Why Experiential Learning?

The materials in The New Fieldbook for Trainers were developed with a focus on adult learning principles. All of the activities, instruments, and presentations are designed to guide the facilitator through the Experiential Learning Cycle. Jones and Pfeiffer (1976) spelled out the learning process in the cycle that appears below. Training that features "learning through doing" or "hands-on" interaction is designed to generate high "ownership" of the material. The experiential learning tools in TNFT help participants take ownership of their learning and "learn how to learn." The cycle contains five steps:

1. **Experiencing.** This step involves the activity itself. This is the "doing" step. In training, this is a group activity in which participants interact. In the "real world" this is what the team does together in order to carry out its work tasks.

2. **Publishing.** This step involves sharing observations and reactions experienced during Step 1. In training, this is often a "go-around," in which participants say what they saw and how they felt. In the day-to-day work situation, this is telling each other what we see and how it affects us.

3. **Processing.** This step involves group discussions of the trends in what is shared during Step 2. The group looks for patterns and cause-and-effect relationships. In training, this step is group structured discussion. On the job, this involves team diagnosis of its own dynamics.

4. **Generalizing.** This step involves going beyond the data "in here" to "out there." The group develops generalizations about how work gets done. In training, this is the "So What?" step. The group discusses what is being learned that might be useful in the "real world." On the job, the work team develops learnings from the results of its work, including its "mistakes."

5. **Applying.** This step involves committing to more effective behaviors, based on the results of Step 4. This is the "Now What?" step. In training, participants commit themselves to changes in their behavior at work, based on what they learn during the process. On the job, teams engage in continuous improvement of their group dynamics as well as how they organize to accomplish tasks.

The Experiential Learning Cycle is a powerful tool for thinking about how people learn during training. It is also applicable to the day-to-day discussions that people can have with each other at work in order to create conditions and processes that support improvement and growth.
The Experiential Learning Cycle*

* Jones and Pfeiffer

Delivering 5X Training

We contend that strategically placed, solidly designed, and well-delivered training will produce highly significant results. This means training that is based on solid adult learning principles and that "engages" participants so that they take personal ownership for their learning. The training also must be supported by substantive participant materials and professionally produced visual supports. Finally, all training must be reinforced, and the results must be measured. The tips, tricks, tools, and techniques in this book are designed to address these critical training needs. Effective training will help your participants produce results that quickly overshadow the best that could be expected without training. We believe that if you use this material effectively, your results will be a minimum of five times greater than the results you would achieve without training your employees. That is "5X" training.