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The Association of Learning Providers

# DIRECTORY

*the resource for training providers*

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- Reinforcement: Making Great Training Pay Off
- ISA Member Listings

# It's a Noisy World



Experts weigh in on how to engage today's learners and ensure training sticks

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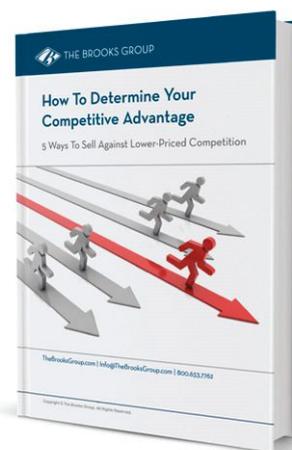
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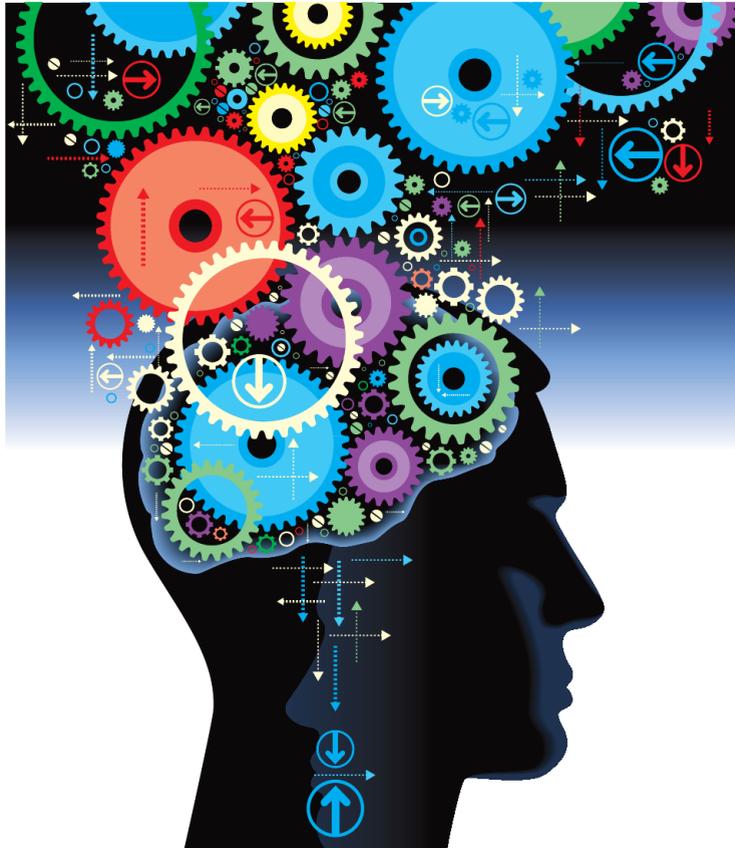


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# It's a Noisy World

Experts weigh in on how to engage today's learners and make sure training sticks.



## ENGAGING ALL LEARNERS IN AN AGE OF INFORMATION OVERLOAD

By Herrmann International

Each one of us as a learner is a unique human being with a unique learning style. Consider your own experience: You likely did much better in some subjects than others; surely you responded much more to some teaching methods than others; finally, you retained some material more accurately and for a longer period of time than other material delivered in a different way.

There's a reason for that. Our unique learning style is the result of the brains we were born with, combined with the years of experience that have developed into our own distinctive learning styles over the course of our lives. So we're drawn to certain methods, materials, and areas of focus. It's not about competence; rather, it's about our *preferences*.

While every learner is different, our 30 years of research into these thinking and learning styles has shown that, taken as a whole, the world is a composite of different learning preferences, crossing the traits described in the Whole Brain® Learning Considerations model. This means that any population of more than 100 learners will represent distinct differences in their individual learning and thinking styles. Since each learner population will be diverse in their learning, the most effective training design and delivery methods will take into account an approach that works well across those differences.

