

Personal Reflection – May 23, 2021

A New Framework

From my reading of Zull's "The Art of Changing the Brain" and "From Brain to Mind." And, from my own design work I recognized the need to give learners an experience before we offer new concepts, skills or attitudes (WHAT).

My sense of the Learning Needs and Resources Assessment (LNRA) needed attention. Zull teaches that the new learning needs a prior experience. Wow!

So, I am now suggesting this sequence in any Learning Task:

1. Discover learners' context, needs, knowledge and skills in this area
2. Offer an experience of this concept or skill: now!
3. Read, watch, listen to current research on this new skill, knowledge or attitude (SKA)
4. Use it – a team's presentation of this new SKA in a given situation
5. Take it home – design a use of this SKA in your unique context. Publish your design.

What's new here: I spoke for many years about immediacy and relevance and engagement. This is a cut above.

An Example: Teaching a group of university professors

The human brain learns in terms of previous experience.

1. LNRA

These professors met you at a dinner party last night. You heard their situation, their interests, their frustrations, their problems in teaching undergraduates, etc.

2. Offer an experience

You open the session with the professors:

- *Share in pairs, the story of the best learning experience you remember....*
- *Name one element you saw at work in that experience. Write these and post them.*
- *We'll hear all you wish to share.*

(Remembering an experience is itself an experience)

3. Current research on learning

Neurology of the brain indicates:

1. We learn based on prior experience.
2. Images precede concepts or skills.
3. The learning is in the doing and the deciding of the learners.
4. Meaning is personal.

In new pairs, compare the elements we all named with this current research. Share what you notice.

4. A teaching/learning situation

A group of 20 college freshmen are taking a course entitled university resources. The first 50-minute session is entitled Our Library. In new pairs, name two or three learning tasks you will set using Zull's research. We'll hear all.

5. Taking new learning home

Using the Eight Design Steps, design one session of a course you are currently teaching or hope to teach.

Eight Design Steps

1. *WHO – The learners, number, other salient information*
2. *WHY – The situation that demands this event*
3. *SO THAT – The behavioral indicators as a result of the learning*
4. *WHEN – The timeframe and minutes for learning*
5. *WHERE – The place and space*
6. *WHAT – the skills, knowledge, and/or attitudes to be taught; the content*
7. *WHAT – The achievement-based objectives; by the end of this 50-minute session, all will have ...*
8. *HOW – The learning tasks and materials to learn*

The product - a design for their unique context - is also the beginning of evaluation. Behavioral indicators!

The learning is in the deciding and in the doing.