

Building an Effective Learning Culture Initiative: Preliminary Report



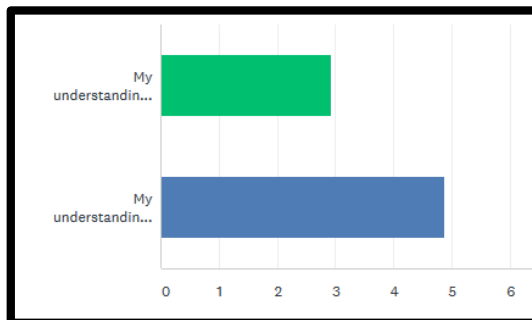
Background

In January 2017, library teams from around North America embarked upon a new Infopeople learning initiative, Building an Effective Learning Culture (BELC). The online learning initiative continued through June 2017 and included virtual mentoring, bite-sized learning content, and experiential learning opportunities, which focused on applying concepts and strategies locally.

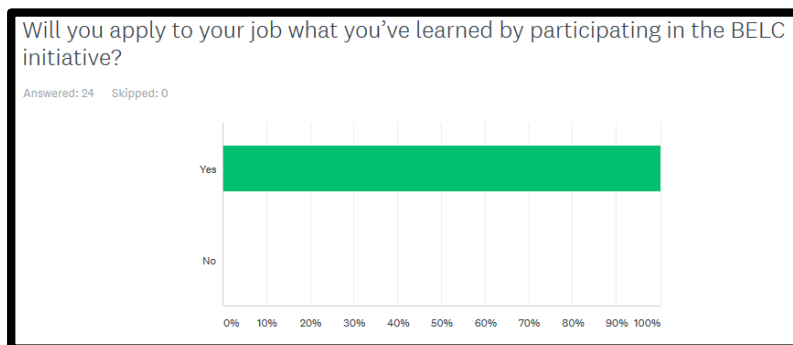
Measuring Impact

As the initiative ended, team members were asked to complete an evaluation, measuring their perceptions of the value of various initiative components and assessing their growth and change. Mentors were also asked to complete an online evaluation, which captured input about their experiences and opinions regarding the initiative. 24 team members completed the evaluation and 8 mentors completed the mentor evaluation.

Results



Team member survey respondents were asked to rate their understanding of how to build an effective library learning culture BEFORE participating in this initiative and their understanding of how to build an effective library learning culture AFTER participating in this initiative. 100% indicated an increase in understanding. (Overall scores increased from 2.92 to 4.88 on a 6 point scale)



100% of team member survey respondents said they will apply what they learned.

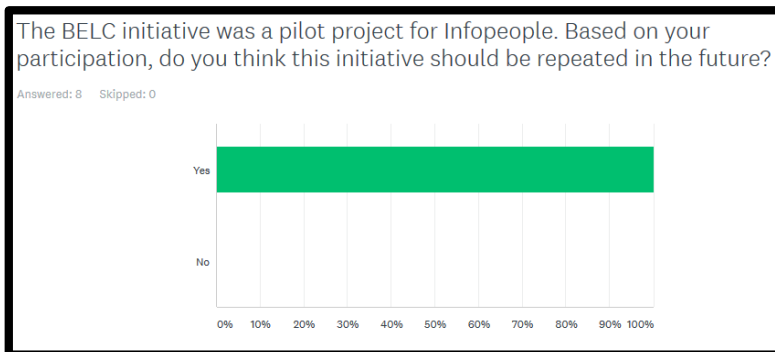
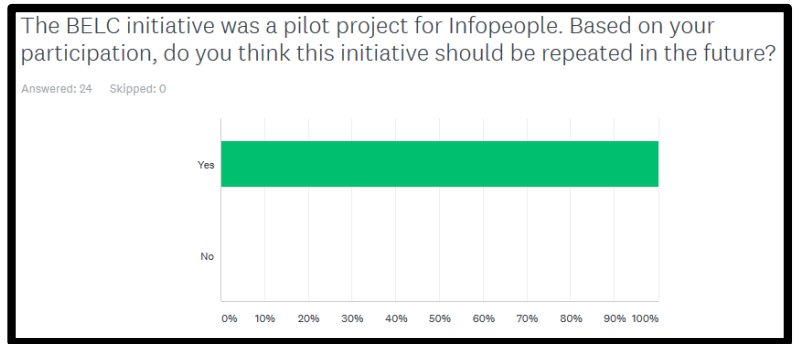
Team member survey respondents were asked to rate the value of various initiative components, including the instructors' knowledge, content, assignments, and mentor. The instructors and the mentors were rated highest.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total	Weighted Average
The instructors' knowledge of the topic	4.17% 1	0.00% 0	8.33% 2	12.50% 3	41.67% 10	33.33% 8	24	4.88
The contribution of the initiative content to your understanding of the topics	0.00% 0	4.17% 1	20.83% 5	25.00% 6	25.00% 6	25.00% 6	24	4.46
The contribution of the assignments, activities and exercises to your learning of new skills	0.00% 0	8.33% 2	16.67% 4	33.33% 8	20.83% 5	20.83% 5	24	4.29
The contribution of your team's mentor to what you learned	0.00% 0	12.50% 3	12.50% 3	8.33% 2	33.33% 8	33.33% 8	24	4.63

Team member survey respondents were asked how useful the initiative was to them in various ways. They rated it most useful in assessing their library's learning culture.