### Whole Brain® Learning Considerations

<p><b>A</b> <b>Learns By</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Acquiring and Quantifying Facts</li> <li>Analysis and Logic</li> <li>Thinking Through Ideas</li> <li>Building Cases</li> <li>Forming Theories</li> </ul>	<p><b>Learns by</b> <b>D</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Taking Initiative</li> <li>Exploring Hidden Possibilities</li> <li>Relying on Intuition</li> <li>Constructing Concepts</li> <li>Synthesizing Content</li> </ul>
<p><b>Learns by</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organizing and Structuring Content</li> <li>Evaluating and Testing Theories</li> <li>Practice</li> <li>Implementing Content</li> </ul> <p><b>B</b></p>	<p><b>Learns by</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Listening and Sharing Ideas</li> <li>Integrating Experiences with Self</li> <li>Moving and Feeling</li> <li>Emotional Involvement</li> <li>Harmonizing with Content</li> </ul> <p><b>C</b></p>

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An interesting thing happened during the years companies pulled back on training: The level of content and information coming at employees from all directions didn't pull back with it. Instead, the noise only grew louder. The competition for attention became fiercer. The disruptions, priorities, responsibilities, and demands piled on at an alarming rate.

From Big Data to social collaboration tools to the never-ending flow of e-mails, employees today are drowning in information. Volume—in all its definitions—is the hallmark of the work environment, and although we have a variety of new ways to reach employees with training, those employees have more distractions getting in the way and more incentives to tune out.

So how do you engage your learners, keep their attention, and get the lasting outcomes you need? ISA member companies Herrmann International and MOHR Retail recently tackled these questions in the book, "Developing Talent for Organizational Results" (Pfeiffer, A Wiley Imprint, 2012), excerpts of which follow.

Whole Brain® Teaching and Learning provides the basis for bridging the gap between the individual learner and the design and delivery of the learning. With a Whole Brain® approach, you can better reach and engage with diverse learners, improve their retention, and deliver memorable—rather than forgettable—learning experiences in an increasingly cluttered, fragmented work environment.

## Step 1: Understand Your Learners

Review the Whole Brain® Learning Considerations model and think about the populations you serve. How are they different? Similar?

More often than not we do not know the preferences and styles of our learners. Thus, when in doubt, design using a Whole Brain® approach—chances are you will have that diversity anyway. Keep in mind that you also will need to think about other differences, including introversion, extroversion, and generational differences. There are other aspects to audience diagnosis, including size and location of the audience, technical skills, and need for support. To ensure you don't overlook any critical areas, use the Whole Brain® Model to guide your own thinking.

