

Engaged Learning

Introduction

Adults are very practical learners. They seek to learn when they are challenged in some way by life. They search for information and skills particularly suited to their immediate needs and interests. And they choose learning experiences that help them to accomplish their goals.

Learning, however, is not a passive process. It requires that learners be actively engaged, from deciding that learning is necessary all the way through to practicing new skills on-the-job. For this reason, we focus on Engaged Learning and the Engaged Learner. And we focus on engaged learning within the context of work.

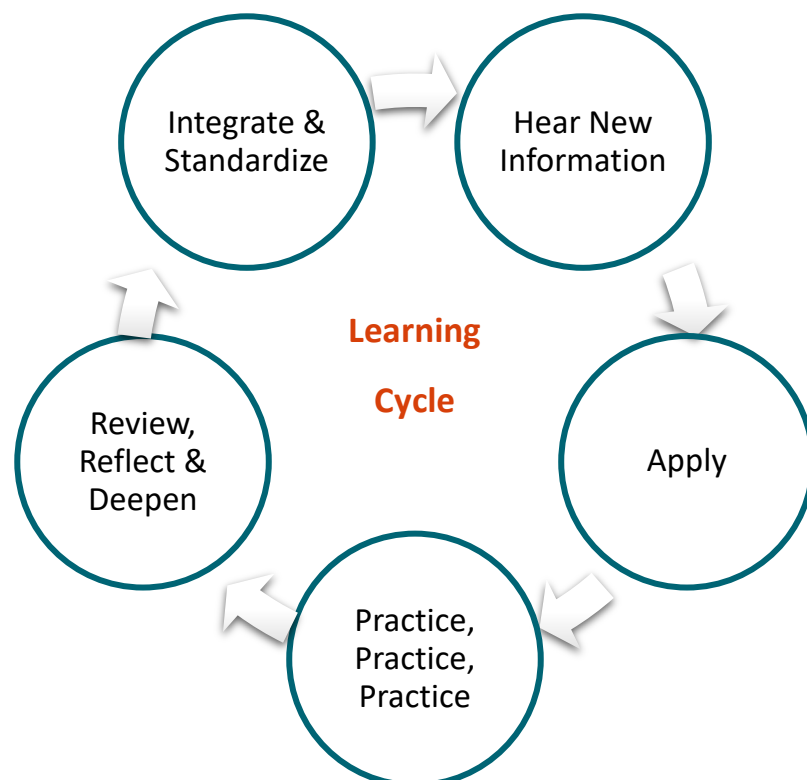
Engaged Learners

Engaged Learners take an active role in their learning experience. They identify learning needs based on the requirements of their job. They take initiative to find the appropriate learning resources. They engage with the learning resource with the intent to grow and develop.

They see success in learning as having developed new knowledge or a new skill. And they understand that practice is a critical step in developing those skills. So, they practice on-the-job with the intent of learning from their practice. Finally, they know that the investment in learning is only as good as their ability to apply their new knowledge and skills on-the-job. So, they actively integrate their new knowledge and skills into their daily work.

The Learning Cycle

The Learning Cycle is a simple, yet powerful model of learning that you can use to develop knowledge and skills, and to integrate them into your performance on-the-job. The Learning Cycle has been used successfully by many professionals, at OSU and beyond. The steps in the Learning Cycle are shared below.



1. Hear New Information

The first stage is **Hear New Information**.

For example, when you attend a workshop or a conference, you are presented with *Information*. Some *Information* may be familiar. Some may ask you to re-think old *Information*. Some *Information* will directly challenge your current beliefs and knowledge. It is the presenter's job to present it as cogently as possible. Your job is to stay open and listen-to-learn.

1. Apply

The second stage is **Apply**.

You have to determine if the *Information* fits with your job. Then, you have to find relationships between the new *Information* and your current knowledge and skills. Finally, you have to find a way to *Apply* the new *Information* in your job. You design a plan to practice and develop the new skills on-the-job.

2. Practice, Practice, Practice

The third stage is **Practice, Practice, Practice**.

The only way to develop skills is to *Practice*. There are no short-cuts or CliffsNotes that can help! Only real-life trials, errors, and more trials lead to skill development. So, you implement your plan, keep an open mind, allow yourself to make mistakes, learn from your efforts, and try again.

3. Review, Reflect & Deepen

The next stage is **Review, Reflect & Deepen**.

During and after *Practice*, you need to stop and consider what worked, what didn't work, what did you learn, and what do you want to try next. In short, you need to *Reflect* on your actions. This is where the learning sinks in. This process also instructs where your learning needs to grow next.

4. Integrate & Standardize

The final stage is **Integrate and Standardize**.

Now that you've learned some things and you've started new practices, it's critical to maintain the gains! You want to *Integrate* the new skill into your everyday work. So, you figure out how you are going to maintain the gains. And, you make a plan to make the skill a part of your practice.

