Blazing New Trails: Re-designing Training (& Educational Programming) to be Interactive & Empower Learners

Q1: What do you spend most of your time doing during class/session/training program?

Q2: What do you think faculty spend most of their time doing during classes?

A. **Having learners read text, handouts, slides, or manuals.** Easy for you, maybe, but too bad for your learners. If you define "learning" as being able to remember and use information in some way, then reading is one of the least effective ways of learning for most people.

B. **Talking/explaining/lecturing to learners.** As interesting as you think your lectures are, most folks remember very little of what they hear, especially if they don't immediately apply the information. Yes, strong auditory learners may be content to simply sit and listen, and sprinkling your lecture with stories, metaphors, analogies and humor definitely makes your message more memorable. But listening doesn't mean learning, even if you entertain while you talk.

C. **Showing visuals on slides, televisions, or computers screens.** This is a step up from reading or listening, especially if the media used is saturated with images, such as video-clips, graphics, photos, cartoons, icons, and the like. In this case, information becomes more image-rich, and consequently easier to remember.

D. **Discussing concepts or practicing skills.** Now you're heading in the right direction. Any time training participants discuss concepts and practice skills, they dramatically increase learning. Furthermore, they will be able to remember and use the new information for longer periods of time.

E. **Having learners teach each other and learn from each other.** You are light years ahead of most trainers because you know that teaching another person is one of the most powerful ways to learn. When you allow learners to teach each other, and learn from each other, they increase their own confidence, competence, and ability to use—and master—what they have learned.

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Be empowered to re-design your training techniques to create more impactful learner environments and begin doing what it takes to foster learning:

- *Encourage* discovery and coloring outside the lines.
- *Provide* opportunities to experiment, and don't punish "failures"
- *Enable* people to learn from one another.
- *Provide* challenges to groups, not individuals.
- *Make* time and room for conversation with peers.
- *Provide* resources for people to learn things for themselves.
- ABC’s of learner engagement strategies:

**Learner Engagement strategies: 4 Cs reference Guide**

- **Connections**: Learners make connections with what they already know or think they know about the training topic, with what they will learn, with what they want to learn, and with each other.
- **Concepts**: Learners take in new information in multisensory ways: hearing, seeing, discussing, writing, reflecting, imagining, participating, and teaching it to others.
- **Concrete Practice**: Learners actively practice the new skills, or they participate in an active review of the new knowledge they have learned.
- **Conclusions**: Learners summarize what they have learned, evaluate it, celebrate it, and create action plans for how they plan to use the new knowledge or skills after the training is over.

Three-Minute Connection: Fast Pass

- Learners are more likely to remember beginning and ending of a class or workshop.
- Connect: learners make connections to what they already know or think they know about topic.
- Concepts: learners take in information in multisensory ways (storytelling, video, movement, etc.).
- Concrete Practice: learners actively practice the new skills or participate in active review of new knowledge.
- Conclusions: Learners summarize what they have learned and evaluate it, create action plans to use it, etc.
- Interactive learner engagement strategies.
- One-minute review.
- Chunking of information into 10 minute chunks.
- Bias to do what is familiar.
- Humour and emotional environment to create safe learning environments.
- Concept mapping/represent learning.
- Encourage learners to be present and focused.