



In association with



L&D in 2026

Into the unknown

Donald H Taylor

Lead researcher,
L&D Global Sentiment Survey



– Country partner for Belgium –



– Sponsors –



– Global Media Partners –



L&D and AI

2023

2024

2025

2026



Chaos
and
overwhelm

L&D and AI

2023

2024

2025

2026

**Chaos
and
overwhelm**

**Initial
understanding
and
fascination**

L&D and AI

2023

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**Use, misuse
and
abuse**

2026

L&D and AI

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**Initial
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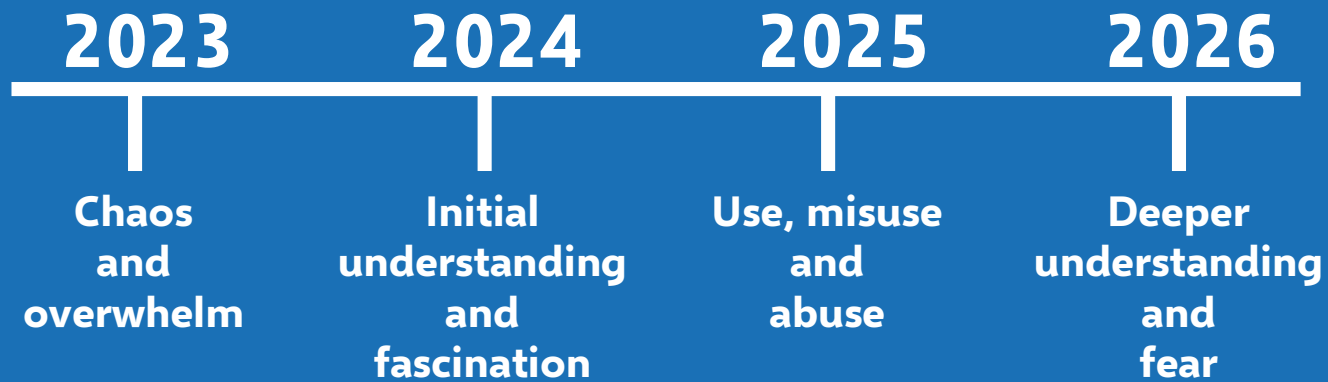
2025

**Use, misuse
and
abuse**

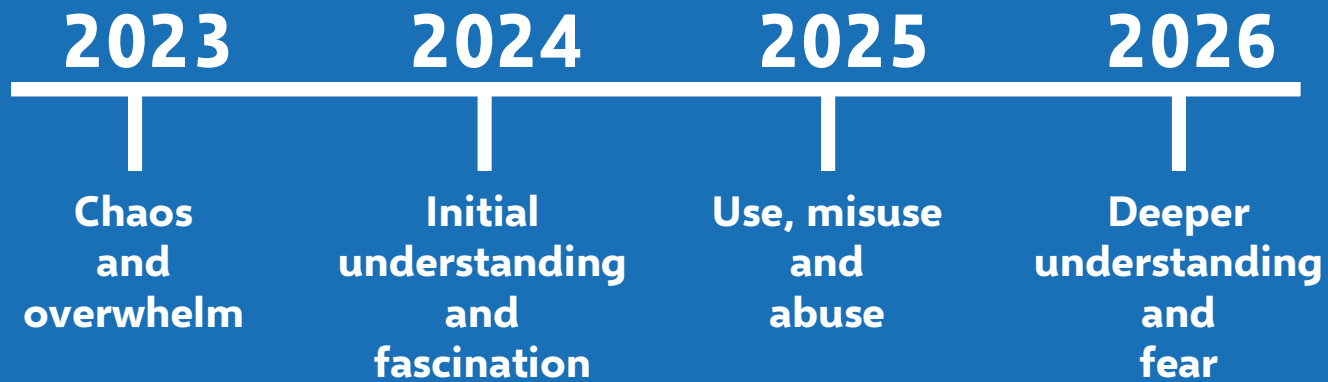
2026

**Deeper
understanding
and
fear**

L&D and AI



L&D and AI



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success

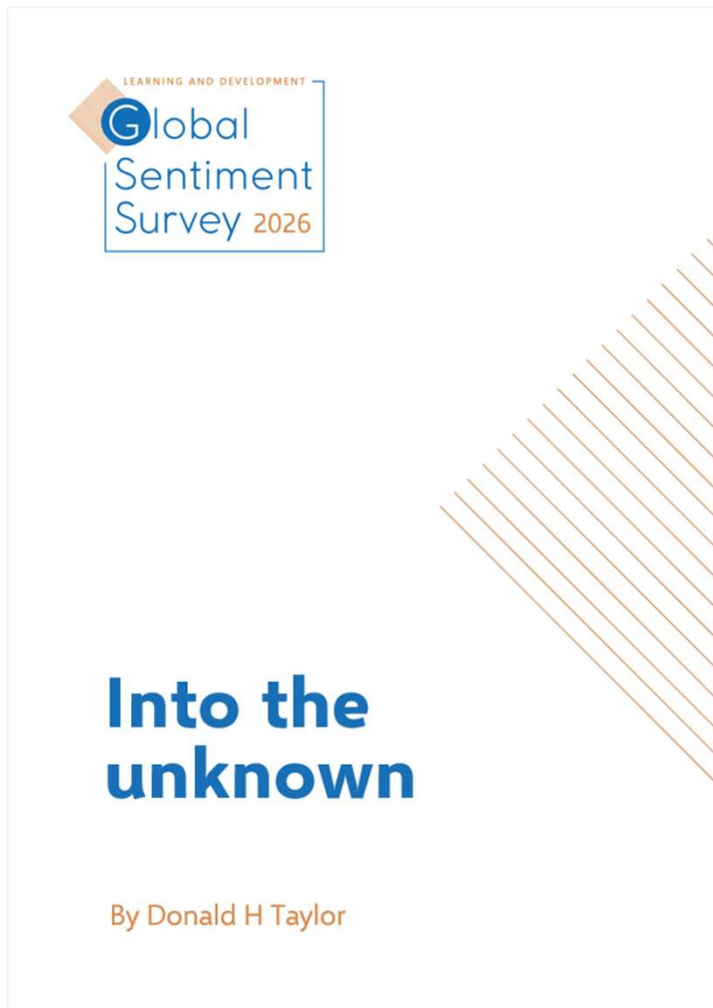
4



1

Results for 2026





Three key questions

What's hot next year?

What are your challenges?

What have you done that's new?

- ◆ Year 13
- ◆ 105 countries
- ◆ 3,797 respondents, 50% in workplace L&D

Choose up to 3 of 16 options

Artificial intelligence

Coaching/mentoring

Cohort-based learning

Collaborative/social learning

Consulting more deeply with the business

Learning analytics

Learning experience platforms

Micro learning

Performance support

Personalization/adaptive delivery

Reskilling/upskilling

Skills-based talent management

Showing value

The Metaverse

Virtual and augmented reality

Other

GSS 2026		Δ%
1. Artificial intelligence (1)	22.5%	↓
2. Reskilling/upskilling (2)	10.5%	↑
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n = 3,797

Figures in brackets show previous year's ranking

The results

GSS 2026

Key takeaways

- Interest in AI has peaked

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- L&D is using AI – selectively

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Key takeaways

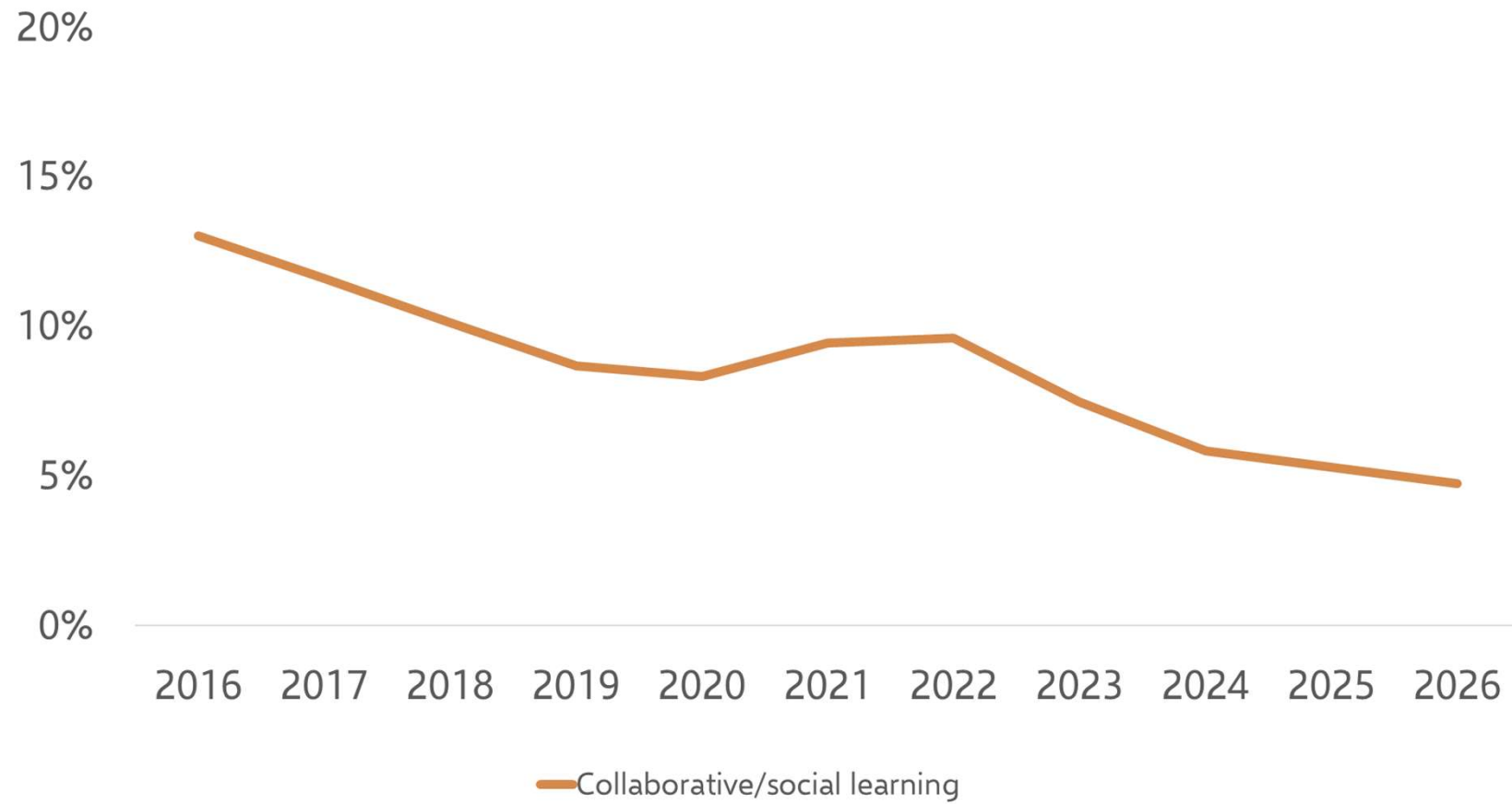
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- L&D is using AI – selectively
- Interest in value is up. A lot.

