how do I engage all learners?

When we learn anything, we move through four critical steps: the gaining of our attention, the initial discovery of new information, the application of this information and adaptation of it for our world. The secret to engaging training design is intentionally leading the learner through these four steps.

1. **engage** the gaining of attention
2. **share** the initial discovery of new information
3. **practice** the application of new information and skill development
4. **perform** the adaptation of new information for real-world application
Think about anything you have learned, and ask yourself if you experienced these four steps. This four-part cycle of learning applies to learning anything. You followed this cycle when you learned to ride a bike, when you learned Spanish in 10th grade and when you figured out that new software last week. Ok, maybe, you didn’t really learn Spanish. However, I bet if you figured out why you’re not fluent in Spanish, it would have something to do with one part of this cycle being skipped. By applying the model to training design, you ensure that learning really happens.

This guide will give you an overview of how to apply the 4MAT model to training anybody on anything. There are four key questions we will explore that will help you in applying 4MAT to training design and delivery:

1-What is learning, really?
Learning is understanding the two actions that occur when learning happens. There are two primary actions that occur when we learn. Preferences in how learners approach these two actions define individual learning style. When you understand these preferences, you can address them successfully.

2-What is a learning style?
Your learning style refers to the part of the learning process you enjoy the most. Your learning style influences how you evaluate learning experiences, how you communicate with others and how you train. Being aware of your learning and training style preferences and the preferences of other styles will help you be a better trainer.

3-What do I need to know about the brain?
Recent brain research affirms that the 4MAT model mirrors what is happening in the brain, when we learn. While it is important to understand learning styles preferences, it is critical that a trainer understands that preferences speak to the part of the learning cycle the learner enjoys most. You don’t need to know all the neuro-speak. Although, it is impressive to occasionally weave in the phrase, “orbital cortex” into a conversation. An effective trainer needs to know how to lead all learners through the entire 4-part learning cycle.

4-What is the simplest, fastest way to create brain-based learning?
As trainers, we are bombarded with tools, tips and strategies for creating “brain-based” learning. How do you make sense of this and make sure you include everything you need to in your design? 4MAT gives you a simple framework for integrating learning styles, right- and left-brain strategies and performance improvement strategies.
what is “learning”? 

There are two primary actions that define learning: **perceiving** and **processing**.

**Perceiving** refers to the act of taking in information through our senses.

**Processing** refers to how we act on that information. By this definition, when you read an email, sit in a meeting or talk to a salesperson, you are learning.
Perceiving: How do you take in information?

Some of us prefer to take in information experientially. **Feelers** enjoy being immersed in an experience. Feelers take in information from an “inside” place. They rely heavily on their own experience. They prefer to be personally involved in a learning experience. You will see these preferences in action in a classroom learning situation. Feelers like to hear and share stories. They enjoy dialogue and group activities. Are you a **feeler**?

Other learners prefer to take in information intellectually. **Thinkers** prefers to read, research or learn from another outside source. Thinkers take in information from an “outside” place. They enjoy structured, well-organized presentation of information. You will see these preferences in action in a classroom learning situation. Thinkers prefer well-researched data, concepts and organized lecture. Are you a **thinker**?
what is “learning”?  

Processing: What do we do with the information we take in?

Once we take in information, we process the information. Some of us linger in reflection. **Watchers** prefer to reflect before moving into action. Watchers like to understand the information. They want to make sense of what they are experiencing before deciding how to act upon this new information. You will see these preferences in a classroom learning situation. The watchers will hang back and observe. They will ask clarifying questions. They will be slower to move into activities. They like to see things unfold, before jumping in. Are you a **watcher**?

Others prefer to jump into action. **Doers** are imagining how they will use the information you are sharing. They will be quick to move into activity, sometimes disregarding the directions. They will finish quickly. And, they will have little patience for content that doesn’t seem to be practical. Are you a **doer**?
When you combine the perceiving preference for feeling or thinking with the processing preference for watching or doing, you discover four distinct preference combinations. These four combinations are the foundation of the 4MAT design and delivery model, and the 4MAT learning style descriptions:
what is a learning style?

