

6 Simple Ways to Increase Learning in Your Training

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With the business world getting more competitive every day while organizations struggle to do more with less, workplace learning is a key that many successful companies have found to harness the potential of their employees and environment. By providing timely and effective training and learning opportunities to employees, many organizations have seen a dramatic increase in productivity and a decrease in turnover.

When sponsoring learning events in your own organization, here are six tips that can maximize the results:

- 1. Make learning meaningful.** Don't waste time with hypothetical events and imaginary role plays. Tie all learning activities and content directly to the real-world workplace. Find real issues that learners can relate to and can use to solve real problems so that they can then transfer the applications to the workplace immediately.
- 2. Get learners actively involved.** There should be no passive observers in the classroom. It is crucial that trainers learn how to effectively facilitate the exchange of ideas and knowledge. They are the conduit through which ideas pass between participants and they provide the structure for the learning that will occur. Anyone in front of a group of learners should be aware of principles of adult learning, how the brain is structured and functions, different learning needs and modalities and how to discover them in their learners, and myriad other concepts related to learning. They should use this knowledge to stimulate and engage all learners.
- 3. Use behavioral modeling in the classroom.** By using the concepts of behavioral modeling in which a process or skill is explained, and then demonstrated after learners are probed for any questions they have trainers can communicate to all three learning modalities (visual, auditory and kinesthetic). Once the demonstration is over, the trainer should again elicit questions from learners before having them actually try the skills while being observed. Following their performance, feedback is given, any necessary corrections made, and then the entire process is repeated again. This cycle continues until the trainer and learners are comfortable with their ability to perform the task successfully.
- 4. Use many open-ended questions.** Open-ended questions typically start with words like who, when, where, how, and why, as opposed to closed-ended questions which start with verbs (e.g. do, did, should, or could). BY asking open-ended questions to stimulate dialog and encourage thought exchange, a trainer or facilitator can maximize the knowledge and talent in a classroom.
- 5. Use small groups for activities.** Normally 5-8 participants are all that is needed to provide a forum for sound problem-solving and discussion. Any more than that can become cumbersome and result in several people becoming observers and one or two

people dominate. Any less and there may not be the depth of knowledge needed for fruitful outcomes.

When using small groups in training, it is important to have a specific outcome in mind and to provide adequate guidance for the groups. It is also important to monitor the discussion within groups so that they stay on task.

6. **Incorporate games and activities.** By making learning a fun event while providing a vehicle for the exchange of ideas you can encourage participation and stimulate the neurons of the brain. The key with any activity or game is that they must relate directly to training content. Training time is too valuable to waste. Everything you do in the classroom must have a direct correlation to the topic and you should debrief the activities to explain that relationship. Do not assume that everyone will know your intended outcome; they won't and they could walk away from the learning event frustrated and not be willing to participate again in the future.

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