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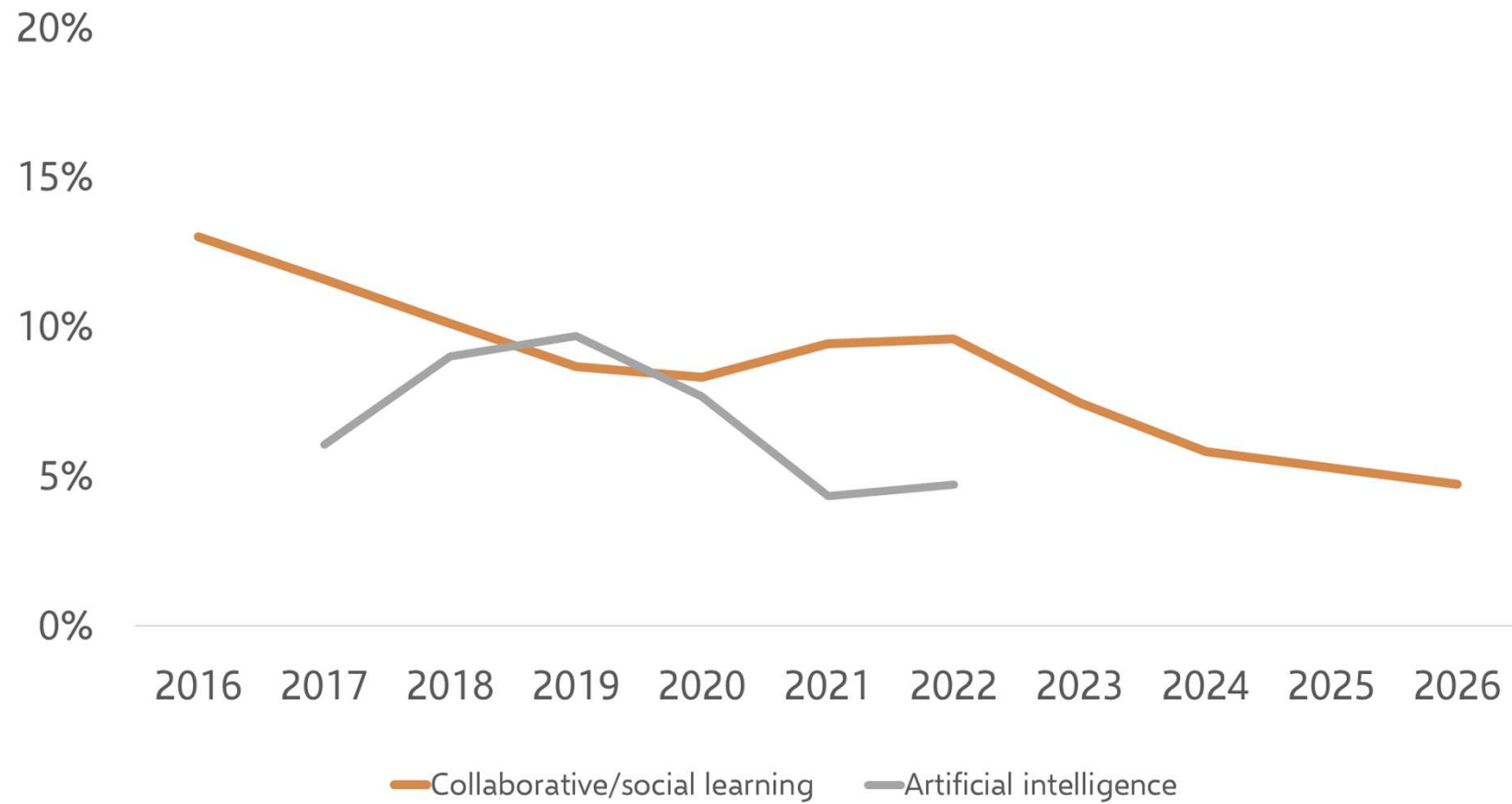
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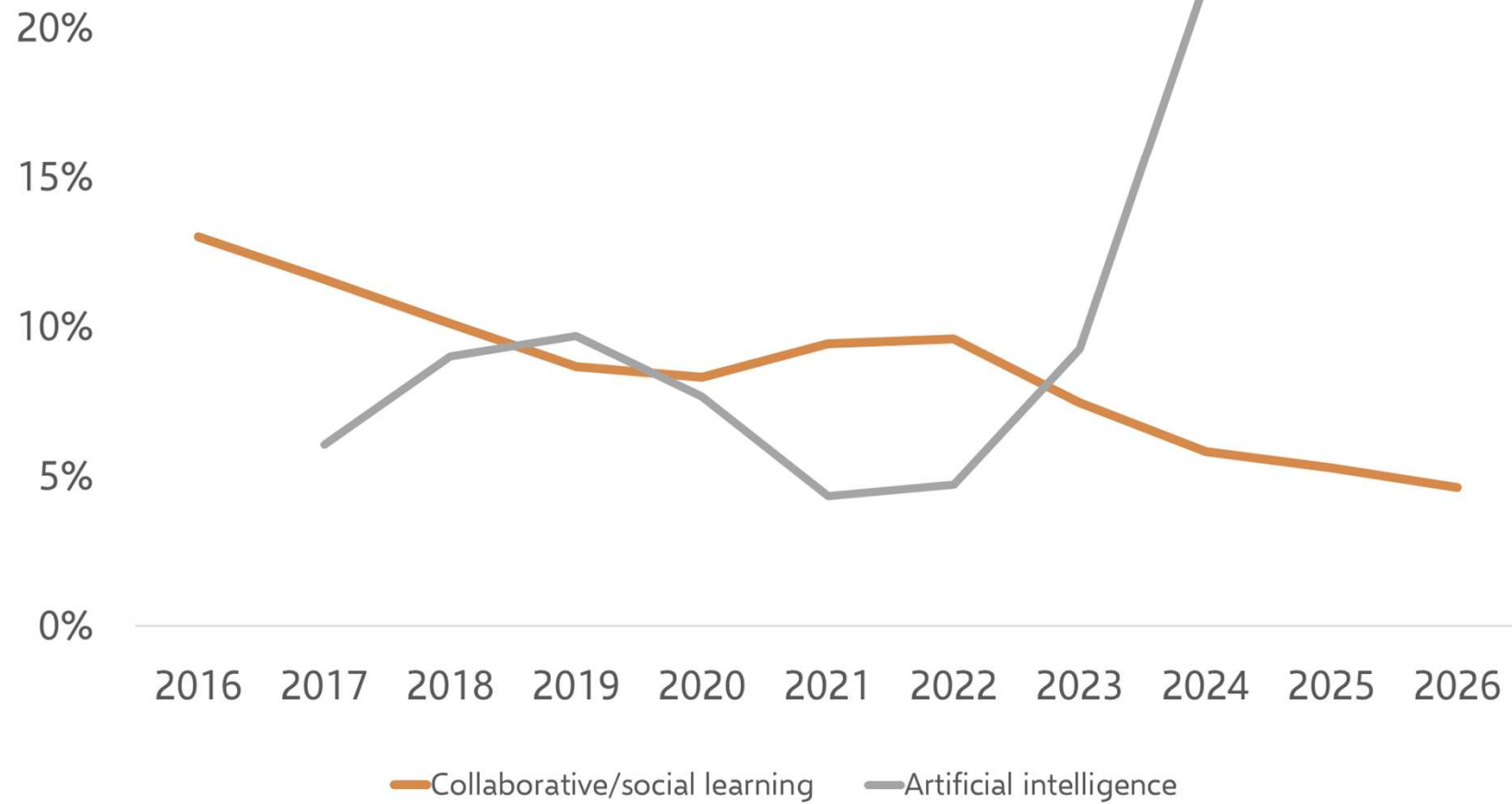
Options fall over time



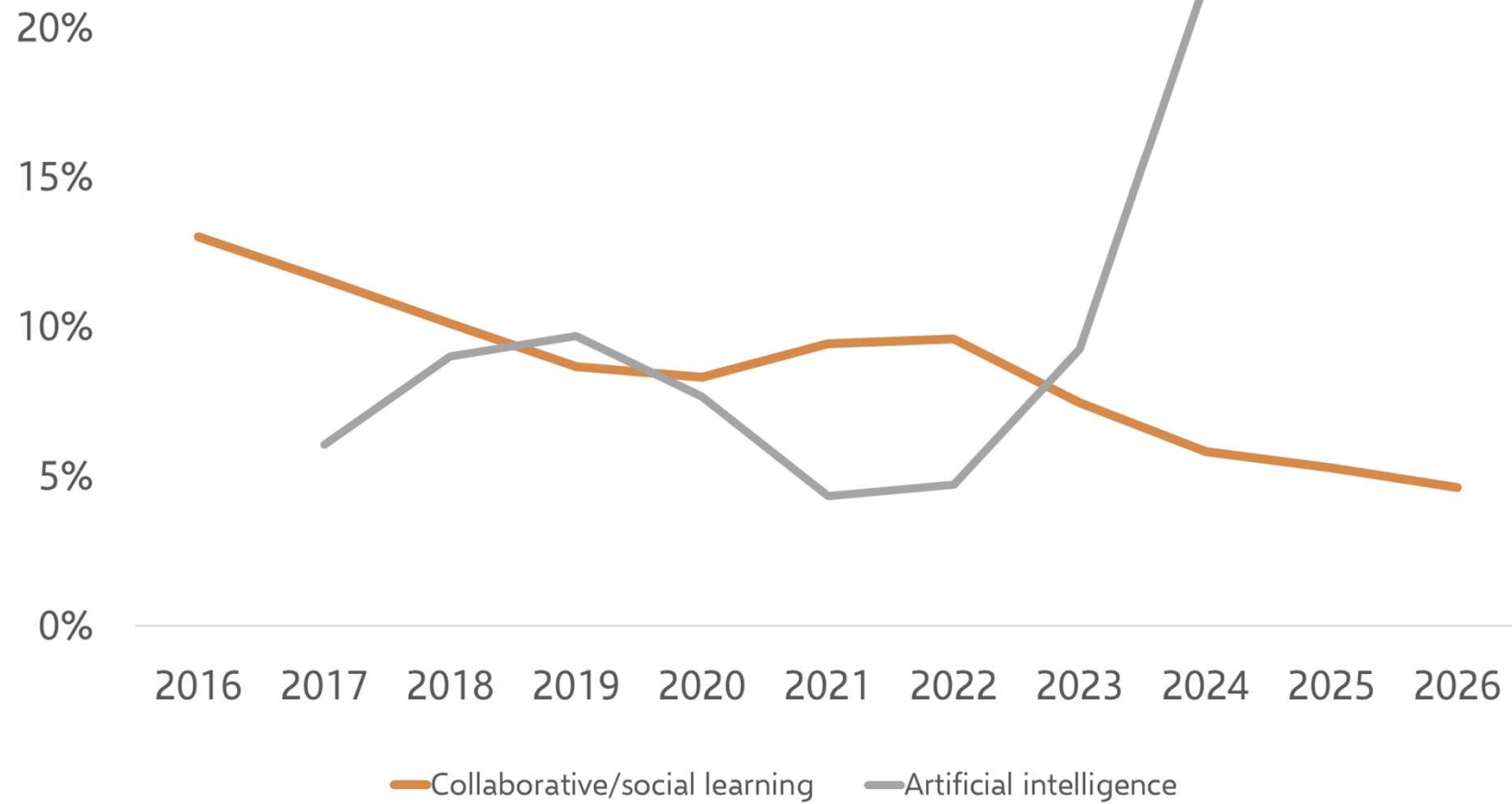
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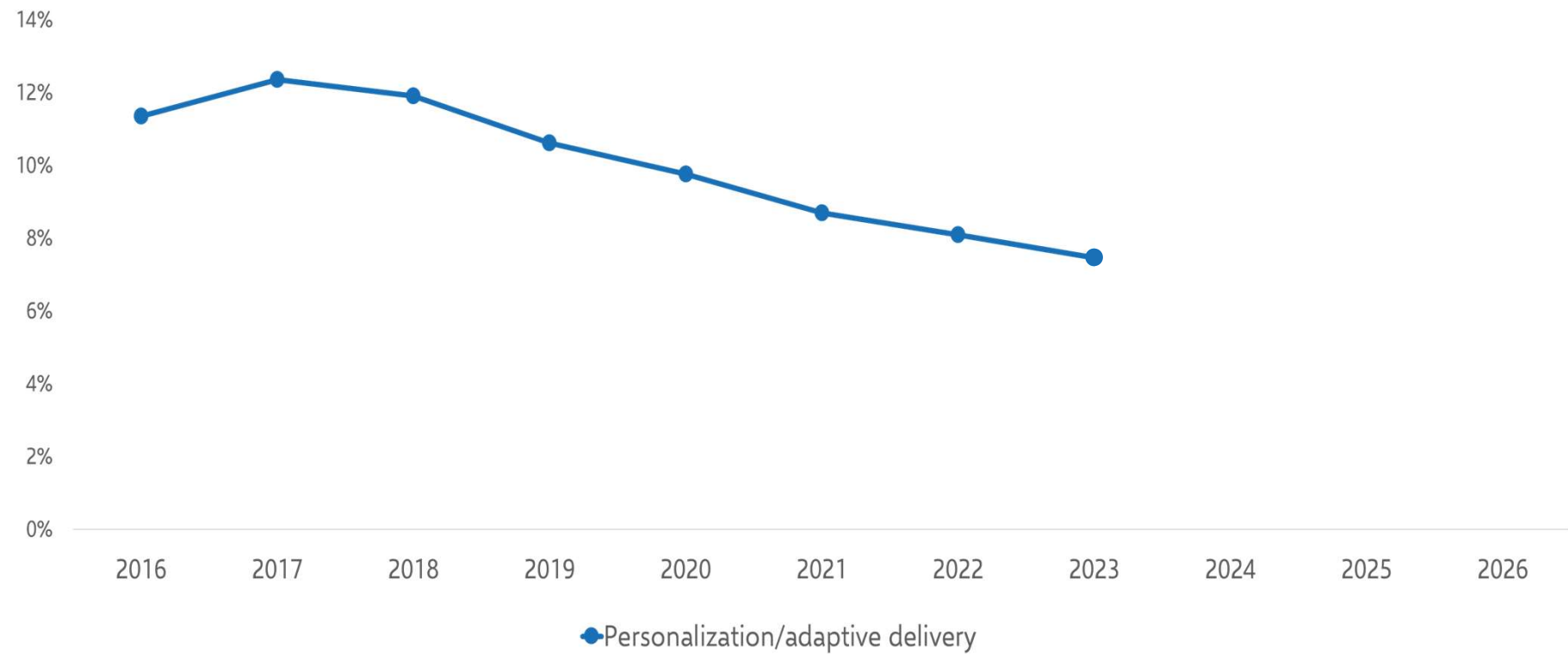
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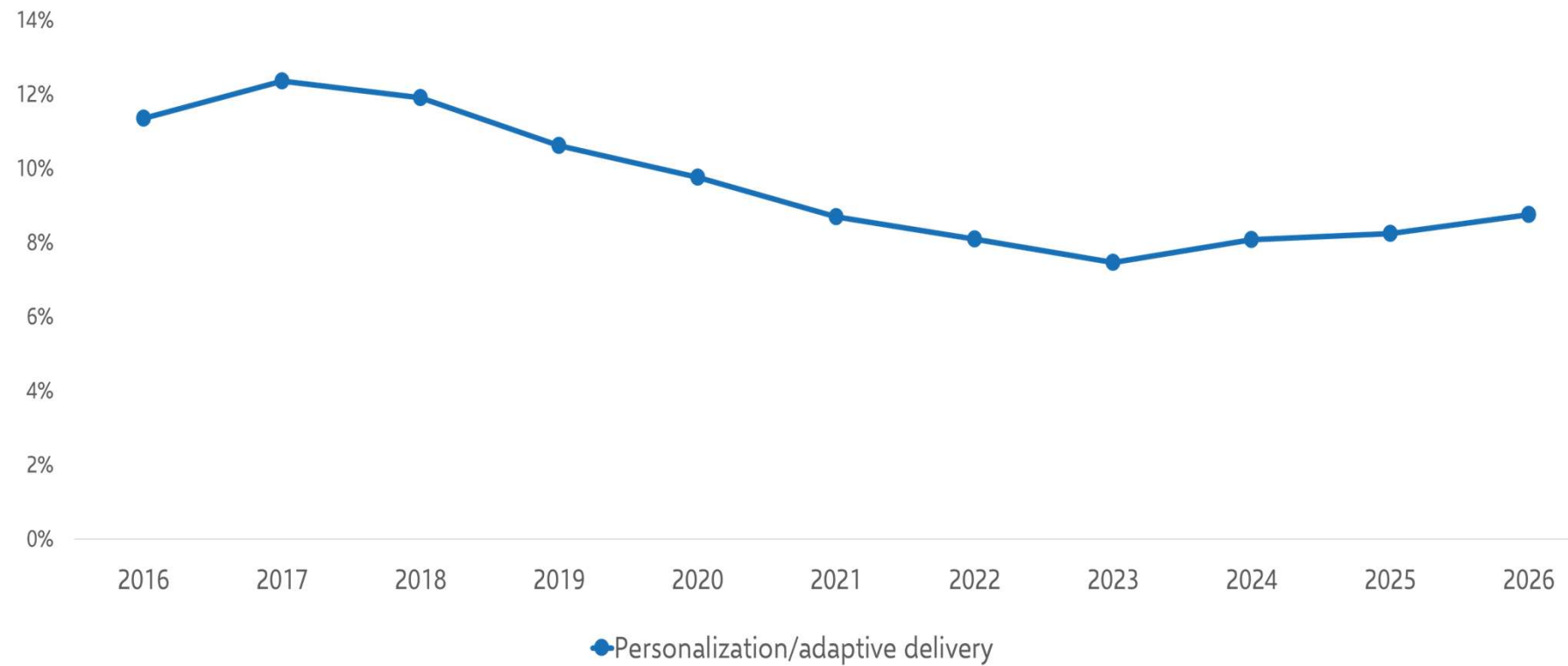
Options fall over time ... even AI



