

Title:

Who Do You Blame If They Learn Nothing At Your Seminar?

Word Count:

528

Summary:

Ted, Alice, Pete and Rita are all attending the same seminar. They all expect to learn something, after all that's why they are there. Trouble is they each have very individual and different ways of learning, so this seminar had better take this into account or some of them may come away disappointed.

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Article Body:

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Ted had been to events before where he could not get satisfactory answers to his questions and was disappointed that he could not get to grips with the theories that were being promoted.

The prospect of sitting through a day of presentations did not appeal to Alice . On previous seminars she had always blamed presenters for being uninteresting and longed for an opportunity to test new ideas out.

Pete felt a bit like Alice did and always had the feeling that he did not have enough time to really think new ideas through. Sometimes he recognized that concepts were sometimes not clearly signposted and found them difficult to follow.

Rita, on the other hand knew from previous experience that, if she could watch someone else demonstrating how to do something, that was worth hours of talk to her.

If your workshop demands that the participants actually learn something, you need to be aware of the four learning styles that exist amongst the population. They are given the titles:

- * Theorist
- * Activist
- * Pragmatist
- * Reflector

They all demand different things from a learning environment and so, it is in your interests to design the content of your workshop to appeal in some way to each learning style.

Ted, for example, is a Theorist and likes to be challenged with interesting ideas and concepts and he will enjoy an opportunity to question the logic and the science behind the thinking.

Alice is an Activist and likes to role-play and put new concepts into practice without too much preparation and she enjoys an opportunity to work through any problems with others in a team environment.

Pete falls into a group called Pragmatists who have to understand the connection between new ideas and their existing map of the world. They also prefer an opportunity to practice a new way of doing things with a step-by-step model.

Reflectors like Rita need time to consider the effects of change on every aspect of their job and their life. They are happy to observe others making changes but don't like being pushed in at the deep end without plenty of preparation.

All of this means that each workshop session should be divided into three sections:

- * An information presentation phase with checklists and process models to illustrate each major point.
- * An opportunity for people to ask questions and challenge the theory
- * Practice sessions where people can role play and make the theory work for them and allow others to observe.

Using this type of structure for a workshop means that Ted, Alice, Pete and Rita will all experience the same material during the workshop but, because of their

preferred learning styles, they each receive more benefit from certain elements. With a little care and attention to the composition and content of the material, they will all find the workshop to be a significant learning opportunity.