

Designing Learning Experiences

With knowledge being digitized and offered through plentiful cheap DIY learning options (think YouTube, Coursera, Khan Academy), learning designers and trainers need to re-invent themselves as curators who enable meaningful interactions between the learner and the learning to be acquired.

The "how" of learning is thus becoming critical and blended learning¹ provides exciting possibilities to be exploited. Adult Educators who embed their subject matter expertise in a desirable learning experience for target learners have a better chance of securing the emotional resonance that underpins deeper and sustained learning.

While there is no one formula for creating engaging learning experiences, we could look at infusing a combination of factors into our learners' experiences.

Below is an infographic to summarise the different factors and guiding questions that can enhance learning design and facilitation.

DESIGNING LEARNING EXPERIENCES

- VARIANCE**
Create high points and "a-ha" moments
1. What are the high points in the experience or "aha moments" that are likely to stick with learners?
2. What are the "low" moments where learners are required to attempt the unfamiliar or resolve a dilemma?
3. How can I vary the delivery methods, mode of interaction, and texture of different segments in the experience?
- IMMERSION**
Create authentic learning environments
1. How have I designed for learning to be as authentic as possible?
2. How likely are learners to resonate with the scenarios or issues in the experience?
3. Can I use a common motif/ metaphor/ analogy to weave the learning together?
- CONTEXT**
Know who your learners are
1. How do I get to know my learners as a whole person?
2. How do I enable them to articulate their learning intentions and set clear learning goals for themselves?
3. How do I contextualise learning for learners?
- EMOTION**
Consider how you want learners to feel
1. How do I demonstrate empathy for learners' concerns?
2. How do I create a safe environment for learners to express their emotions?
3. How do I model self-disclosure appropriately to foster trust?
- SIGNIFICANCE**
Facilitate learners to reflect on what is most important to them
1. How do I design space for learners to reflect on what is most important for them in any learning experience?
2. How do I invite learners to consider alternative interpretations for their development and growth?
3. How do I help learners to apply their learning?

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How to Engage the Head, Heart and Hands of Adult Learners?

Watch the following [video](#) and see if you can identify with Leslie, an experienced trainer who struggles to connect with learners at a deeper level.

When watching the video, consider the following:

1. What is usually most challenging about creating engaging learning experiences?
2. What are the essential components of engaging learning experiences?
3. What role can blended learning play in creating engaging learning experiences?

See this [video](#) to learn (together with Leslie) more about these factors.

References

1. Parrish P, Wilson B, Dunlap J. (2011). *Learning Experience as Transaction: A Framework for Instructional Design*. *Educational Technology* Mar-Apr 2011
2. Dewey, J (1925/2000). Experience and philosophic method. In J.J. Stuhr (Ed), *Pragmatism and classical American philosophy* (2nd ed, pp 460-471). New York: Oxford University Press
3. Beard C, Wilson, J. (2013). *Experiential Learning: A Handbook for Education, Training and Coaching*. United States of America. Kogan Page Limited.