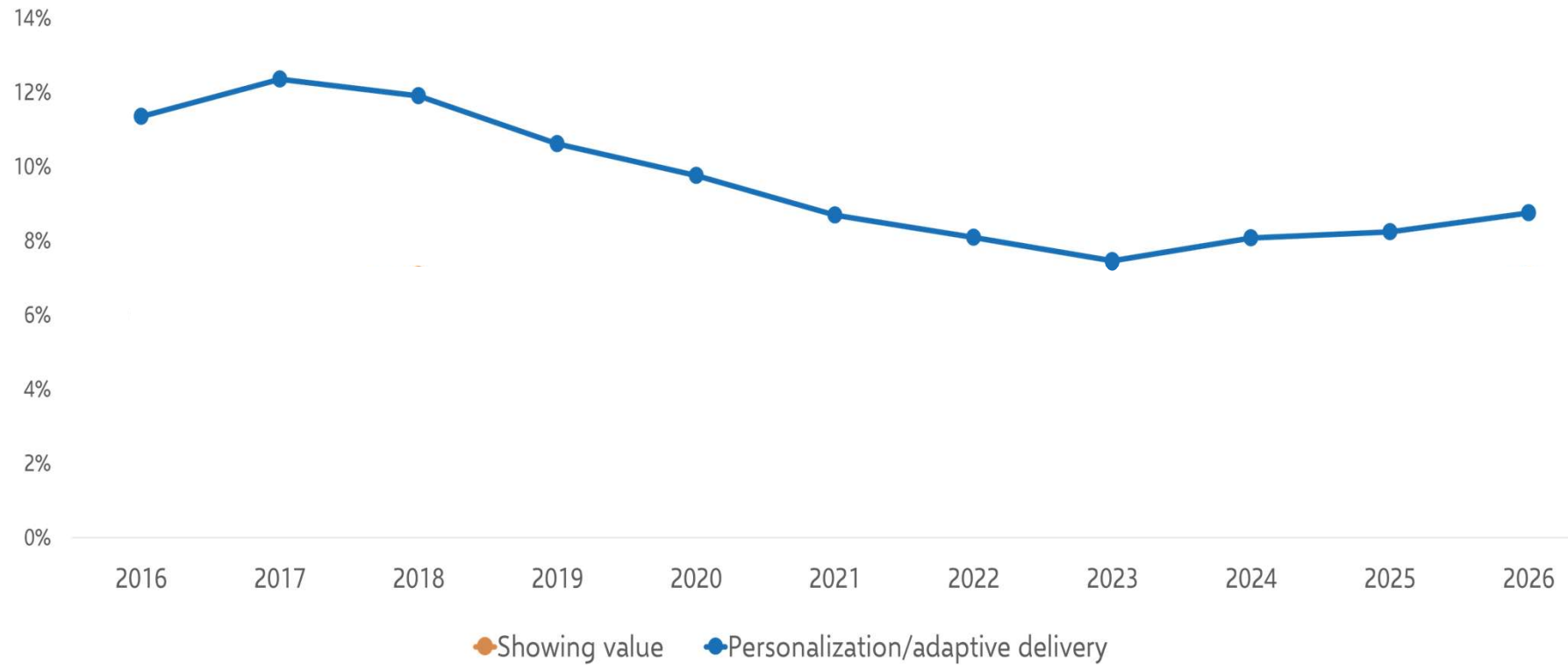
Putting AI to use: personalisation



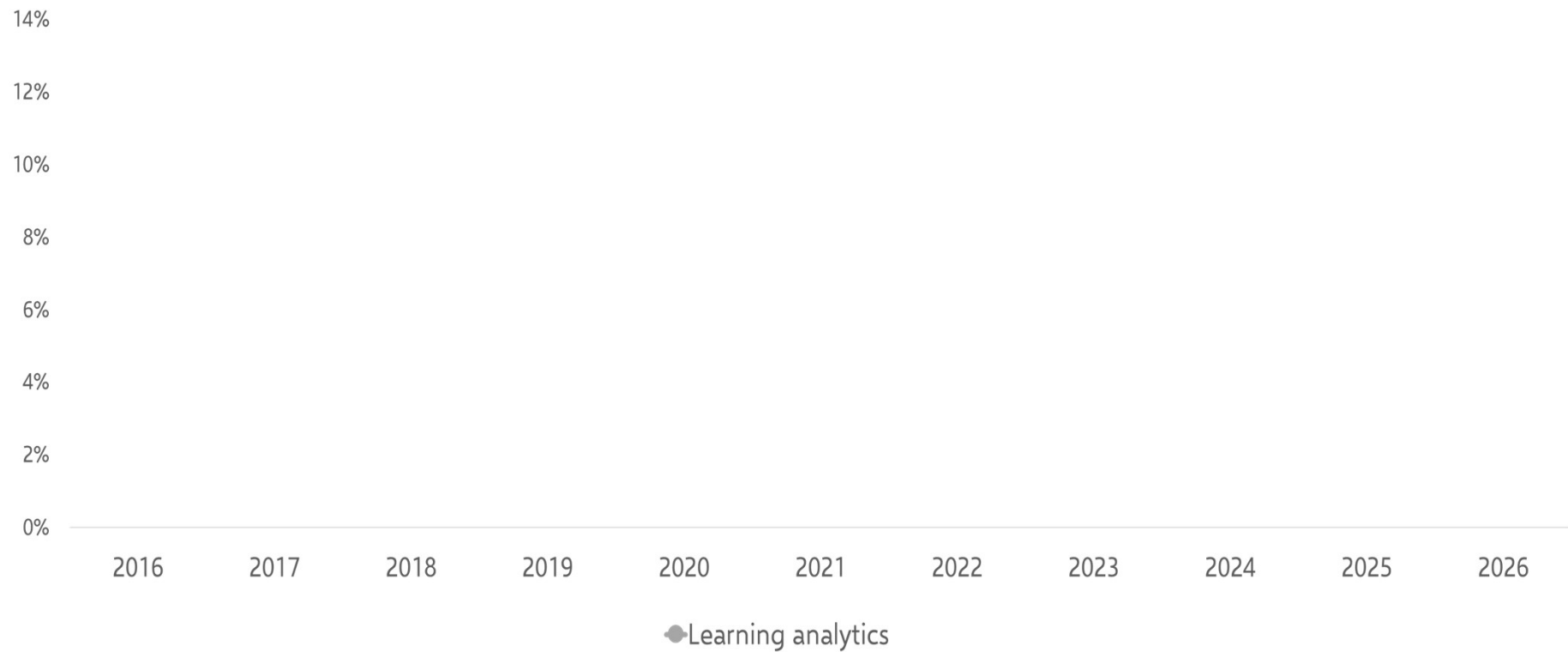
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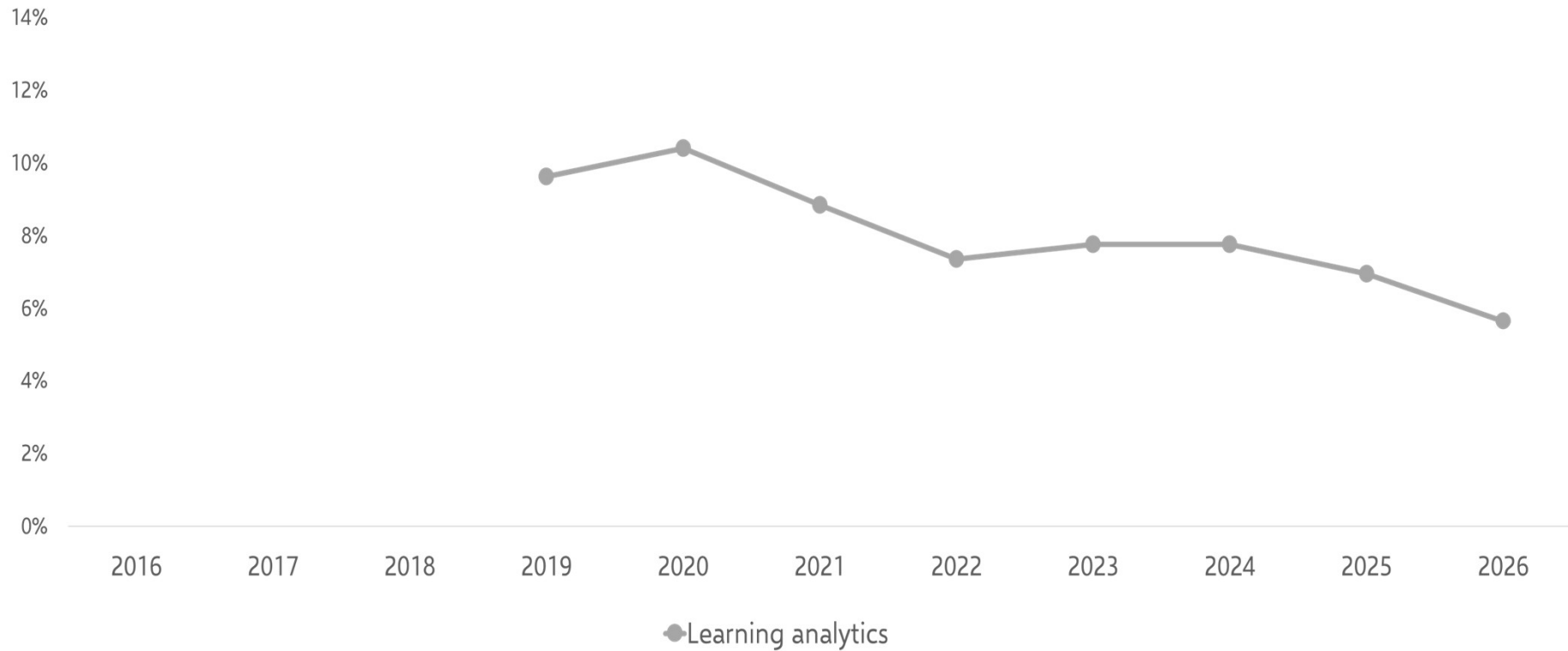
The challenge of AI: showing value



