Maximize the Impact of Your CLE – Utilize Your Attendee's Adult Learning Styles

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THE EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING PROCESS: TAKING IN & TRANSFORMING INFORMATION BY "GOING AROUND THE CIRCLE"

Learning occurs as a blending of <u>two processes</u>:
Taking in information
Transforming or <u>processing</u> or <u>making meaning</u> of that information

We learn best by
- o taking in new information,
- o understanding that information clearly,
- o relating it to other relevant information and drawing out the principles, then
- o deciding on and implementing new actions.

Taking In Information
- Experiencing: take in information concretely and directly, feeling that information in a subjective and immediate way.
- Thinking: take in information abstractly through a more objective, remote mental process.

Both modes are valuable. When we do not use both modes, we increase the likelihood of missing important information.

Transforming, Processing or Making New Meaning from Information
- Reflecting: process information internally to see the big picture and ponder it in order to grasp its meaning and nuance.
- Applying: process information actively in order to test its practical application by translating it into new behaviors.

Both modes are valuable. When we do not use both modes, we may act ineffectively or too quickly because we lack adequate understanding, or we may suffer the paralysis of analysis and fail to act in a timely manner.
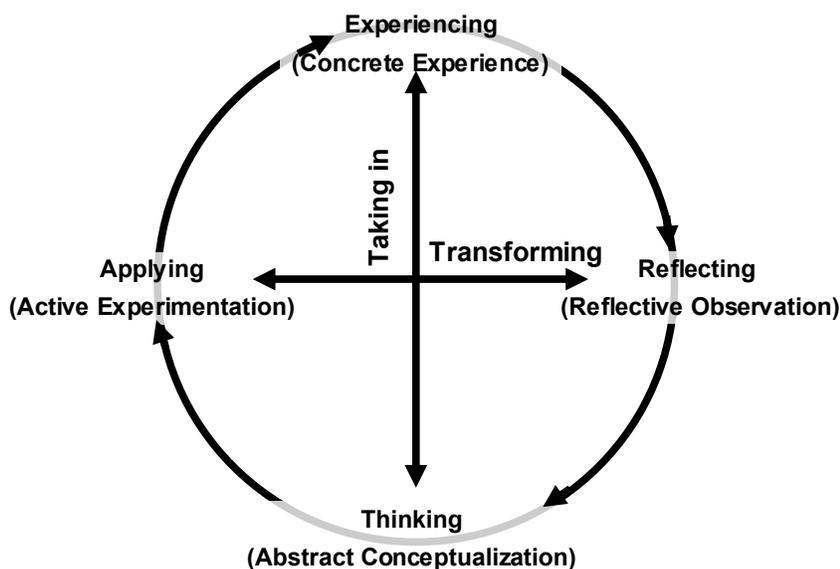
The four modes are: Concrete **Experiencing, Reflecting** & Observing, Abstract **Thinking,** and Active **Applying.** Learning involves all four modes, and the best learners go all the way around the circle.

Adapted from David A. Kolb, *Experiential Learning*

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CHARACTERISTICS OF THE FOUR LEARNING MODES

ON THE "TAKING IN" DIMENSION (VERTICAL LINE):

Experiencing
- Direct and concrete
- Personal or subjective rather than objective or removed
- Attention to people and affect (emotions)
- Emphasis on feeling more than thinking
- Artistic rather than analytic
- Attention to "intuition" in problem solving
- Unstructured situations
- Open-minded approach to life

Thinking
- Emphasis on thinking more than feeling
- Looks to objective research to gather relevant information
- Ideas, concepts and models preferred to people and emotions
- Problem solving with an "objective/scientific" rather than a "subjective/intuitive" approach
- Logic and quantitative analysis
- Values precision, rigor and discipline when analyzing ideas
- Systematic planning
- Looks for a cohesive framework to hold ideas and plans

ON THE "PROCESSING" DIMENSION (HORIZONTAL LINE):

Reflecting
- Focuses on understanding the meaning of ideas and situations by carefully observing
- Looking at things from different perspectives and appreciating different points of view
- More mental/inner reflection than external behavior and action
- Seeing the implications of ideas and situations
- Intuiting the meaning of things
- Understanding as opposed to practical application
- Concern with what is true as opposed to what will work
- Reliance on own thoughts and feelings to form opinions
- Develops patience, impartiality, and thoughtful judgment

