

Creating a Stimulating Learning Event

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Learning occurs in different ways for each person. There is no one right way of presenting information and sharing your knowledge. Unfortunately, many trainers and educators do not realize or capitalize on this fact. Instead, they often provide information in a traditional lecture-based manner or in their own preferred format in hopes that everyone will get something out of it. The sad fact is that in many instances this strategy fails a percentage of learners in their group.

Rather than taking a narrow delivery approach of using one or two methods through which you provide information, consider better ways to address learner needs. Think about what you have read regarding the way in which the brain best processes information. Look for ways to create a learning environment that continually challenges and stimulates the brain and that supports the message that you are delivering.

Many options exist for getting people involved in the learning process and to have them share ideas and information. You can use activities, puzzles, games, question and answer (Q&A) segments, interim reviews, role-plays, demonstrations, brainstorming, and many other events to challenge learners and get them to participate actively in their learning. You are often limited only by own imagination and desire to try other approaches.

Technology has added a variety of new tools from which you can benefit and enhance your learning environments. Research shows that the brain responds well to elements such as fun, novelty, engagement, motion, color, light and sound. To capitalize on this data, you can add electronic games to your workshop to capture and hold learner attention while reinforcing key program concepts. Game Show Presenter® and Classroom Jeopardy® are both excellent vehicles for sharing and reviewing information in a learning environment. With such software, you can create your own categories based on key session topics, then develop questions to which learners respond individually or in teams. The book, *I'll Take Learning for 500*, provides great ideas for incorporating game shows into workshops and *Training Workshop Essentials* provides many more ideas on how to provide a stimulating learning event.

One simple way to maintain your enthusiasm for session content that you deliver frequently, like New Hire Orientation or policy sessions, is to substitute the activities that you use. Many trainers and educators use the same boring activity all the time when doing a repetitive training session. For example, as an icebreaker, they have learners turn to the person to their right or left, introduce themselves, get to know one another, then share three new things that they learned about their "new friend" to the rest of the group. This activity can help people relax and allow them to get to know a bit about each other, however, it has been around for about a gazillion years and many people have experienced it in training sessions before. There are thousands of alternative activities that can do the same thing. Look on the Internet, in books, or in creative publications such as this one to find other activities if you do not have alternates.

By having a variety of strategies and activities from which you can pull, you can use a different one each time you present a session. This causes you have to stop and think, as well as rehearse. The mental challenge this creates to you can help stimulate your brain, make you think and keep the session fresh for you. If you are enjoying the session yourself; chances are learners will be also.

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