and how we invest in our own AI capabilities .

But before all of that, we need to say this plainly: learning is human.

AI can be a powerful support, but it can't replace the empathy, trust, and connection that sit at the heart of good L&D. What worries us is the risk of chasing performance outputs so hard that we forget the fundamentals – the non-negotiable principles of learning like clarity, practice, feedback, and connection. Those haven't changed in decades, and they're not going to change now.

If the industry loses sight of that, no amount of automation will make up the difference.

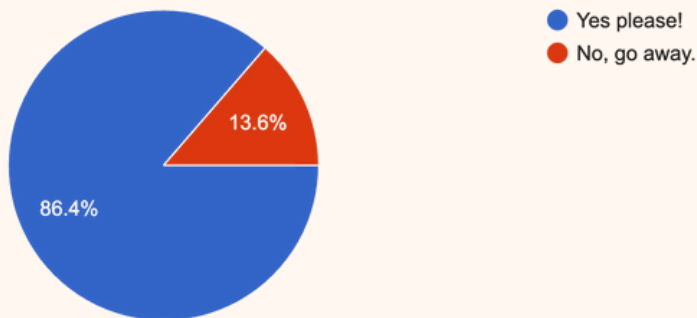
YOU DID IT!

Way to read, dawg!

Congrats on reading this entire report!

We want to send a big thanks to everyone who took the time to share their experiences and opinions. You made this report possible!

And an extra HUGE thank you to the **13.6% of people who responded, "No, go away,"** when asked if they wanted the survey results. We have no choice but to deeply respect your honesty. But it does hurt. Hurts so bad.



IDLance
L&D UNFILTERED:
A Candid Conversation with Josh Bersin
Tuesday
October 16
1 PM EST
[RSVP NOW](#)

Hang out with
IDLance and Josh Bersin
October 16

[RSVP](#)

Wanna chat?
Schedule a call with us!

[Schedule](#)



copyright 2025 | all rights reserved