Applying
- Actively influencing people and changing situations
- Doing rather than observing
- Getting things accomplished and seeing results
- Practical application as opposed to reflective understanding
- More concerned with what works than with what is true
- Taking risks in order to achieve goals
- Values influencing the environment
- Helps refine skills

LEARNING STYLES

IMAGING STYLE/DIVERGERS – *Consider, Imagine, Understand, Value*
    Take in more directly/subjectively with an emphasis on the feel of the situation using the **Experiencing** mode
    Process personally and internally pondering its meaning and looking for connections using the **Reflecting** mode
- Have a developed imaginative capacity and are creative
- See situations from many perspectives
- Generate many ideas and are good at brainstorming
- Care about people
- Are aware of their own feelings and include emotions in their decisions
- Are interested in values, meaning, the arts and culture

ANALYZING STYLE/ASSIMILATORS – *Gather Knowledge, See Patterns, Make Connections, Plan*
    Take in more objectively with an emphasis on external data and comparison with other situations or information using the **Thinking** mode
    Process personally and internally pondering its meaning and looking for connections using the **Reflecting** mode
- Good at creating theoretical models and synthesizing disparate information
- More concerned with abstract concepts and theories than their practical application
- Place great value on the soundness and precision of the model or framework
- May disregard the facts when they don't fit the plan
- More concerned with ideas than with people
- Careers involving research and planning

DECIDING STYLE/CONVERGERS – *Focus on Outer Knowledge, See the Details, Break Things Down, Look for Answers*
    Take in more objectively with an emphasis on external data and comparison with other situations or information using the **Thinking** mode
    Process quickly and practically looking for how to use it using the **Applying** mode
- Good at finding a practical application for new ideas
- Use logic and analysis to understand issue; reason deductively (general to specific)
- Are comfortable in situations with a single correct answer
- Value keeping emotions out of the decision-making process
- Like problem-solving and decision-making
- Prefer dealing with things and technical problems rather than people issues

INITIATING STYLE/ACCOMMODATORS – *Respond Quickly, Try things Out, Pay Attention to People and Own Gut Feeling*
    Take in more directly/subjectively with an emphasis on the feel of the situation using the **Experiencing** mode
    Process quickly and practically looking for how to use it using the **Applying** mode
- Good at doing things and carrying out plans
- Action-oriented
- Willing to take risks
- When the plan does not fit the "facts," will likely discard the plan and try another approach
- Solves problems using intuition or trial and error
- Relies on other people for information, not on own analytical ability

Adapted from David A. Kolb, EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1984

Presentation Strategies and Kolb's Learning Circle

Direct or Concrete Experience *(Experiencing)*
Activities that involve the learner in the experience either physically or emotionally. Hands-on, uses the senses, engages the learner affectively. May have to be vicarious experience. "Here and now" data.

- Recalling past experience
- Role play (scripted)
- Demonstration/Modeling
- Field Observation
- Case studies
- Videos
- Debates by "experts"
- Reenactments
- Interviews
- Self-tests
- Stories
- Guest speakers
- Poetry, art, photos, music
- Imagery Work
- Simulations/Games
- Brainstorming

Reflective Observations on Experience *(Reflecting)*
Activities that require the learner to step back and look at experience, get perspectives of others, make connections to other experiences.

- Structured small group discussions (pairs, triads, or larger)
- Reflective papers or journals
- Rhetorical questions
- Asking learners how they react to a session
- Asking learners to make connections to other learning, own experience
- Asking learners to discuss class session with other people
- Having learners formulate questions individually or in pairs

Abstract Conceptualization (*Thinking* in Abstractions or Principles)
Information from authoritative sources. Using research and specialized knowledge from the law and other disciplines to develop principles. "There and then" data.

- Legislation, regulations, rules, cases
- Checklists, procedures, chronologies
- Law reviews, journal articles
- Lectures by experts
- Documentary videos
- Legal analyses
- Forms, charts, documents, flowcharts
- Statistical analyses

Active Experimentation *(Applying)*
Opportunities for the learners to try out principles or theories in problem-solving.