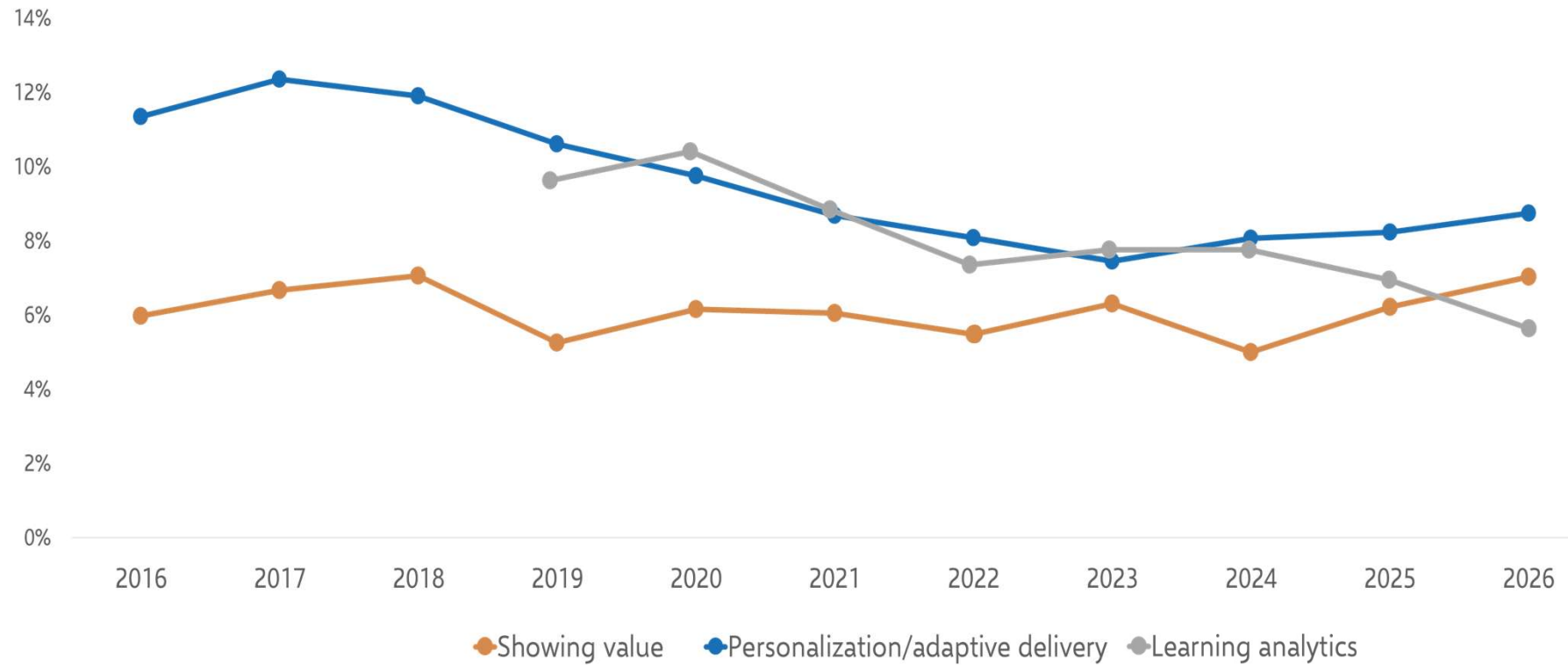
The question of learning analytics



The question of learning analytics



What's going on?



