



## ***Designing Respectfully for Learners with Varying Levels of Experience***

We're all learners, yet that doesn't change the trepidation that Dialogue Education™ practitioners can feel preparing for a group of people with wide ranging experience levels with either the topic or within the context (field) we are designing for. This issue of *Dialogue Education™ Tips & Tools* describes strategies for using this opportunity to benefit all concerned.

### **We're All Learners**

Make sure to acknowledge both the experienced individuals and the novices. Give plenty of opportunities for those in the know to teach others – through small group work, pair work, perhaps even asking ahead of time if he/she might give a presentation on a certain content piece. Alternatively, he or she might co-teach a portion of the course or a task with you, or be a planned resource.

Here's another idea:

Include quotes from the Learning Needs and Resource Assessment within the design, PowerPoint or on a chart (with permission of course!). Novices can offer great questions and keen insights just as well the more experienced participants. [Peter Perkins](#) shares, *"This honors all insights and engages everyone right off the bat, as they see their names and useful quotes. I choose only a few and celebrate their contributions, while acknowledging we'll hear from others throughout our time together."*

### **Variety**

In addition to mixing up pair, small and large group work to take advantage and include everyone's ideas, be sure to set this up so that people are working with new people often. [Jeanette Romkema](#) explains this, in this way, *"Change the groups around so people have exposure to a variety of skill sets, experience and*

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### **Upcoming Events**

#### **Learning to Listen, Learning to Teach**

*An Introduction to Dialogue Education™*

**August 10-13, 2010 ~ Boston, MA**  
with Marian Darlington Hope  
([marian@globalearning.com](mailto:marian@globalearning.com))

[register now](#)

**September 14-17, 2010 ~ San Diego, CA**  
with Karen Ridout

**Early Bird deadline: August 2**  
([karen@globalearning.com](mailto:karen@globalearning.com))

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**October 19-22, 2010 ~ Montpelier, VT**  
with Peter Perkins

**Early Bird deadline: August 24**  
([peterp@globalearning.com](mailto:peterp@globalearning.com))

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**November 2-5, 2010 ~ Toronto, ON**  
with Jeanette Romkema

**Early Bird deadline: September 7**  
([jeanette@globalearning.com](mailto:jeanette@globalearning.com))

[register now](#)

**November 30-December 3, 2010 ~ Raleigh, NC**

with Karen Ridout  
**Early Bird deadline: October 5**  
([karen@globalearning.com](mailto:karen@globalearning.com))

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#### **Advanced Learning Design**

**November 8-10, 2010 ~ Montpelier, VT**  
with Peter Perkins

([peterp@globalearning.com](mailto:peterp@globalearning.com))

**Early Bird deadline: September 13**

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learning styles.” This also mediates any dependence on one person’s experience (or not), and gives everyone chances to respond to, and ask questions of new people.

Keep the pace steady, and create opportunities that allow those who are ready to move ahead.

Offer learners choice: they will choose wisely according to their experience, need and skill base.

## Questions

Create open questions that can be answered at many levels:

- When you have used this, what have you seen? Experienced?
- Given your current experience, how might you modify this?
- What stands out to you as most important about these steps?
- For those of you that have done this: What is one sentence that you would offer as a tip for success?

You can also help to “level the playing field” by asking:

- *What are one or two ways \_\_\_\_\_ (workshop content) has been very effective (well-used, implemented, etc.) in your place of work?*
- *What suggestions do you have for improving its implementation?*

## For more ideas:



[Two Examples from Learning Tasks that Take Advantage of a Range of Experience Levels in the Learning Group](#)

## Learning Evaluation by Design

December 7-8, 2010 ~ Washington, DC

with Valerie Uccellani

([valerie@globalearning.com](mailto:valerie@globalearning.com))

**Early Bird deadline: October 12**

[register now](#)

View the complete

[2010 Public Course Calendar](#)



## ***Take Advantage of a Range of Experience Levels in the Learning Group***

### **Example One**

[Valerie Uccellani](#) offers this idea:

Like layered open questions, you can also create Learning Tasks that have several "layers" to them. We design the task so that if a small group is less experienced than others, they can choose to complete just the first layer of the task, and still have what they need for whatever comes next in the learning program.

For example, we recently field-tested a course on planning community-based health programs. One task required each Country Team to draft a budget for their program.

They could:

- Simply define the categories for their budget (and we gave a resource for this to make it doable even for beginners)
- Define categories and estimate amounts (a bit more challenging)
- Define categories, estimate amounts, and itemize expenses (more challenging still).

It was perfectly acceptable for any group to achieve any one or more of the 3 levels, and regardless of their choice, be able to confidently move on in the learning program.

### **Example Two**

[Karen Ridout](#) teaches and leads group activities in Myers Briggs psychological type workshops. When there are experienced participants, she includes some great questions that can meaningfully invite insights and take advantage of how the knowledge and insights can make big differences in people's lives.

After the participants have been introduced to the general topic and learned more about their specific type, ask:

- Experienced people to share: How have you used knowledge of Types? And, how has knowing this affected your life? Your work? Your relationships?
- People new to Type: Given the discoveries about yourself and others, what would you like to ask the experienced people in the room about Type?

Rich, enthusiastic dialogue always ensues.

The tools and resources in this issue of *DE Tips & Tools* were developed/compiled by [Darlene Goetzman](#), Certified Dialogue Education Teacher and GLP Partner. [Contact her](#) about coaching and consulting services, or to bring Dialogue Education™ directly to your company or organization.