## Step 2: Think About Your Learning Design

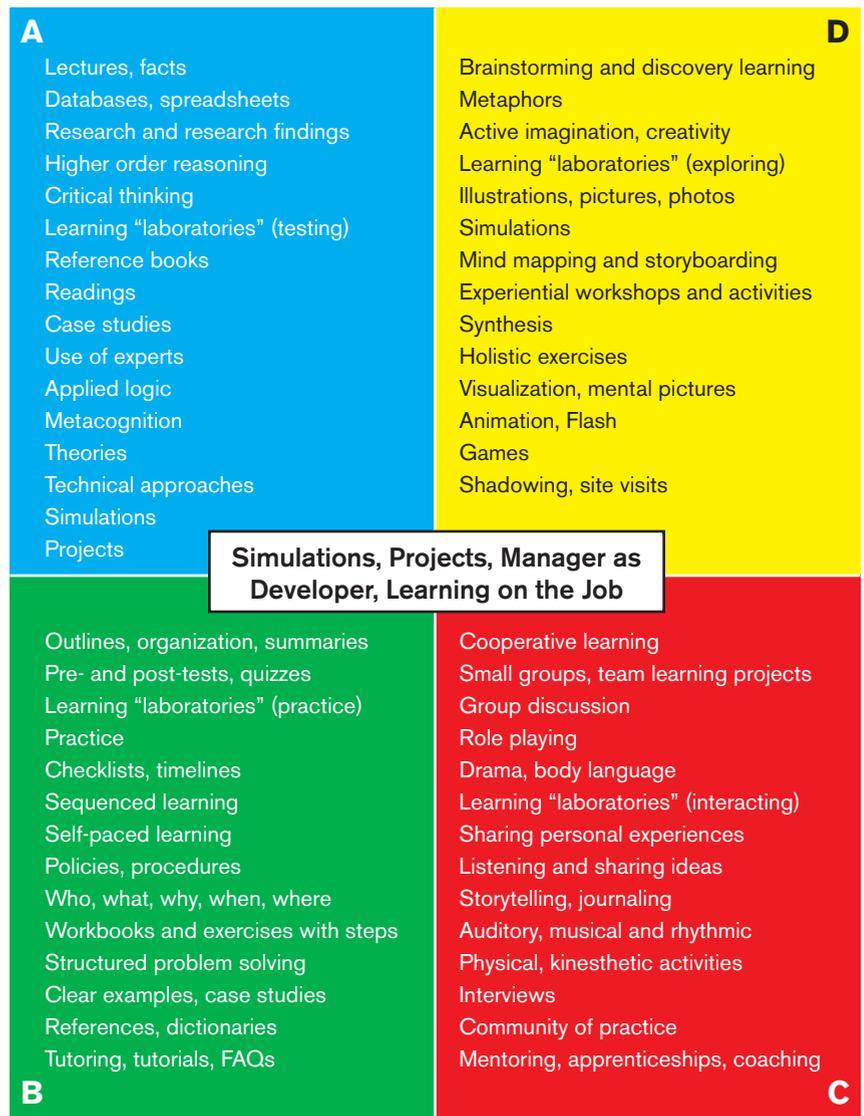
Now that you have analyzed your learners, your learning design and key learning points require the same. Just as in any learning design, you need to design the instructional approach(es) and delivery methods you will use to teach those critical learning points.

Our research has shown that different design and delivery approaches improve and facilitate learning for each of the four specialized quadrants of the brain. The model at right, for example, shows different design and delivery approaches by quadrants for face-to-face/workshop learning. Use thinking preferences as a guide in creating the optimum blend of approaches across the online and offline spectrum, as well as the four quadrants.

## Step 3: Put It Together in the Context of Your Learning Environment

Depending on your own thinking preferences, the growing list of options technology gives us may seem exciting or overwhelming. Either way, take a step back and focus on the two to five approaches that will best serve your design, your audience,

## Face-to-Face and Workplace Learning Methods: The Whole Brain® Way



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and your organization—within its constraints. Keep it simple and always, always keep the brain in mind. You are, after all, a learner yourself. Put together a Whole Brain® team to help you evaluate your options and think this through.

## A World of Choices

This rapidly evolving learning environment means we have an obligation to rethink what we've always done and how we've done it. This doesn't mean we throw out all the old ways, but now we have so many more options that let us actually

*continued on page 7*



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## It's a Noisy World *continued from page 4*

anticipate learner needs, and we can adapt, using internal social networks, as well as face-to-face and online methods. It's not just a challenge—it's our responsibility to continue to push our thinking in a much more complex world of choices.

Thinking and learning are the new currency in the age of the knowledge worker, and yet it's becoming that much

more difficult in our always-on, fragmented environment. Everything you can do to help your learners better target their thinking, invest their attention more efficiently, and leverage their Whole Brain® Thinking skills more effectively will not only deliver results for the individual but for the organization as a whole. **T**

## REINFORCEMENT: MAKING GREAT TRAINING PAY OFF

By **MOHR Retail**

Getting people to actually use what they have learned after a training session can be a challenging and complex task. Let's take a closer look at one tool that is key to ensuring that new behaviors are used back on the job: Reinforcement.

### Reinforcement

When a company has identified a skill gap or need for training, there is a substantial amount of time spent *before* any training is done analyzing who to train, how, when, and by whom or in what format, e.g., e-learning, distance learning, virtual classroom. Weeks or even months might be spent on this portion of preparation alone, not to mention the amount of time for actual development of new material to be used during the training. Once those initial questions are answered about the population and training approach, there's the logistical side of getting ready, which might include reserving outside facilities, making travel arrangements, defining equipment needs, and so on. There might be a separate implementation plan that needs to be worked out for national or global implementations, as well as measurement criteria to assess impact. Planning and preparation for training can require a substantial amount of time and resources.

