

LNRA: What's in a Question?



Let's begin by saying, "Don't sweat it!" That said, we can all deepen our capacity to create questions that engage and provide useful insights for us and the respondents.

Some readers will be familiar with the acronym: LNRA. For those that aren't, the **Learning Needs Resource Assessment** is a tool that Dialogue Educators use in their preparation to design or to teach an existing learning event. It is comprised of three actions: *Asking, Observing and Studying*. This month's *Tips & Tools* will focus on the "Ask" dimension in the teaching preparation phase.

At Global Learning Partners, it is a regular practice to send out via email three to five questions to the people who will be coming to a course. These questions can serve multiple purposes, such as to:

Upcoming Events

Learning to Listen, Learning to Teach

An Introduction to Dialogue Education™

April 26-29, 2011 ~ Stowe, VT

with Peter Perkins

(peterp@globalearning.com)

Early Bird deadline: March 1

[register now](#)

June 7-10, 2011 ~ Raleigh, NC

with Karen Ridout

(karen@globalearning.com)

Early Bird deadline: April 12

[register now](#)

September 20-23, 2011 ~ Boston, MA

with Marian Darlington Hope

(marian@globalearning.com)

Early Bird deadline: July 26

[register now](#)

November 1-4, 2011 ~ Toronto, ON

with Jeanette Romkema

(jeanette@globalearning.com)

Early Bird deadline: September 6

[register now](#)

Advanced Learning Design

June 13-15, 2011 ~ Raleigh, NC

with Karen Ridout

(karen@globalearning.com)

Early Bird deadline: April 18

[register now](#)

November 16-18, 2011 ~ Montpelier, VT

with Peter Perkins

(peterp@globalearning.com)

Early Bird deadline: October 5

[register now](#)



Prime the pump: *Preparing the learner for some of what he/she will be learning during the event.*

EXAMPLE: *How do you currently plan and create plans for teaching, either for a group or in a one to one situation?*

Build rapport: These questions and the responses back to participants are one of a number of actions that set the tone for the course before folks even walk in the door.

EXAMPLE: *Take a look at item #3 on the welcome letter; what questions do you have about designing or practice teaching right now? What else would you like to know about the course (content, schedule, ...anything?) or would you want me to know about you and your learning preferences or...?*

Build enthusiasm and curiosity for the course: Asking questions that encourage people to tell about their strengths, needs, desires and hopes.

EXAMPLE: *Please read the achievement-based objectives for this course on the previous page. Which three objectives are of greatest interest to you? Why?*

Demonstrate interest in the participant: Questions that connect the person's experience and desires with what can be expected to happen in the course are an example of the ways in which the teacher and learner will interact and connect during the course.

EXAMPLE: *What kind of teaching (group, 1:1), counseling, supervision, and/or training, do you do? What do you like about your teaching? What challenges or doubts do you face in doing this work?*

Deepening reflection: Too often in our fast paced world we do not stop to consider our actions. Well-crafted questions provide an opportunity for people to reflect upon the extent to which what they are doing and experiencing actually meets their desired outcomes.

EXAMPLE: *Consider the ways in which your environment and context have changed over the past five years. How are things moving more into control? How are they moving further from control? What is your role in this change?*



Here is another example of LNRA questions from page 14 in [Training Through Dialogue](#) by Dr. Jane Vella:

- *Why are you excited about taking this week long course?*
- *What have you read about adult learning that has helped you in your work?*
- *What are your present teaching or work responsibilities, including current issues you face?*
- *What do you hope to have achieved and to have learned by the end of this training course?*

What do you notice about these questions? Consider adding your insights to the following resources (tip sheets).



[3 Steps to Creating the “Right” Question for the “Right” Response](#)



[Checklist for Learning Needs Resource Assessment Surveys \(Questions\)](#)



Other ideas and resources: See the [January 2010](#) and [June 2010](#) issues of *Tips & Tools* for included tip sheets on [Open Questions](#) and [More Open Questions](#).

To share your own experiences and ideas for creating great questions, and to read more about using questions to prepare for teaching, go to this week’s blog post: [LNRA: Phone Calls or Email?](#)

More ways to connect:

- ❖ START A DISCUSSION ON [FACEBOOK](#)
- ❖ SEND A MESSAGE TO THE [VOICES LISTSERV](#)



Global Learning Partners acknowledges and thanks [Darlene Goetzman](#) for the concept and compilation of this issue of *Dialogue Education™ Tips & Tools*. [Contact Darlene](#) or any of our [Global Learning Partners team](#) about coaching and consulting services, or to bring Dialogue Education™ directly to your company or organization.



3 Steps for Creating Learning Needs and Resource Assessment Questions

1. Interview yourself

- What information will help you to know more about the individuals who are coming to your workshop or class, and how they will be using what you are teaching?
- What situations or challenges are they encountering that would indicate the content you are teaching will be useful to them?
- What question could you ask to learn more, and provide assurance of the course's value to the learner?

2. Decide

- What can you share about the course that would:
 - Minimize any fears or concerns people might have?
 - Increase people's enthusiasm for coming?
 - Give people a sense of "who you are" or your style?
 - Provide a glimpse or more of what people can expect?

3. Deepen

- What could you ask now that would help people shift to a grander view of what's possible for him or her, after their participation in this course?
- Here are a few examples you might adapt for your circumstances:
- If you were _____ even more effectively than you are now, what would it look like?
- In what ways can you imagine this course will be most useful to your specific situation?
- What will be different about the way you _____, if you successfully complete this course?
- What is your ideal outcome from taking this course?

Developed by Darlene Goetzman, ©Global Learning Partners Inc.



Checklist for Learning Needs Resource Assessment Surveys (Questions)

Check your wording, is it clear? *If you are concerned about wording, have someone else read the question and determine if it is interpreted in the way you mean it to be.*

Are your questions and the introduction to them inviting and clear?

Do any of the question's words have a double meaning that may cause misunderstanding?

Have you avoided using any terminology that may not be understood by everyone reading the questions?

Have you given a deadline by which the responses are due?

Have you described how to and to whom their responses should be sent to?

Are most, if not all, open questions?

Developed by Darlene Goetzman, ©Global Learning Partners Inc.