AI in L&D: The Race for Impact

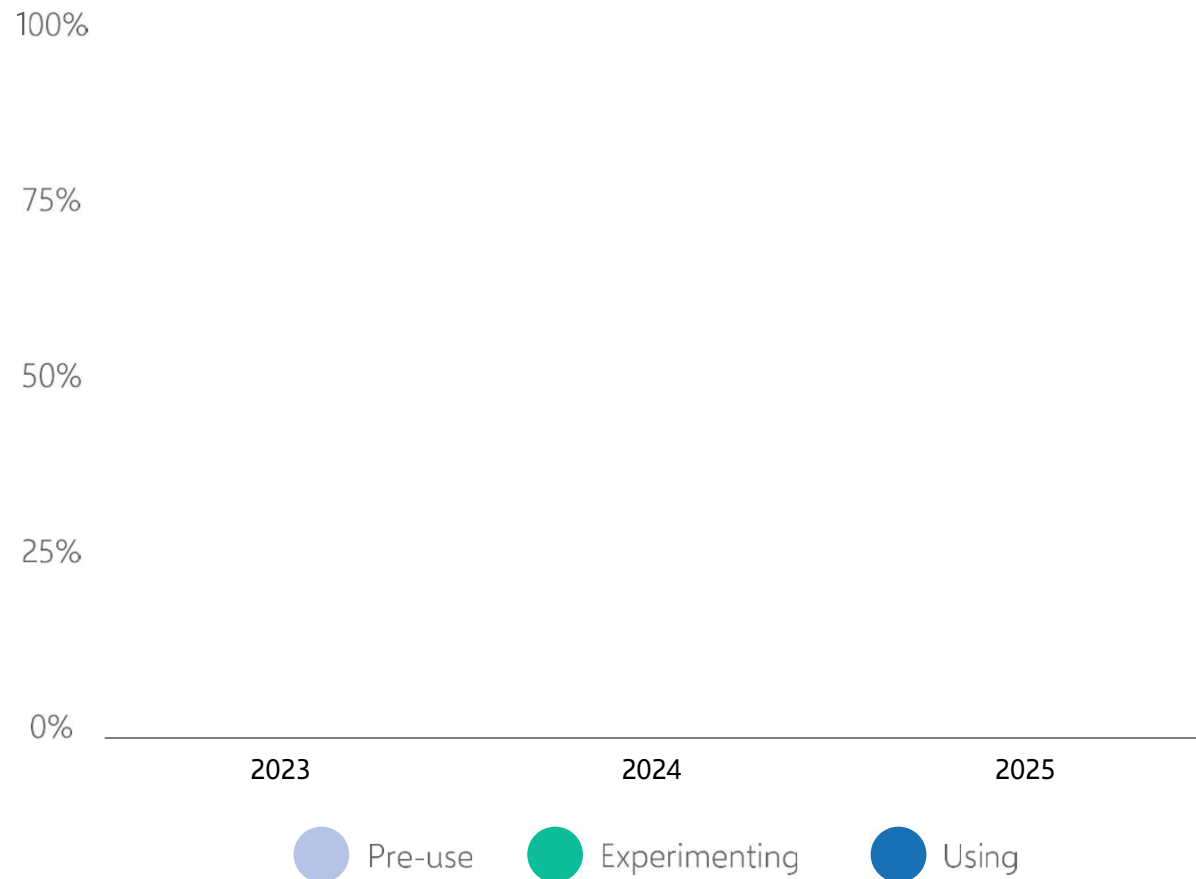


- Inflexion point
- Focus on content
- Some sophistication

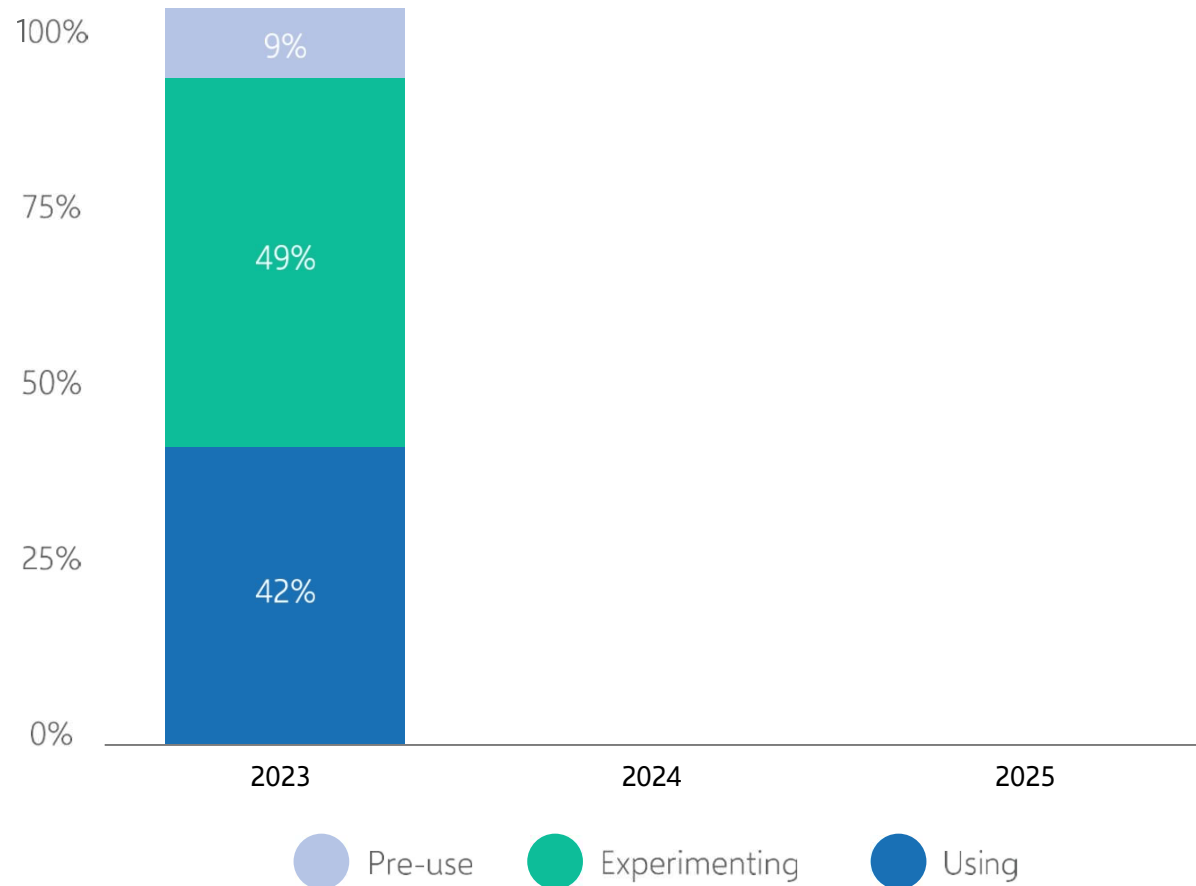
<https://bit.ly/Focus04-Impact>

Co-authored with Eglė Vinauskaitė

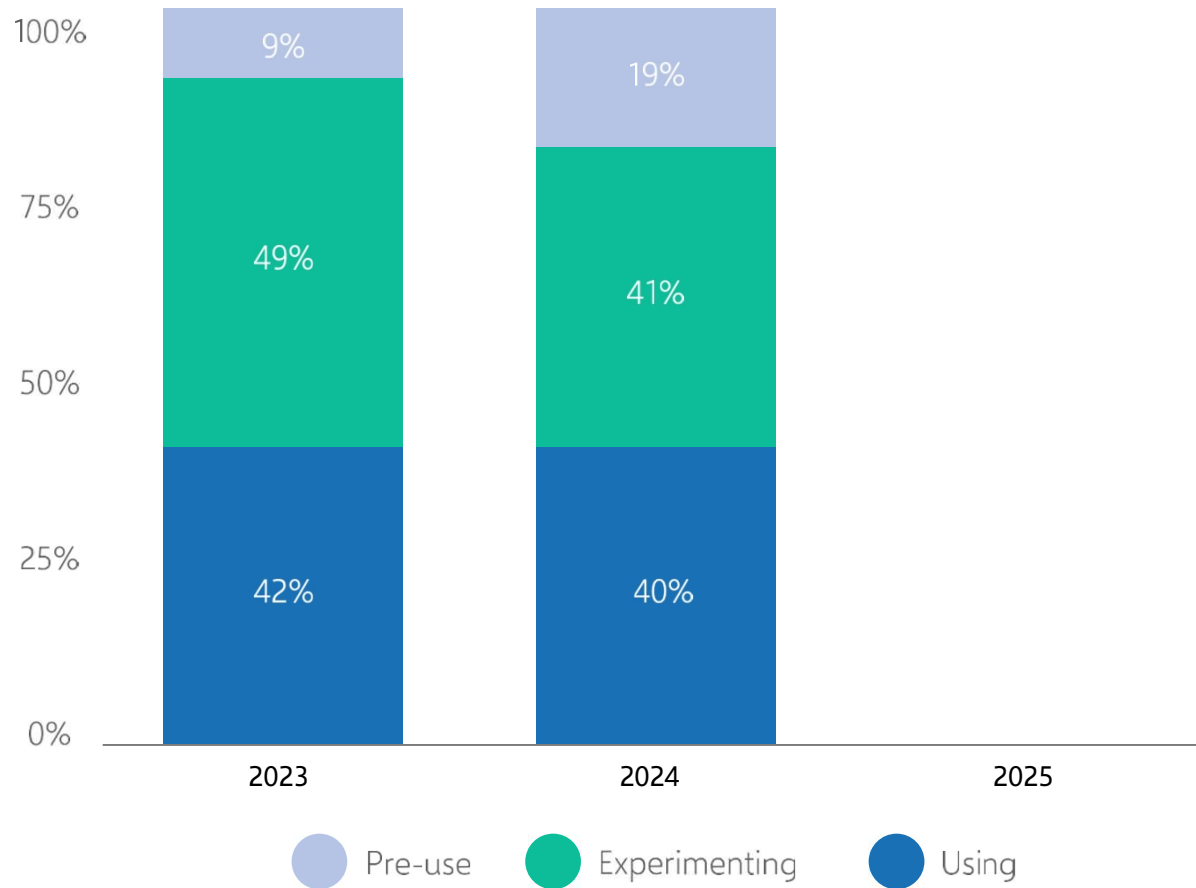
The inflexion point



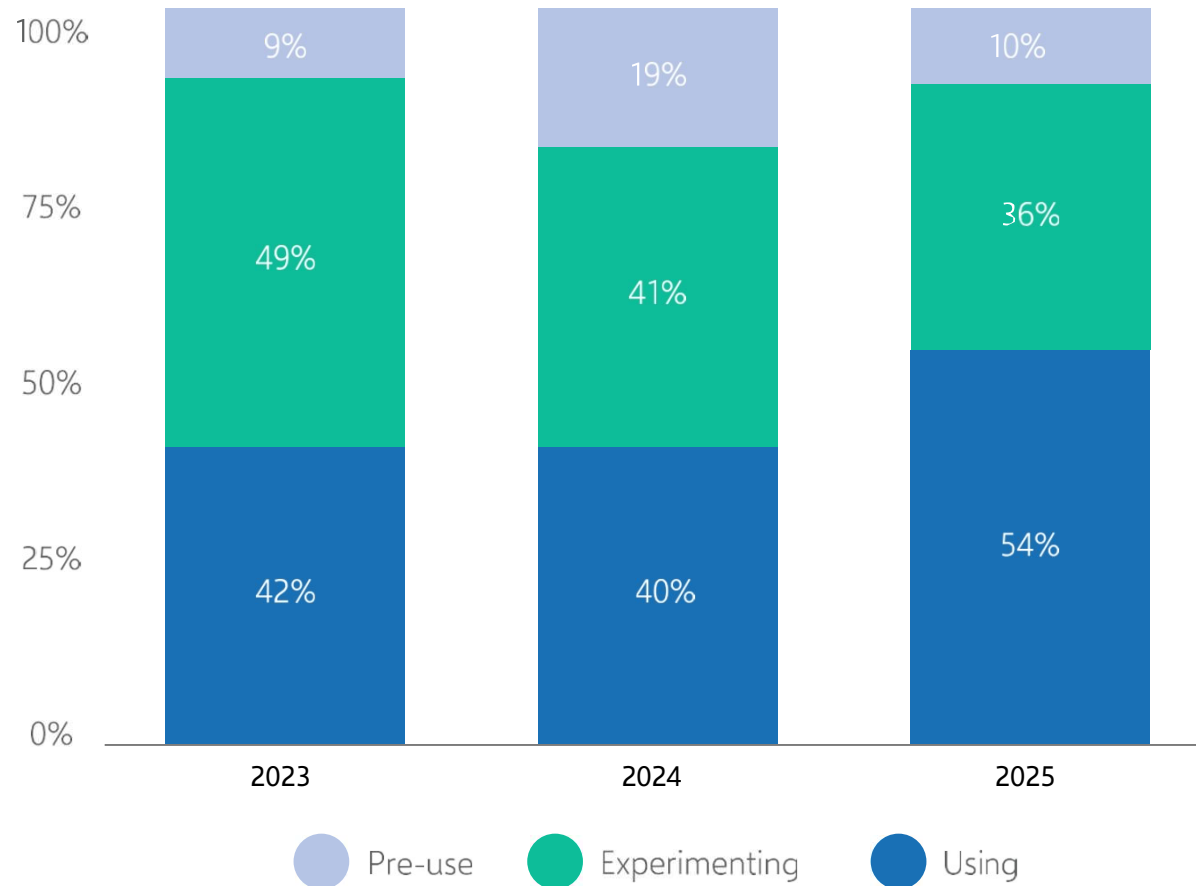
The inflexion point



The inflexion point



The inflexion point



What are they using AI for?