- Role play (unscripted)
- Individual and group projects
- Video-taping of practice session
- Hypothetical or "What if" situations
- Devising plans of action
- Problem-solving activities
- Debates by the learners
- Pro-bono or clinic work

What's worth showing up for?
Which of these strategies can be delivered successfully online?
Which of these strategies is delivered more successfully face-to-face?
Which strategies can be combined in **blended learning** for optimal results?

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CHECKLIST FOR PLANNING CLE PRESENTATIONS

This planning tool can be used for any topic included in a continuing legal or judicial branch education program, college course, or a community outreach program.

Know your target audience
Who are your learners?
- What do they already know about your topic? prior experience with topic?
- What do they believe about your topic?
- What is their motivation for attending?
- How receptive are they to new learning experiences?
- What are their work settings and responsibilities?

Learning objectives
What do you expect from your learners in terms of change in:
- Identity, Attitude or Values
- Skills or Behaviors
- Knowledge or Understanding

Content
What will you teach? What, out of all of the things you know about your topic or course, are most important to share during <u>this</u> presentation? Consider focusing on:
- Toughest concepts/problems
- New developments and changes
- Common mistakes
- Skills to improve processes

What is the level of instruction: Fundamental? Intermediate? Advanced?
What content can you move to handouts for later reference by the participants?

Process
What activities *(See Presentation Strategies and the Learning Circle handout)*
will you use to engage the participants in each of the following:
> Concrete Experience (*Experiencing*)
> Reflective Observation (*Reflecting*)
> Abstract Conceptualization (*Thinking*)
> Active Experimentation (*Applying*)

How much time will you allocate to each of these activities?

Evaluation
How will you evaluate the program as part of the learning process?
- What stood out for you?
- What is the most important thing you learned?
- What questions were unanswered?
- What will you do differently as a result of this presentation?

Adapted from Patricia H. Murrell, Leadership Institute in Judicial Education, University of Memphis

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Tips for Better CLE Presentations

1. Begin your presentation with a relevant story, case study, difficult question, cartoon, quote, short scripted role-play, or having the learners recall a past experience that pulls your learners in both cognitively and affectively. Recent studies show that our brains are hardwired for narrative storytelling and learning begins with this emotion-laden, "here and now" type experience.

2. Build time into your presentation for learners to engage in reflection. Be comfortable with a few moments of silence for your learners to reflect upon their experience. Create opportunities for learners to share their reflections with others by formulating questions in dyads or sharing perceptions in small groups.

3. Take a break from the slide show. Incorporate activities and techniques that involve the learners in your presentation. We retain only 10-20% of what we hear during a lecture or talk. But if the learning is experiential, giving us opportunities to apply the new knowledge or skills in an active way, we retain up to 80% of the material. Lasting learning means knowledge creation through active participation, not knowledge consumption through passive observation.

4. **Create a conducive learning community** by connecting with your learners, by having your learners connect with each other through small group discussion and interactive exercises, and by showing respect at all times for your learners and your subject matter. Research and our own experience demonstrates that an environment that fosters learning is relaxed but stimulating, collaborative rather than competitive, and is free from excessive stress, fear, humiliation, and ridicule. Consider the use of nametags, table tents, room setup, etc., to create this environment.

5. Provide handouts that are useful, practical guides for the new information in the presentation, such as checklists, flowcharts, top ten lists, "attorney's toolbox," etc. Do not photocopy cases or websites, but do provide citations, website addresses, resource lists, etc. Don't confuse PowerPoint slides with a handout. Think **FORC**: forms, outlines (annotated), resources, and charts.

6. End every session with an application exercise that involves the learners.
- Role play (unscripted this time)
- Individual or group projects
- Video-taping of practice session
- Hypothetical or "What if" situations
- Devising plans of action
- Problem-solving activities
- Debates by the learners

7. **Use the evaluation as part of the learning process itself**. Ask questions that require the learner to reflect upon and apply the material. Examples include: What is the most important thing you learned at this session? What will you do differently as a result of this session?

8. Divide your agenda into 30 minutes modules. Write an objective (see below) for each module. Limit mini-lectures to 20 minutes or less.

