

The ABCs of Creative Training

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Hundreds of studies have been done to discover how the brain receives, processes and stores information. Much of this research can be used by trainers and educators to ensure that any learning event is more successful by utilizing concepts related to stimulating the brain. The following are tips that can help anyone involved in sharing information or skills with others to be more successful:

Allow learners to take control of their own learning whenever possible by encouraging them to get actively engaged in the process.

Begin each class or session on an upbeat note by using an icebreaker activity to capture attention and set the tone for what will follow.

Create an environment that is brain-positive by ensuring that environmental elements such as temperature, lighting, sound, furnishings and other elements contribute rather than detract from learning.

Divide learners into small groups for activities using creative techniques such as different colored erasers or toys placed at each learner seat to identify which group they will join.

Encourage learners to think outside the box when problem solving or discussing real-life issues during a session.

Find different ways to engage learners throughout the session (e.g. brainstorming, discussion groups, nominal group activity, or role play/simulation)

Gain learner buy-in by using closed-ended questions to verify and validate data periodically throughout the session...

Help learners of all styles (e.g. visual, auditory and kinesthetic) gain maximum benefit by delivering content in a format that addresses their preference.

Invide learner to volunteer throughout the learning event by offering small incentives (e.g. candy or small program themed toys) for their efforts

Join theory and practice together regularly by helping learners understand how what they have learned will be directly applicable when they leave the classroom.

Keep the need for biological needs in mind and provide regular and adequate breaks throughout a session that lasts longer than ninety minutes.

Let learners have the opportunity to share their personal experiences related to program topic whenever appropriate and possible.

Mix theory with practice by changing the pace and style of your delivery every twenty minutes or so.

Nurture comments and efforts made by learners in order to encourage further involvement by them and others.

Organize all materials, furniture and other elements of the learning environment before participants arrive so that they have a positive first impression.

Plan all materials and equipment needed in advance and ALWAYS have a spare or backup for everything, including activities, just in case something goes wrong.

Quote experts in the field or topic that you are addressing in your session to add validity and credibility to your message.

Resist the temptation to lecture; interaction is always better for stimulating the human brain.

Stay abreast of current brain research so that you know the latest discoveries in ways to maximize learning.

Treat each learning situation as unique, even though you may have taught a class numerous times, in order to maintain the freshness of your delivery.

Use a variety of props, color and sounds in your sessions to attract and maintain interest.

Verify understanding of key concepts by conducting *Interim Reviews* at various points during your session.

Wait for learners to complete assigned tasks before rushing to something else in order to avoid frustration and having them give up when you have them do something else.

Xpand your repertoire of games, activities and techniques regularly so that you are continually upgrading your delivery style.

Yearning for better outcomes in training without doing anything proactive to make that happen will not help. Read books, attend seminars and conferences and talk to peers to find ways to enhance your skills and knowledge.

Zero in on a couple objectives for a session rather than trying to do too much. Go for quality not quantity.

Robert (Bob) W. Lucas is President of Creative Presentation Resources, Inc, a creative training and presentation products company in Casselberry, Florida. He has over three decades of experience training adults. He is a very active in ASTD and is a past president of the Central Florida Chapter. He has written and contributed to twenty-eight books, including *Creative Learning: Activities and Games That REALLY Engage Learners*; *People Strategies for Trainers: 176 Tips and Techniques for Dealing with Difficult Classroom Situations*; *The Creative Training Idea Book: Inspired Tips & Techniques for Engaging and Effective Learning* and *The Big Books of Flip Charts*. He is also listed in *Who's Who in the World*, *Who's Who in America*, and *Who's Who in the South and Southeast*. For more information on creative training and products, visit www.presentationresources.net.