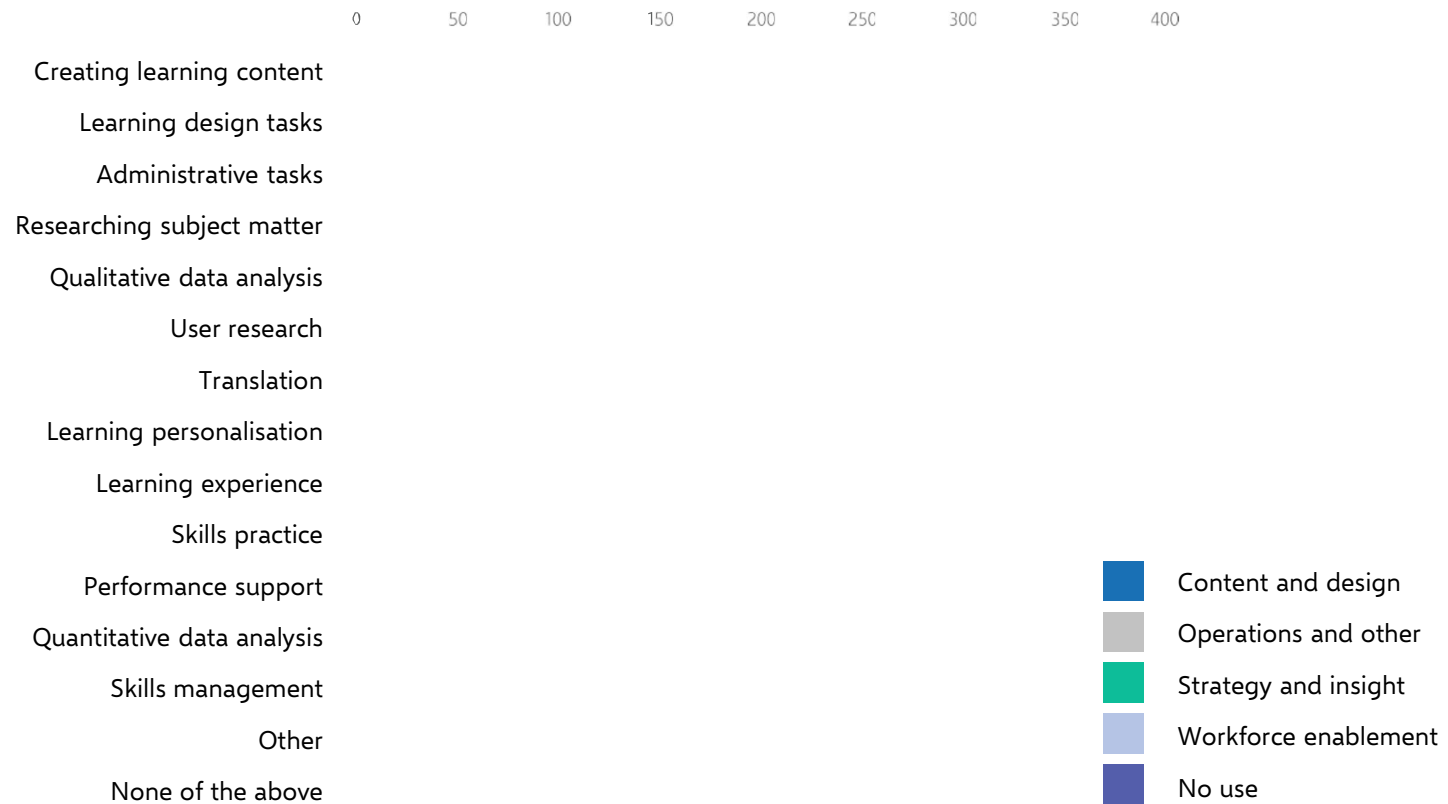
Content
and design

Operations
and other

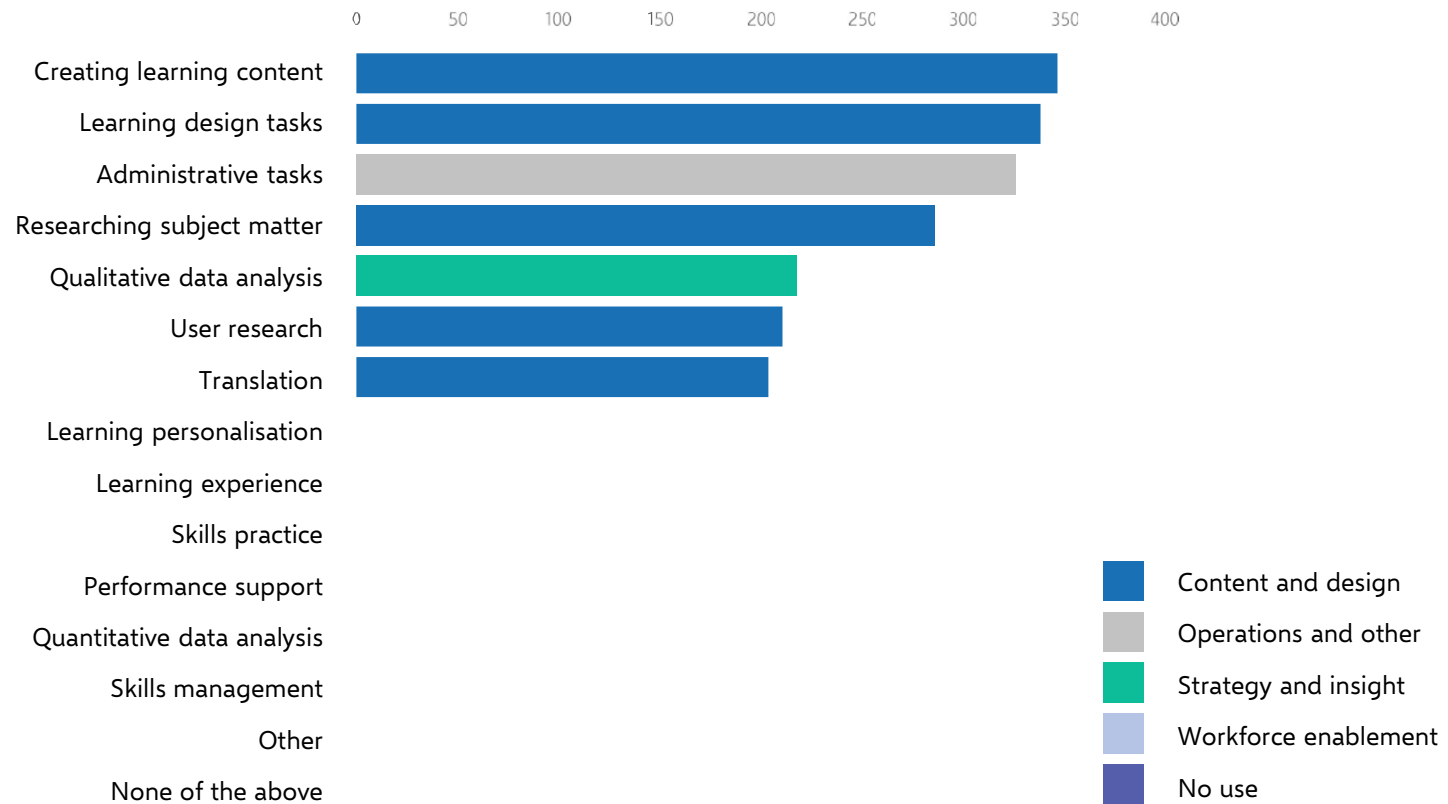
Workforce
enablement

Strategy
and insight

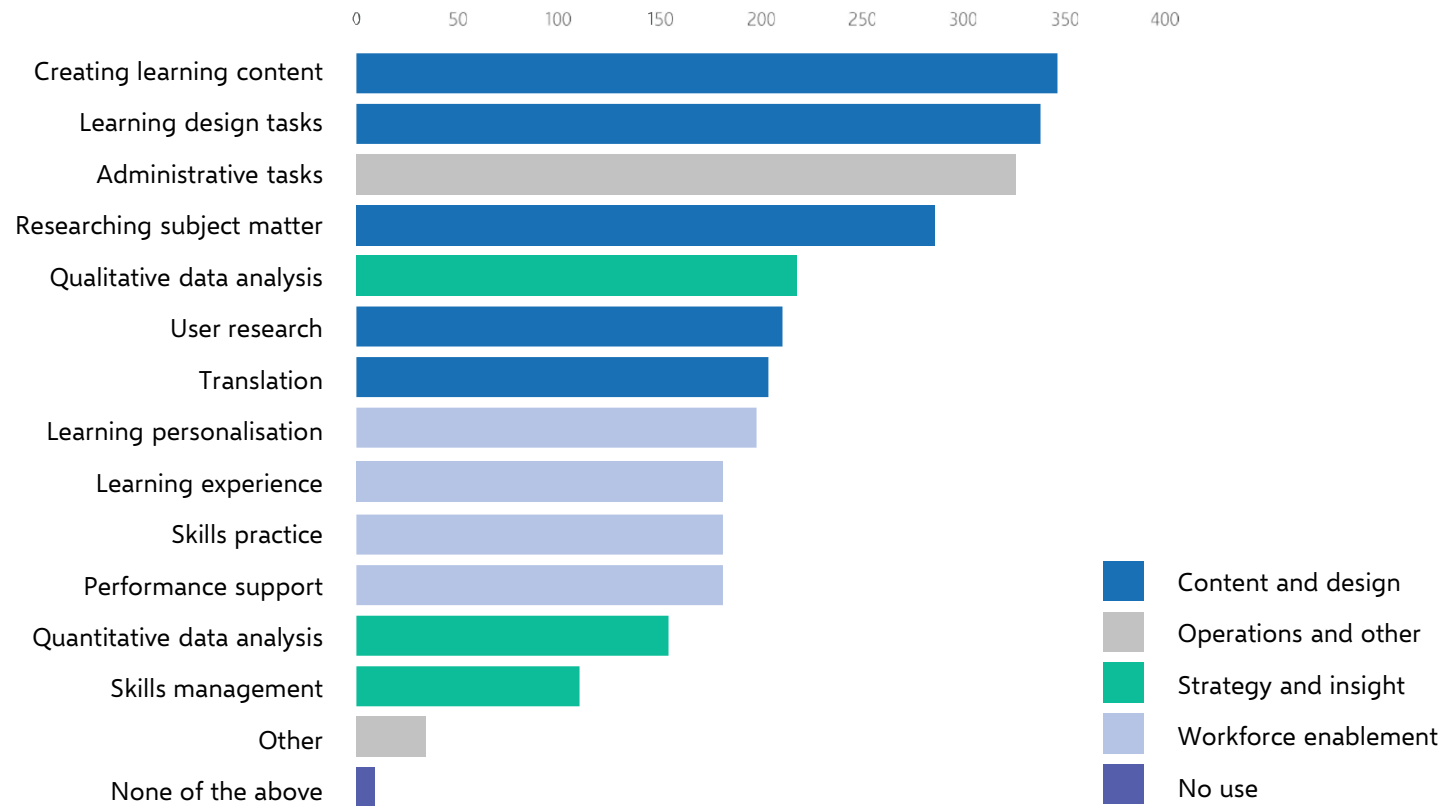
What are they using AI for?



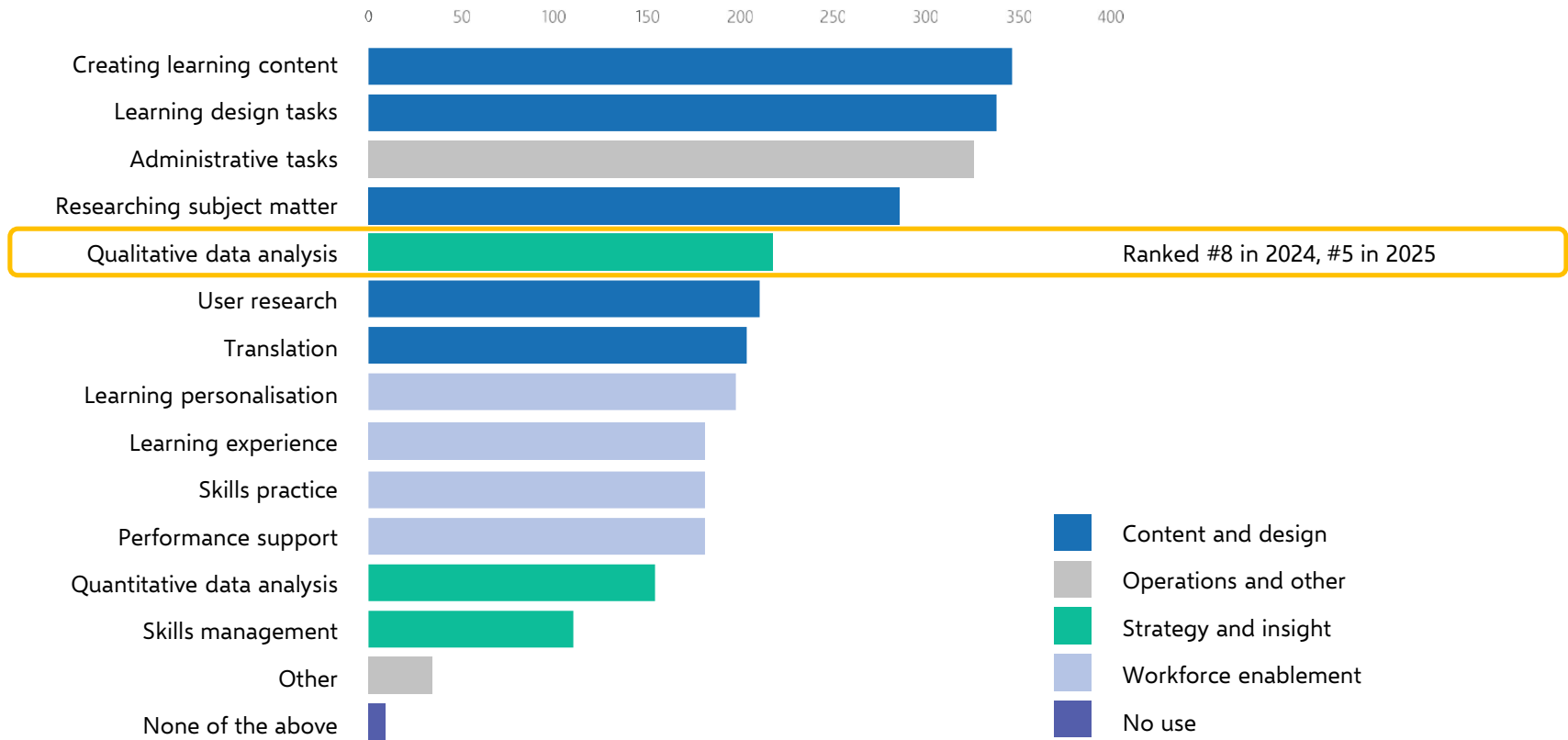
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What are they using AI for?



...one notable change...





