

Seven Common Sense Learning Principles

The learning experience is what determines how much content an individual retains. Adults find “chalk talk” boring and will quickly disengage from the process. The following principles apply to any type of learning whether formal classroom, on-the-job, webinar, conference, or meeting. Let these seven principles guide your learning experience design.

Principle 1: Focus on what is important

Don't fall into the trap of attempting to disseminate every piece of information about what you are teaching. Focus on what is important and relevant. If you are teaching how your company conducts marketing campaigns, it isn't necessary to cover marketing fundamentals with the learners, just what the learners need to know to do their job.



Principle 2: Explore

Whenever possible begin learning with a problem or issue that needs exploring. This can be presented through a simple question, games, or a number of activities. The challenge will engage and motivate learners. Discussion and interaction will

follow allowing learners to more easily assimilate content.

Principle 3: Play games

Games reinforce rules, values, foster higher level thinking, and show outcomes. The learning is in the reflecting on what occurred during the game and why. Make sure the game is relevant to the learning objectives.

Principle 4: Tell stories

Storytelling was the original form of teaching. Good stories are memorable. Stories bring life to lessons. Use stories to kick off learning sessions to foster interaction and discussion.

Principle 5: Use pictures

A picture is worth a 1000 words. Believe it. Visuals can add meaning and give framework to text. It also gives those visual learners food for their soul. Be sure the pictures add meaning to the content and not distract from the content.

Principle 6: Learn from each other

Studies seem to support the fact that learning is a social activity. When faced with self-study learning most people become easily bored. When multiple people are introduced into the learning, learners thrive. Allow opportunities for ideas to be discussed so each person's reality is checked and learning can be integrated.

Principle 7: Give it time

Learning activities presented over time have the biggest impact. It allows learners to apply daily what has been learned and to test it against what they know. Time helps to refine and shape the ideas through experiences.

Integrating these principles will make the experience more learner-centered opening the door for increased content retention.