	1 Not at all useful	2	3	4	5	6 Very useful	Total	Weighted Average
Articulating the importance of a learning organization to staff and the community	0.00% 0	4.17% 1	12.50% 3	29.17% 7	16.67% 4	37.50% 9	24	4.71
Assessing your library's learning culture	4.17% 1	0.00% 0	4.17% 1	12.50% 3	41.67% 10	37.50% 9	24	5.00
Setting goals for building a learning culture	0.00% 0	4.17% 1	4.17% 1	20.83% 5	37.50% 9	33.33% 8	24	4.92
Creating a plan for organizational learning	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	12.50% 3	16.67% 4	45.83% 11	25.00% 6	24	4.83
Creating a safe environment for risk taking and experimentation	0.00% 0	8.33% 2	20.83% 5	25.00% 6	25.00% 6	20.83% 5	24	4.29
Incorporating learning into daily life for all staff members	4.17% 1	4.17% 1	12.50% 3	25.00% 6	41.67% 10	12.50% 3	24	4.33
Encouraging staff to share learning and knowledge in a meaningful way to others	4.17% 1	4.17% 1	8.33% 2	25.00% 6	25.00% 6	33.33% 8	24	4.63
Allowing for the application of learning after learning events and experiences	4.17% 1	0.00% 0	16.67% 4	16.67% 4	37.50% 9	25.00% 6	24	4.58

100% of team member survey respondents said they think the initiative should be repeated in the future.



100% of mentor survey respondents said they think the initiative should be repeated in the future.

Successes and Lessons Learned

In a number of ways, the instructional approach used for BELC was different than the instructional approach normally used for Infopeople’s courses. Two significant differences were the technology used and also the team approach.

Team Approach: Infopeople chose to organize this learning initiative as a team effort. The team member evaluation asked, “Was the team approach beneficial to your organization? Explain why or why not.” 22 team members responded to the question and all said that yes, it was beneficial to work on the initiative as a team. Others reported that working together on the team helped strengthen their organizational teams and some individuals felt that it improved their own teamwork skills. Some will keep the team working together, “It was good to discuss with our team and it will help having a team moving forward.” A few respondents noted that finding time for team meetings was an issue.

“I think that the discussions we had among our team enriched the experience a great deal. I would not have benefited as much as I did if I had completed the program on my own.”

Technology: Most Infopeople courses are delivered using the Moodle learning platform. However, for this initiative, different tools were used, including the Docebo learning management system for course content and Slack messaging for communication. While a couple of team members included positive comments about the opportunity to learn to use new technological tools, a majority of respondents felt it was confusing and challenging to use the two different tools, “I did not like the format of Slack or going between the different platforms. It was hard to follow or know where I was at in the course or what the next assignment was. Too many tools!” While Infopeople instructors and support created tutorials and provided technology assistance, the busy participants were already struggling to find time to work on course content and many did not want to spend additional time learning to use new technological tools. As one person noted, “Honestly, the technology impeded the ease of completing the class.”

Successes: It is perhaps in response to the question “Please describe your team’s learning culture growth and achievements during the initiative. Include any activities, events, improvements and changes to plans/processes/systems, etc.” that the impact of the initiative is best seen. Respondents mentioned a number of actions, activities, and events, including:

- “We were **able to better articulate our goals** and what we'd like to do moving forward.”
- “One major change has been the **time set aside for personal development**—this tells staff that their Learning Time is important.”
- “A second major change is the **Staff Development Day**—having a few hours set aside for everyone to give presentations and learn from each other is great.”
- “We had no **learning plan** before this initiative and now we do. While it is going to take time and patience to implement new trainings, at least we have a starting point.”
- “We created a learning plan that was approved by administration, and **the concepts and vocabulary of learning culture have made their way into our top administrators' rhetoric when speaking to all groups.**”
- “Implemented a way for staff to **share training experiences at staff meetings**”
- “I'm also excited for our **first staff learning summit**. BELC gave us a chance to take time to think deeply about learning and the best ways to make it happen”
- “A **survey was created** and that provided us with insight on what our staff wants to learn and what barriers they face that limits their ability to attend training.”
- “Our project really **helped to engage many people in our organization in the learning process** as we asked them all to contribute their experiences. It also **generated a lot of conversation** about different ways of doing things, flexibility, and challenging our processes and procedures.”
- “... opportunity to re-evaluate some of our existing policies for any gaps or inconsistencies as the library grows and expands as a learning organization”

Final Evaluation

This is a preliminary evaluation report, highlighting data from the team member and mentor evaluations administered immediately after the initiative end date. In October 2017, team members will be asked to

retake a learning culture assessment that they took in January 2017, in order to measure growth and change over time. A final report will be written after that data has been collected and analyzed. The final report will build upon evaluation data to make recommendations for future initiatives or learning opportunities on this topic.