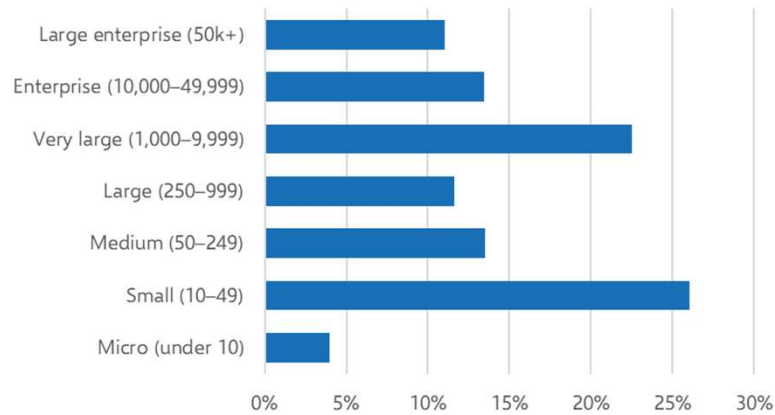
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Focus on Belgium



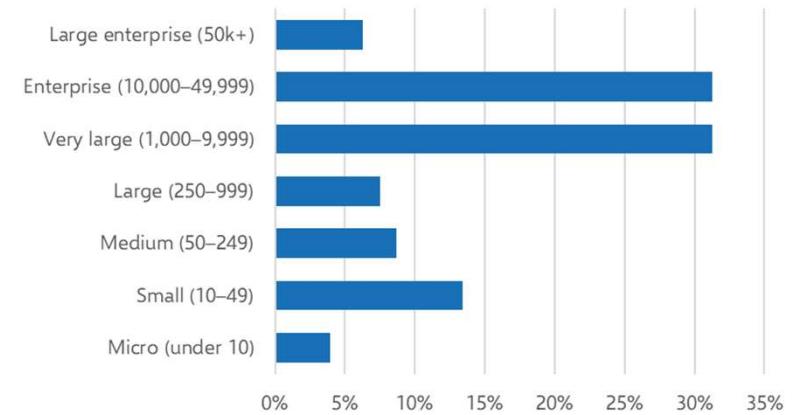
Organisations by employees

Organisations by size: all, 2026



- n = 2,071
- Median = Large

Organisations by size: Belgium, 2026



- n = 84
- Median = Very large

Belgium vs all other countries

GSS 2026 All other countries

1. Artificial intelligence	22.5%
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n = 3,678

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Belgium vs last year

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3

Key L&D challenges



What is your biggest
L&D challenge in 2026?

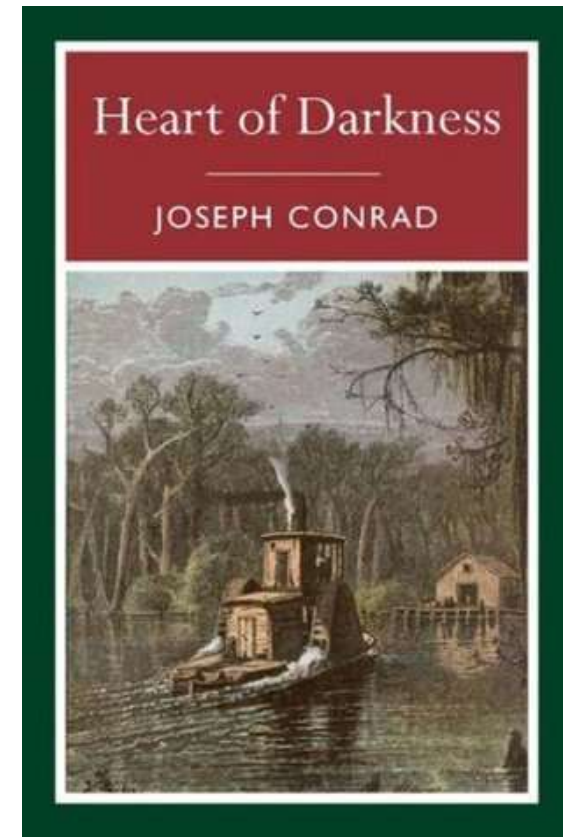
41,731
words

Free text, n = 3,625 (95%)

What is your biggest
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41,731
words

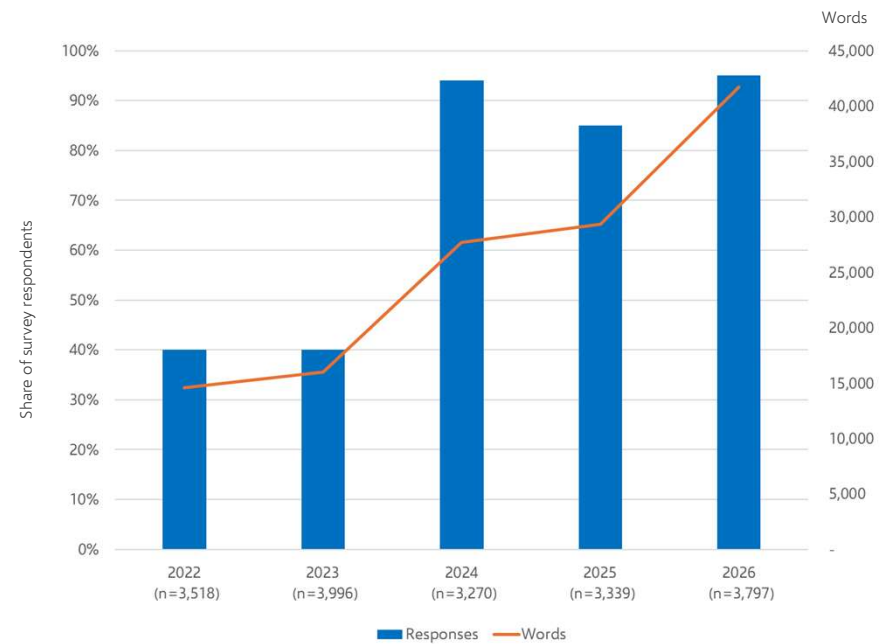
Free text, n = 2,833 (85%)



What is your biggest L&D challenge in 2026?

41,731 words

Free text, n = 3,625 (95%)



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41,731
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Free text, n = 3,625 (95%)

5 themes



1. AI adoption and integration
2. Demonstrating value and impact
3. Budget and resource constraints
4. Learning engagement and application
5. Change, uncertainty and L&D's new role

AI adoption and integration

'Cutting through the noise of AI to focus on good practice.'

'Too many AI tools'

'Finding the right balance between AI hype and genuine skilling experiences.'

'Ensuring AI strengthens learning instead of eroding it.'

Change, uncertainty and L&D's new role

'Moving from training provider to performance partner.'

'Educating the business to see L&D as a consultant and value-add.'

'Proving value to avoid redundancy.'

Budget and resource constraints

'We don't have the people or funding to do some things we could be doing.'

'Budget cuts and layoffs, which means doing more with less. trying to keep up with the new demands that AI is placing on employee skills and capabilities.'

'Budget cuts yet business expectations to still deliver.'

Demonstrating value and impact

'Moving beyond completion rates to measuring true business impact.'

'Our biggest challenge is ensuring learning truly drives performance and business results, while keeping learners engaged in an increasingly fast-changing and AI-driven work environment.'

Learning engagement and application

'Getting employees to trust the learning offerings and invest the time'

'Post action. Getting participants of training to implement the new skill learned.'

'Ensuring learning actually improves performance, not just participation.'

'Moving from training provider to performance partner.'

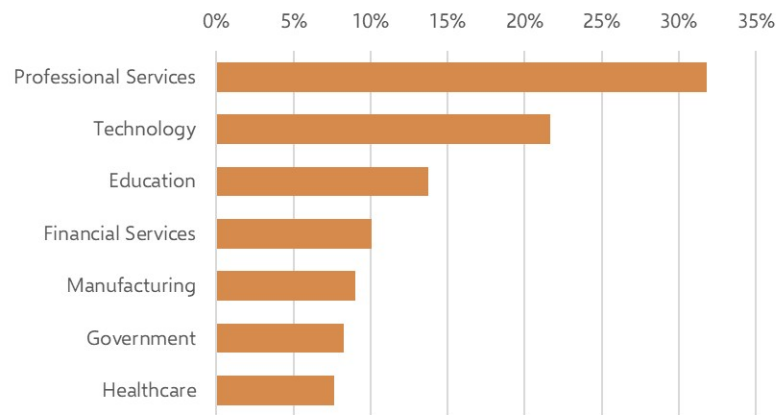
'Proving value to avoid redundancy.'

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Organisations by sector

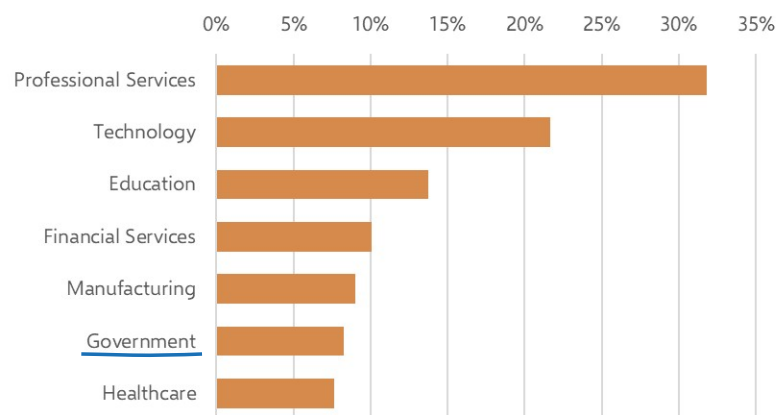
Organisations by sector: all, 2026



- Skewed towards services
- 7 biggest sectors = 76% of all orgs
- Total = 1,582 orgs

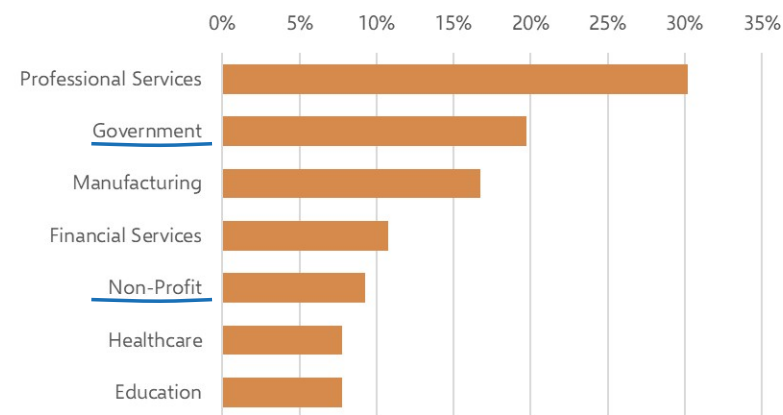
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Organisations by sector: Belgium, 2026



- 7 biggest sectors = 67 orgs of 84 (80%)
- | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| More significant: | Less significant: |
| • Government | • Education |
| • Non-profit | • Technology |

Challenges for Belgium and the world

Challenge	Rest of the world (n=3,271)	Belgium (n=105)	Key differences
1. AI adoption and integration			
2. Demonstrating value and impact			
3. Budget and resource constraints			
4. Learning engagement and application			
5. Change, uncertainty and L&D's new role			

Challenges for Belgium and the world

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And now in their own words....

Challenge	
1. AI adoption and integration	<i>"Getting all employees AI literate and keeping them up-to-speed. Reshaping the L&D role in this AI era, looking for more added value."</i>
2. Demonstrating value and impact	<i>"To be recognized as a business partner, not merely an organiser of training programs"</i>
3. Budget and resource constraints	<i>"Keep up with business needs whilst continue L&D strategy vs justify budget and being able to execute / workload"</i>
4. Learning engagement and application	<i>"Motivating learners to show up or do the work"</i>
5. Change, uncertainty and L&D's new role	<i>"Restyling due to internal rotations (FTE downsizing due to geopolitical situation and non-EU competition)"</i>

4

Action and success



What are you doing now in
L&D that you were not doing
12 months ago?

What are you doing now in L&D that you were not doing 12 months ago?

- ◆ AI has moved from experimentation to everyday practice
- ◆ Respondents report moving content design beyond large courses
- ◆ Greater use of data, analytics and evidence to guide decisions
- ◆ Expansion of L&D's role into coaching, culture and capability systems

We are already drawing the map

Challenge: 'Balancing learning effectiveness with limited time and learner engagement, while adapting learning content to different learner needs and skill levels.'

Action: 'I am spending more time analysing learner difficulties and feedback data to improve learning materials and learning effectiveness.'

Challenge: 'The focus is on creating practical, measurable learning that truly impacts performance, not just participation.'

Action: 'I now take more ownership of projects and focus on improving learning outcomes, not just delivering sessions.'