Assuming the actual training content is on target and has been developed with a credible learning design, you are finally ready to begin delivery of the training. The facilitation and/or delivery of training is fairly concise, almost blast-like, when it finally gets to the audience.

While the training professionals have been immersed in this project for some time, the participants might be getting the experience of being dipped into a torrent of information for a very short period of time. Is there a way to get them involved sooner? Using participants to help develop content increases their personal buy-in. Unfortunately, this typically involves only a small percentage of the overall audience. When a company is embarking on a major initiative that requires training, it's important to remember that *training is change*. And we all know how much participants like change. Since there will be a new expectation, a new norm for performance and/or method to performing their job, reinforcing that new norm even *before* managers come to the training is essential. A Level 1 assessment at the end of the training gives you a sense of how confident or relevant the training was. It doesn't tell you if people are going to use it.

### The Manager's Role

When we're working with a client charged with a training initiative, one of the early questions we like to ask is, "What is the role of senior managers in developing their people?" The question almost always evinces some kind of reaction: a knowing smile, a frown, or nodding in agreement. What comes next is not always as encouraging. Many clients understand the importance of what happens back in the field, but they also know senior managers are rarely interested and/or fully equipped to reinforce what was learned. Not to mention having the time to reinforce it.

Training of any kind is just the beginning. In order to receive a full return on the investment of time, money, and effort involved in being away from the field, it's critical to have planned follow-up and reinforcement. Managers often look to their supervisor's behavior to set their own priorities. Do they really want me to use what I learned? Is it really as important as they said? Will anybody notice if I don't change to the new norm? The role of the senior manager is to ensure that what was trained actually gets used. It's the best way to maximize productivity of any training.

When training sessions end, the facilitator's work may be finished, but the participants' work has just begun. The end of a session is the beginning of new behaviors and use of new tools and skills learned.

Think back to the last time you learned something new. Were you perfect after the first lesson? Probably not. What you had were fundamentals that required practice and attention. Who better to follow up and reinforce your efforts, as clumsy as they may feel, than your senior manager? It sends a powerful message that the expectation for change is strong and they have your back. Reinforcement not only ensures better results from more consistent use of training. It also builds trust and strengthens a critical coaching role your senior managers play every day. Reinforcement makes great training pay off again and again. **T**

