



THE
NATIONAL
CONFERENCE CENTER®

Six Secrets To Experiential Learning

Developed in partnership with

 **The Browne Center**

THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE CENTER | 18980 UPPER BELMONT PLACE | LEESBURG, VA 20176

CONFERENCECENTER.COM | 703.724.6040





Introduction

Experiential learning presents a highly unique growth opportunity for participants, as well as a tool that planners can use to achieve a specific outcome. Differentiated from more traditional team-building, experiential learning uses a blended approach to learning, integrating activities, exercises, adventure elements, quiet time and ongoing post-event coaching to create powerful programs of leadership development, strategic planning, mentoring and coaching, communication, feedback and observation as well as enhancement of behavior styles.

In partnership with The Browne Center for Innovative Learning, The National Conference Center operates a state-of-the-art challenge course to provide additional training and learning opportunities for their clients. Through this hands-on experience, these organizations have observed six trends in experiential learning that can help your team achieve more.

Six Secrets Observed in Experiential Learning



Barrier-Free Learning

Take away the white classroom tables. Barrier-free learning is hands-on training in a lab-like setting versus the traditional meeting room or classroom. Your selected training venue should deliver maximum flexibility and support to ensure your specific needs are met by the space. For example, The National Conference Center has created an entire workroom and lab for simulation or scenario training for a major client to deliver new skills, taking away the barrier of the “white table” with attendees learning in a lab or open-space area.



Learning By Choice

Mix classroom training with outdoor activities. A challenge course with high and low rope elements and skilled facilitators can deliver a motivational Challenge-by-Choice approach. Learning programs can be designed to meet the variety of goals unique to each client, whether conferees make use of the elements of the high or low course, or none at all. There is a role for everyone in the training, even if individuals choose not to physically participate.



Learning By Shared Experiences

Creating shared experiences, such as a building project, where everyone—from C-level executives to assistant managers—is involved collectively takes each participant out of their comfort zone and into a creative problem-solving task to construct the future.

Six Secrets Observed in Experiential Learning



Learning By Silence

Groups are increasingly exploring the power of silence in a high-speed, technically dependent world. Facilitators are allowing more time for conferees' solo quests, reflection, meditation time and movements like yoga that can provide powerful reconnection with the natural world, and the true inner self, opening new channels of connection and learning.



Learning By Doing

Learners participate in carefully chosen experiences that are supported by reflection, critical analysis and synthesis. This encourages direct experience—doing something that connects to an area they hope to improve or develop. The learner is actively engaged in posing questions, investigating, experimenting, being curious, and solving problems, assuming responsibility, being creative and constructing meaning.



Learning Through Application

While debriefing is a structured process facilitated by a skilled professional throughout the process of a program, it has been in place for some time. Today a post-program application assists participants over time with how learning translates back at the office. There are a number of strategies that can be arranged to help facilitate this continued learning process. These include self-directed debrief meetings, professional coaching sessions by phone or in person or follow-up, mini sessions at the one, two or three-month intervals. These sessions can be highly productive and fun, assisting the participants in real-time learning application issues. They can be on the participants' work site or scheduled off-site.



More Information

The National Conference Center in Leesburg, Virginia has distinguished itself as a genuine pioneer in the training and meeting industry for over 40 years. A proven vendor for the federal government, The National is the perfect location for off-site meetings, corporate retreats, conferences, conventions, training sessions and educational programs. As one of the largest and most comprehensive conference centers in the nation, this multipurpose venue professionally accommodates from 18 to 1,800 guests in flexible facilities designed for productive, distraction-free meetings, events and residential training sessions.



The Browne Center has been providing innovative experiential learning programs since the early 1980s. It provides a wide range of programming, from comprehensive trainings to shorter one-day sessions. The Browne Center's learning programs evolve to meet the needs of clients, and its diverse client base allows it to draw upon best practices from a variety of disciplines and remain sensitive to specific needs and outcomes.

One of its unique strengths is the diversity of staff serving corporate training, professional development, university, and youth and student clients. With more than 100 available facilitators and trainers, The Browne Center selects a facilitator/trainer with the background, skills and personality to meet the particular needs of each group. The common thread that runs through all of its work is the belief in the ability of the human spirit to grow and thrive through innovative learning.



The National Challenge Course sits on six acres of The National Conference Center campus. It consists of five low elements plus many portable options, which are weight-bearing, problem-solving activities that can accommodate 15 or more people at any one time. Additionally, six high elements can be performed in small or large groups. All high elements are dynamic relays in which participants hold the rope for one another.



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