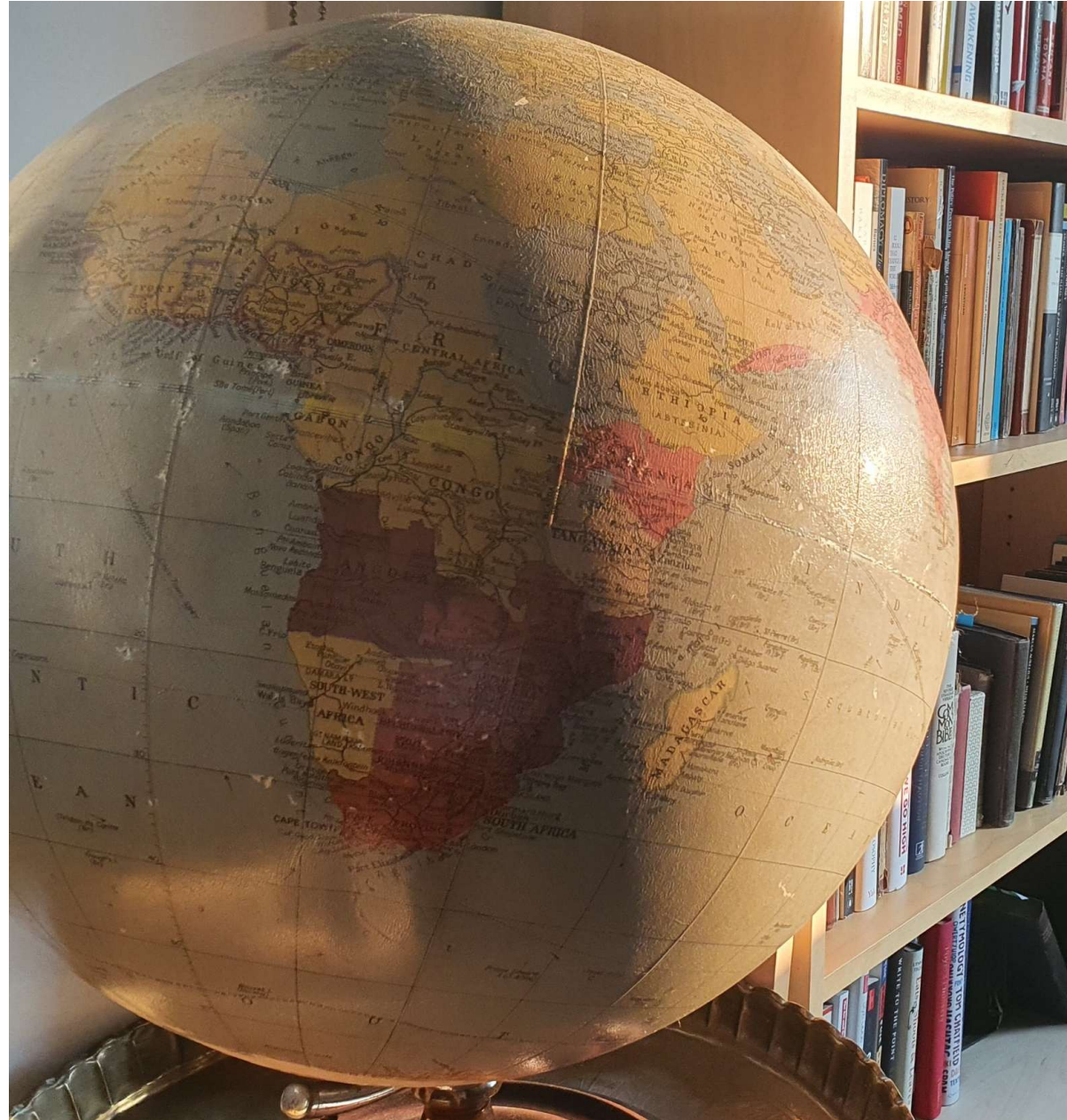
Challenge: 'Keeping training up-to-date and useful, and proving it really improves performance at work.'

Action: 'We use AI tools to create training faster and support learners (chatbots, quick content, personalised learning).'

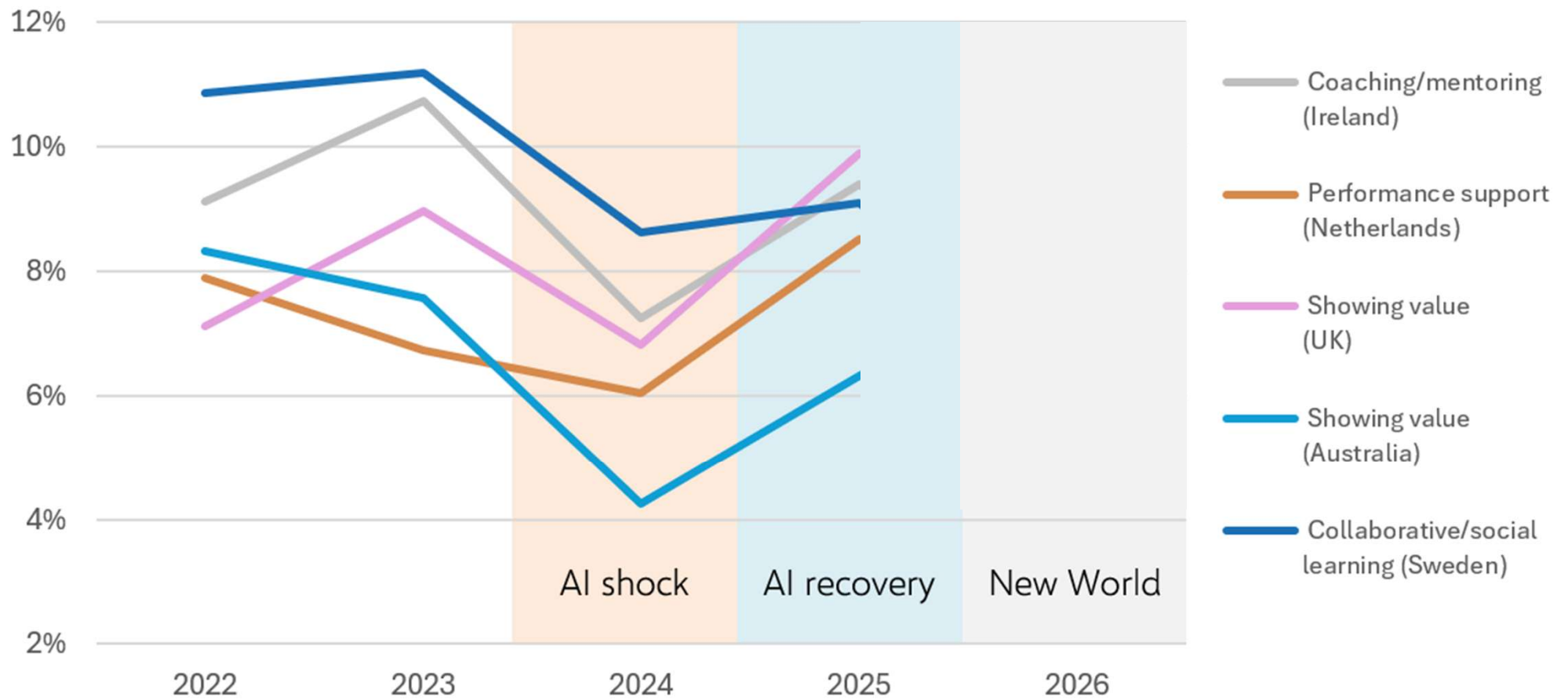


5

A New World



The old rules break down



“ While we have no map, we do have a direction

Into the unknown

By Donald H Taylor

Conclusion

In a previous report, I asked if the coming year would be the year of AI. I suggested it had a chance to play with personalization, and that offered a powerful, new form of personalization. Nonetheless, I said, we should be wary of algorithms that gave L&D a bad name.

I have seen the potential of AI, but the timing was probably wrong. This is the important part of AI, because it is the power of Large Language Models that has the most impact on L&D.

AI is the new electricity, not original, but true. It is powerful and cheap memory. It was not only impossible to have, but it is here.

AI will transform how we work. The question is not if, but how.

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The signs of this transformation are already here: AI is making new things possible with content creation, personalization, skills management, simulations and much more. Combine this with current economic uncertainty, and people are losing their jobs at all levels. The old norms are breaking down.

This morass of uncertainty is where the reality of the future will be decided. There is no map for what happens next. But there are two pieces of good news. First, while we have no map, we do have a direction: an end where L&D supports individual performance towards organisational goals, keeping an eye on that point on the horizon, we can make our way towards it. What's the map to get there? You have to draw your own. To create one through experimentation. Halting things that don't work and redoubling efforts on the things that do. All while dealing with the confusion of AI, and the general economic uncertainty.

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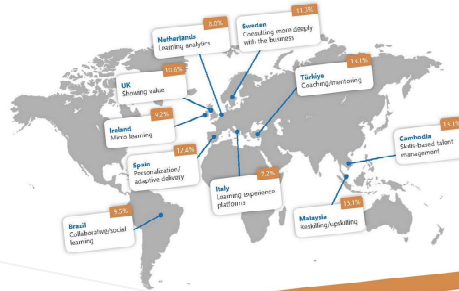
In considering our current upheaval, I am reminded of Hernando Ibarra's term 'outright', from her 2015 book *Act Like a Leader, Think Like a Leader*. This stresses the need to act first, then to reflect. The problem with over thinking things during times of transitional change is that we don't have the experience and knowledge to make good judgements about the new environment.

Ibarra's work focuses on people taking on leadership roles, but her conclusions apply to all those facing new circumstances, as L&D is now.

Into the unknown

By Donald H Taylor

The global view



Three reactions to AI's dominance

L&D has shown three different reactions to the dominance of AI in discussions about the future of L&D: excitement, fear and indifference. All can be seen in Figure 6.

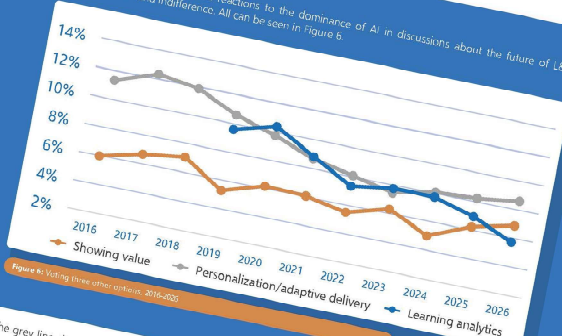


Figure 6: Voting three options in 2016-2026

The grey line shows votes for Personalization/adaptive delivery. This is the only option apart from AI to have risen consistently over the past four years, driven by the promise of AI as a tool to allow for individual tailoring of learning content.

Showing value, in orange, has risen for the past three successive years, the first time since 2018 that this has happened. What has driven this increase? In last year's report we suggested that it could be knowing the potential of AI for showing value, or fear of AI undermining L&D work. The responses to the 'challenges' question of the survey suggest the latter is more likely: L&D feels under threat.

Finally, the blue line shows that the vote for Learning analytics decreasing. Yet if AI enables anything, it is the manipulation of data at scale – exactly what you need for analytics. And here we have to ask the question: has L&D taken a wrong turn? Has the reaction to L&D been simply to focus it on what L&D has always done – create content for individuals, rather than consider what it could do, by exploring organization-wide analytics?

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The results 2026

Responses to the question "What will be hot in 2026?" reveal three things:

- Interest in AI has peaked
- L&D is using AI – but selectively
- L&D wants to connect with the business

#	GSS 2026	%	Δ
1	Artificial intelligence (1)	22.5%	↓
2	Reskilling/upskilling (2)	10.6%	↑
3	Skill-based talent management (3)	8.7%	↓
4	Personalization/adaptive delivery (4)	8.6%	↑
5	Showing value (7)	7.0%	↑
6	Consulting more deeply with the business (6)	6.8%	↑
7	Coaching/mentoring (8)	5.8%	↑
8	Learning analytics (5)	5.7%	↓
9	Micro learning (9)	5.7%	↓
10	Collaborative/social learning (10)	4.7%	↓
11	Performance support (11)	4.4%	↑
12	Learning experience platforms (12)	3.3%	↓
13	Virtual and augmented reality (13)	2.2%	↓
14	Content-based learning (14)	1.8%	↑
15	Other (16)	1.3%	↑
16	The Metaverse (15)	0.8%	↓

n = 3,749 (Figures in brackets show position last year)

Figure 4: Main results for GSS 2026

and who answered



Figure 1: Distribution of votes worldwide

Where people work
[87% of voters chose to answer the question "Where do you work?"]



16 key countries

The 16 countries with numbers of responses for 75% of the total vote



Thank you!

Donald H Taylor

Lead researcher,
L&D Global Sentiment Survey