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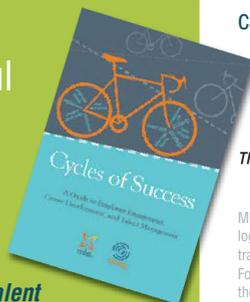
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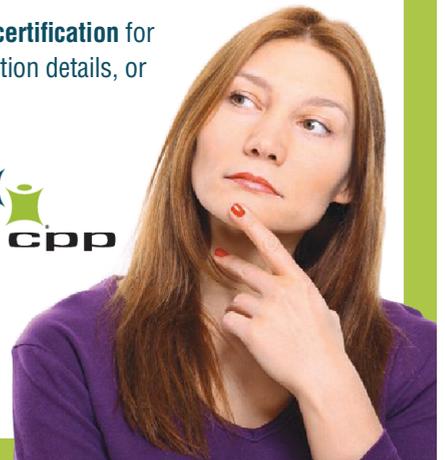
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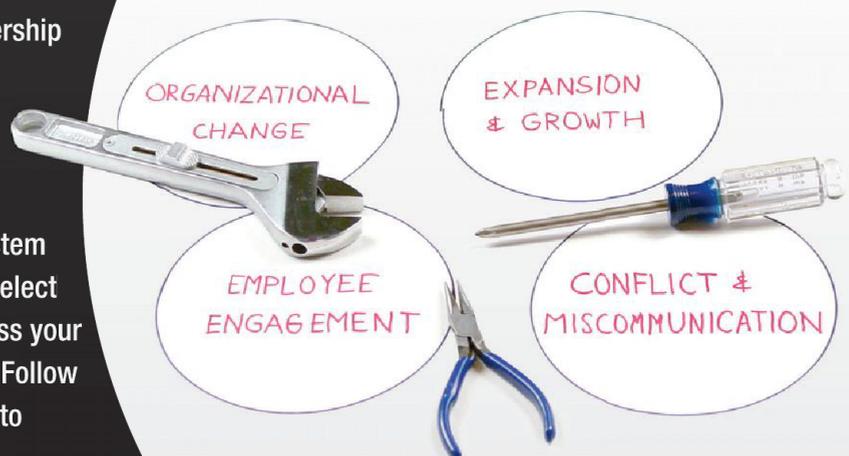
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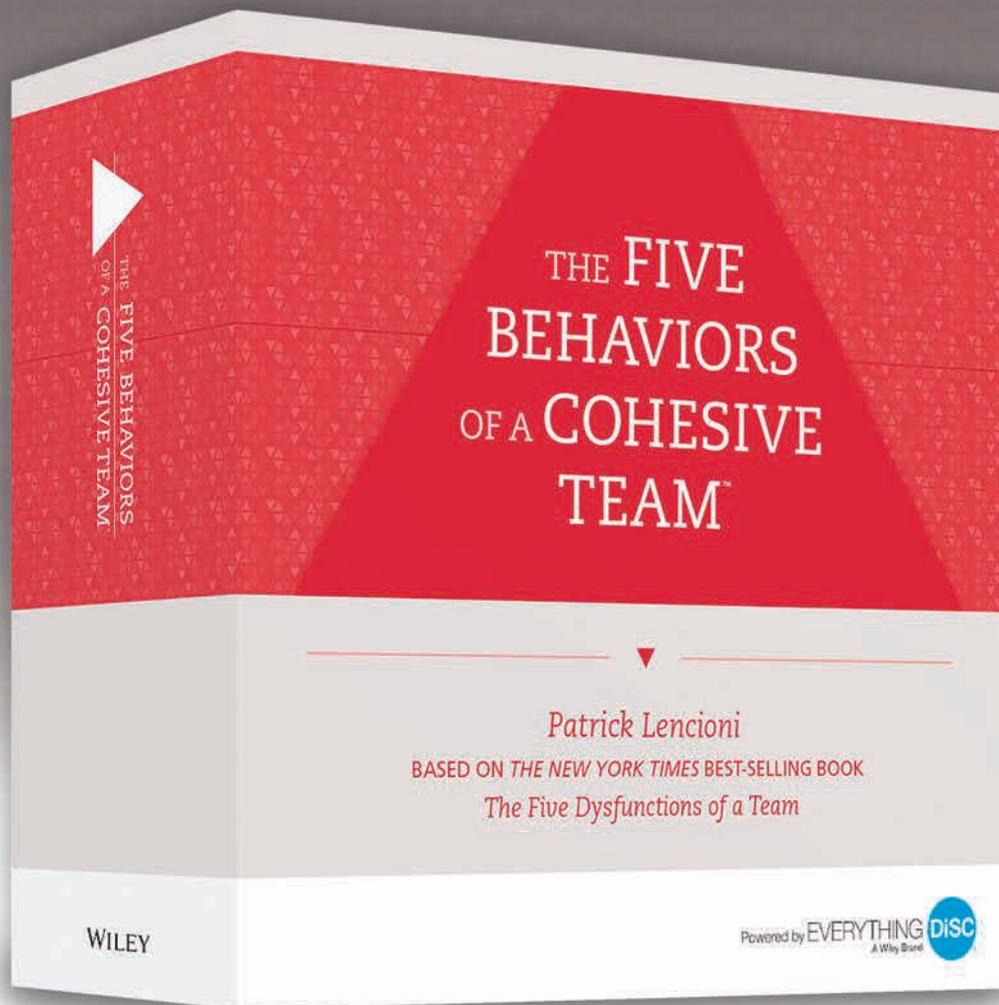
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