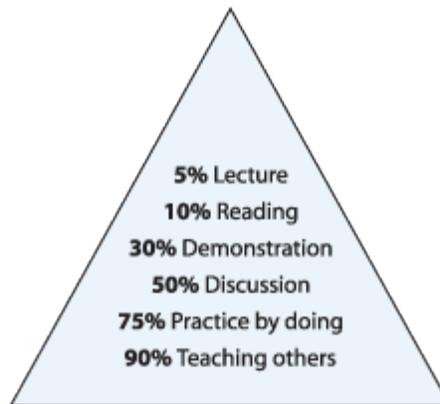


Facilitating Learning/ Experiential Learning Cycle

Strategies and ideas for promoting active learning

Experience is the key: The more active the learning process, the greater the retention of knowledge or skills. Compare how much is retained through a lecture (5%) versus from teaching others (90%).



Learning happens when a person experiences information, an activity, or a situation and walks away with new insights and new knowledge. An effective facilitator will:

- Remain content neutral
- Listen actively
- Ask the right questions
- Stay on track
- Be flexible
- Engage participants in experiential learning opportunities

The Experiential Learning Cycle takes learners through five stages to process their experiences and learn from them. The five stages are:

1. Learners are **involved in an experience** that leads to a sense of discovery; for instance a structured activity, ropes course, or exploration of a conflict.
2. Learners **describe and share** their experience by reporting their own observations and reactions, answering questions such as:
 - What happened?
 - What was your experience like?
 - How did you feel?

3. Learners **interpret and try to make sense** of their experiences, through questions such as:
 - Why did that happen?
 - How was that significant?
 - What does it mean to you?
4. Learners **generalize their experience**, connecting it to other experiences or events in their lives, by responding to such prompts as:
 - Where have you seen this before?
 - What does this remind you of?
 - What does that suggest to you?
5. Learners **apply their insights** and consider how they can use what they have learned, by responding to questions such as:
 - What do you want to use from this experience?
 - What would you do differently?
 - How could you apply that?

Experiential Learning Cycle

Five stages of learning necessary to process experiences/The DIGA model

This experiential learning cycle was adapted from the Northwest Leader Corps training curriculum written and compiled by Nicole Trimble. The DIGA model takes a learner through the five stages of:

Stage 1: The experience forms the basis for the rest of the cycle. The activity should produce information or understanding.

Stage 2: Describe—Participants describe or share their experience to the group by reporting their observations and reactions. It is a time to find out what events occurred. Questions include:

- What happened?
- What were your impressions of that experience?
- How did you feel?
- What surprised you?

Stage 3: Interpret—Participants share their ideas and reactions. It is important to help individuals see and evaluate any trends or dynamics that may be emerging in the group. The trainer's role is to help participants not only notice what happened, but to ask "Why?" Questions include:

- Why did that happen?
- What kinds of patterns are you seeing here?
- How was that significant?
- How might it have been different?

Stage 4: Generalize—The group determines if the experience was unique or if it happens in other situations. Participants are asked to focus on linking the experience to the real world. Questions include:

- Where have you seen this before?
- What does this remind you of?
- What does this make you think of?
- What does that suggest to you about _____ in general?

Stage 5: Apply—Participants plan ways to use what they have learned. Giving participants the opportunity to not only reflect on the lessons they have learned, but to share with and teach others further enhances learning retention. Questions include:

- What do you want to remember from this experience?
- How could you apply that?