

Activity 2: Reflecting on Learning

Orientation Material
A LEARNING EXPERIENCE

Think about a time when you learned something that you wanted to learn.

What did you learn?

How did you learn it?

How do you know you learned it?

What impact has this learning had on your life?

© 2009 University of Tennessee, Center for Literacy Studies

Instructor Note:

What is important to capture here is not what they learned but HOW they learned it, HOW they KNEW they learned it, and WHY it was important to them.

1. Explain to participants that, in order to gain new knowledge and skills, they need to be aware of their own learning – including how they learn, what they want to learn, and when they have learned.
2. Ask them to look at the worksheet **A Learning Experience** and tell them: *Think of a time when you learned something new. It could be that you learned it in school or someplace else. Jot down the following:*
 - what you learned,
 - how you learned it,
 - how you know that you learned it, and
 - what impact that learning had on your life.
3. Once participants have written down their ideas for themselves, ask for volunteers to share their learning experience with the rest of the class.
4. Capture their thoughts about how they learned, how they knew it, and why it was important in three separate columns on chart paper.

How You Learned	How You Know You Learned	Why the Learning is Important to You
Learned how to ride a bike with my father holding me while I tried riding; once he no longer held me, I fell a lot of times but got better.	I learned from those falls and eventually fell fewer and fewer times; then I started riding faster and faster and started doing tricks on my bike. I can still ride a bike today.	I know that, just because I fall, doesn't mean I've failed. I will make lots of mistakes as I learn something.

5. Then have them look at the ways they have learned. [Some common themes should emerge from their experiences, for example: they learned using a variety of strategies, probably most of them hands-on, actually doing and learning from their mistakes; they learned from mentors or working with others; the learning is important because it had an impact on their lives.] Engage the participants in conversation about the need to understand how they learn best.
6. Explain that, throughout the rest of the course, they will need to reflect on what they are learning and the relevance of that learning. Also explain that it is their responsibility to call out instances where they do not understand why they are engaged in certain activities or when they feel that they do not understand a particular concept being taught.

Instructor Note:

Now is a good time for you to share with participants that you plan to use a variety of teaching techniques (discussion, one-on-one reflection, writing, role-playing – to name a few) in order to address their different learning styles. Because everyone learns differently, it is important that participants feel comfortable speaking up when they do not understand something.

Activity 4: How Do I Learn Best?

Instructor Note:

There are many strategies for learning. Sometimes they depend on the skill being learned or the material being taught. They can be as simple as talking out loud, highlighting material to be memorized, or writing notes in the margins of books. For more information about learning strategies, you might want to do your own web search.

1. Have participants focus on the second and third components of the definition for the EFF standard **Take Responsibility for Learning**:

- “Identify own strengths and weaknesses as a learner and seek out opportunities for learning that help build self-concept as a learner.”
- “Become familiar with a range of learning strategies to acquire or retain knowledge.”

Both of these components focus on using strategies for learning. Ask: *What are some strategies you have to use in order to learn something new?* [If they need ideas to get started, you might share your own strategies, for example, to learn a list you might create a mnemonic – such as HOMES which stands for the initial letters of the five great lakes – Huron, Ontario, Michigan, Erie, and Superior.]

2. Capture their strategies for learning on chart paper. Be sure to use their language. As they learn more about how to learn, they may want to learn the specific terminology for a strategy, but for now, what is important is that they think about how they learn and that they develop new strategies. Post their list of strategies on the wall. As they learn new strategies, add these to the list.



3. Along with strategies for learning, participants should be familiar with their own most comfortable ways of learning. There are a variety of learning styles inventories available, many free off the Internet. Have participants complete an inventory that you feel would work best for your class.

4. Once participants have completed the inventory, discuss how the results of this may impact them in different learning situations. Begin by looking at the entire class. *Ask: Do most of you share a similar learning preference?* [If so, as the instructor, it will be important for you to keep that in mind throughout this course. You may need to adjust your teaching style to allow participants to use their stronger learning style.]

Ask: Are there strategies that we can use in class to ensure that you are able to use your stronger preference? What can we do as a class to be sure you have opportunities to "stretch" by trying a less preferred style?

5. Then ask: *How might the results of this inventory impact how you learn on the job? What would you want to tell your supervisor when he asks you to learn something new?*

Instructor Note:

You might do your own web search for learning styles inventories. If you are limited for time, try one of the following websites:

<http://www.metamath.com/lswweb/dvclearn.htm>

http://pss.uvm.edu/pss162/learning_styles.html (for a multiple intelligences look at learning styles)

<http://www.rrcc-online.com/~psych/LSInventory.html>

<http://www.muskingum.edu/%7Ecal/database/general/>