

# Mentoring Spotlight

**Celebrating our network of mentors and mentees in partnership with Guider**



**Neil  
Cunningham**

**L&D Solutions  
Director**

**Mentor**

**Jade Gates**

**L&D Partner**

**Mentee**



# What inspired you to become a mentor Learning Network Mentoring Programme?



I was inspired to become a mentor when I first joined the network.

When solving customer challenges there's always an element of mentoring the L&D team as part of the work, but it's often sporadic. I want to be able to help someone regularly.

As a group with such a large range of skills, we can all contribute to each other's development through mentoring. The learning Network is a great way to do this.

# What inspired you to join the Learning Network Mentoring Programme?



I've worked in my organisation for almost 7 years now and I was looking to connect with other L&D professionals to learn from and share experiences with.

I'm completing my L&D Level 5 Qualification, and I've previously completed my Level 3 but I really wanted to learn more from other L&D professionals about their experience and insight.

I was absolutely thrilled when I was matched with Neil after seeing his depth of experience!

# What benefits have you gained from becoming a mentor?



From a skills development point of view, I've been able to develop my listening and coaching skills.

It's also been really valuable to hear about the challenges people face from different industries and how they're going about solving them.

I've been looking into (and trying to do more) reflective practice after hearing about through the mentoring programme.

I've also made a new friend in the industry!

# What's the most valuable skill or lesson you've learned from your mentor?



This was really difficult to choose just one moment as in every session I left feeling like I learnt something new that I could take back into my role.

I've really valued Neil's expertise in using data and insight to tell a story about learning and development, and ways to engage with different stakeholders and get them bought into the vision.

It's also helped me to understand more about the role that L&D plays in an organisation, but that L&D isn't always the answer and how important it is to think about all of these different factors.

# How does mentoring contribute to addressing broader challenges in the industry?



As L&D professionals I think we can get focused on the bit of L&D that we're good at or asked to work most on.

Mentoring (and being a mentee) helps you broaden that focus (or even change it for a while) so that you're able to take in new ideas and apply new ideas to the work that we create.

Through this diversity of thought, we can come together and build solutions that people love and help our businesses grow,

# How does mentoring contribute to addressing broader challenges in the industry?



Mentoring is one of the best ways to develop and learn, and really supports the pace of change in the L&D industry.

Being able to hear from first-hand experience helps L&D professionals keep a finger on the pulse of what's happening externally, whilst keeping them grounded and realistic about what might work in relation to their own industry.

# **Would you like to know more about the Learning Network Mentoring Programme?**

**Start Your Mentoring Journey at:**

**[thelearning-network.org/mentoring](http://thelearning-network.org/mentoring)**