9. Use Learning Objectives. Learning objectives focus your attention on the learners. They are targeted learning outcomes: What will the learners be able to do after the learning event? What do you expect from your learners in terms of change of attitude, knowledge, and skills?

Using Faculty Wisely:

Consider the following in choosing someone to …
1. give a lecture: subject matter expert, understands the interests and skill level of the learners, good presentation skills, comfortably engages the audience in dialogue.

2. moderate a panel discussion : sufficiently knowledgeable to ask good questions, tactful but not shy about interrupting to clarify or move discussion; listens well enough to draw contracts and comparisons and connections among panel perspectives.

3. facilitate discussion among learners: very good listener, knowledgeable but won't impose "right" answer, skilled at asking questions that make people think.

4. teach a skill: models the skill well, breaks skill into component parts and teaches sub-skills, good coaching skills, gives constructive feedback.

Technical Tips:

1. Take control of your technology and space. Take the time to set-up an arrangement that is comfortable for participants and allows you to move around effectively and comfortably. Make sure your participants have clear sight lines to you and the screens and the seating is arranged in a way conducive to learning and participation.

2. Keep you and your message center stage. Remember that you are the most important audio-visual aid you have. Do not allow your technology to interfere with the clarity of the information you are presenting and never let your PowerPoint over-power the point. Avoid cutesy bells and whistles, flying slides, and other distracting transitions. Do use, when appropriate, highlighting to draw the eyes to the most relevant text, colorful graphs and charts, visual representations of abstract ideas, photos, artwork, video clips, etc.--the things that PowerPoint can do powerfully.

3. When using **audiovisuals,** be sure the material is readable from the back of the room. Use upper and lower case letters for text--research shows that this combination is easier to read. Avoid hard-to-read color combinations (red against blue or green), full sentences, and too much text per slide.

4. Never read your paper or PowerPoint slides. Be confident enough in your material to present it in a conversational way.

5. Use a final slide. Always have a final slide to mark the end of your slide presentation.

6. Practice your presentation. Be sure you have enough time for each activity, especially your application exercises. Also practice advancing the slides, blanking the screen, etc.

7. Have a copy of your slides with you. Present from a numbered copy of your slides so you always know what comes next.

8. Know Plan B. Always have a back up plan. Technology, although a wonderful tool, can fail. Always have a plan B (and C) to fall back on and be ready to punt.

9. Online teaching: Determine that your learning objectives (how you want the learners to change in terms of knowledge, attitude, behavior), are appropriate for online teaching.
Web-based instruction is appropriate for:

- Memorizing terms and concepts
- Applying rules
- Analyzing or synthesizing data

- Evaluating information
- Solving a problem

Web-based instruction is problematic for:

- Changing attitudes
- Reflection on values

- Exploring alternative perspectives

Web-based instruction is <u>not</u> appropriate for:

- Practicing a skill

- Engaging in physical activity

Caveats When Using PowerPoint:

PowerPoint's popularity is beginning to wane because of the cautions listed below. Consider these before you decide to use this tool in your presentation.

1. It's inflexible. When using PowerPoint, the pace and order is set for you. This can minimize the spontaneity that can happen in a less prescribed format.

2. It's risky. Technical difficulties can arise that can either delay the time you start your presentation or interrupt the presentation itself, which make you nervous!

3. It can be a substitute for teaching. Some presenters hide behind their technology and rather than learning the material and developing teaching skills, they create bullet points and read them to the audience. Boring!

4. It's tempting to overdo it. There is almost no limit to the number of slides you can place in your slide show, which makes it tempting to include too much information. Audience members cannot become experts in one day, so it is best to edit your presentation and your slides carefully to include only the most salient points. If you try to "cover" too much, you may just do that: "cover" also means to obscure.

5. It can be mind-numbing. Don't allow the fact that you are using PowerPoint to signal to the audience that it is their time to sit back and relax. Involve participants so they are not bored and plan time within the presentation schedule for them to be active participants.

6. Don't confuse your slides with your handout. There are four parts to a presentation: what you're going to say, what the learners will be doing, your handout, and your slides. Outline your presentation off-line, prepare your handouts, and then think about your slides.

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