Each learning style focuses on a unique question. As trainers, we can engage each learning style by addressing all four questions:

1. why?
2. what?
3. how?
4. if?
Learning style refers to the part of the learning cycle that you enjoy the most. It is the way that you prefer to experience and process information. Everyone has a preference. And, everyone moves through the entire learning cycle. Here is an overview of the 4MAT Learning Styles:

**Type 1: Imaginative Learners**
- seeks meaning
- needs to be personally involved
- learns by listening and sharing ideas
- absorbs reality
- interested in people and culture
- functions through social interaction
- idea people

Strength: innovating and imagination
Goals: self-involvement in important issues, bringing unity to diversity
Favorite question: Why?

**Type 2: Analytic Learners**
- seeks and examines the facts
- needs to know what the experts think
- forms reality
- interested in ideas and concepts
- critiques information, collects data
- thorough and industrious
- enjoys the traditional classroom
- function by adapting to experts

Strength: creating concepts and models
Goals: self-satisfaction and intellectual recognition
Favorite question: What?

**Type 3: Common Sense Learners**
- seeks usability
- needs to know how things work
- learns by testing theories using practical methods
- edits reality
- uses factual data to build concepts
- enjoys hands-on experiences and problem solving
- needs “real-life” correlation

Strength: practical application of ideas
Goals: bringing their view of the present into line with the future
Favorite question: How?

**Type 4: Dynamic Learners**
- seeks hidden possibilities
- needs to know what can be done with things
- learns by trial-and-error, self-discovery
- enriches reality
- adaptable to change and relish it
- enjoys variety and excels in being flexible
- risk-takers
- often reaches conclusions without logic

Strength: action, carrying out plans
Goals: to make things happen
Favorite question: What if?

The 4MAT Learning Type Measure® (LTM) is one of the most widely used tools in the world for profiling individual approaches to learning. It measures individual preferences for selecting, organizing, prioritizing and representing knowledge, information and experience. To order, visit [www.4mat4business.com](http://www.4mat4business.com).
what do I need to know about the brain?

To fully understand learning styles, it is important to understand how learning happens. Your learning style refers to the part of the overall learning process that you enjoy the most. Regardless of learning style preferences, every learner moves through four stages of the learning cycle. In *The Art of Changing the Brain*, Dr. James Zull shares the four stages of the Learning Cycle. Imagine 6-year-old Johnny is learning to ride a bike. Notice how Johnny moves through the learning process:

1. Johnny observes his older brothers riding their bikes to school. He notices how they ride. It looks easy.
2. He asks his brother, “the expert,” to show him how to ride.
3. Johnny gets on the bike and attempts to ride. It’s not as easy as it looks.
4. He adjusts, gets back on and tries again.

Imagine 6-year-old Johnny is learning to ride a bike. Notice how Johnny moves through the learning process:
The 4MAT model is a simple framework for designing brain-based learning. When you intentionally choose activities that lead the learner through the learning cycle, you ensure that learning happens.

4MAT is a straightforward adaptation of what we know about how people learn. When you follow the four steps of the 4MAT Cycle and answer the four key questions for the learner, you design and deliver brain-friendly learning.

*With written permission from Dr James Zull, Professor of Biology and Biochemistry at Case Western University, Director of UCITE (The University Center for Innovation in Teaching and Education), and Professor of a Human Learning and The Brain course.
what is the simplest, fastest way to create brain-based learning?

The 4MAT model integrates the preferences for 1, 2, 3 and 4 with preferences for right- and left-mode processing. Research and real-world results show that images, stories and other right-mode strategies increase learning impact.

As trainers, we need to intentionally include right- and left-mode strategies in our design. When we overlay right and left on the four parts of the wheel, we create an 8-step model for design. This model addresses the four key questions that must be answered for training transfer along with the right and left mode strategies that increase retention.

The 4MAT Hemispheric Mode Indicator (HMI) measures right- and left-mode preference on a scale of -60 to +60. To order, visit www.4mat4business.com.
the 8-steps of learning

STEP 1: WE LEARN FROM WHERE WE ARE, AND WE BECOME PERSONALLY INVOLVED

STEP 2: WE NEED TO BE IN DIALOGUE, SHARING PERCEPTIONS AND IDEAS, EXPLORING OUR THINKING

STEP 3: FOR DEEP, CONCEPTUAL UNDERSTANDING, WE HAVE TO SEE HOW IT ALL FITS TOGETHER

STEP 4: WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND THE UNDERLYING CONCEPTS AND HOW THEY CONNECT ALL OF THE DETAILS

STEP 5: WE NEED TO PRACTICE WITH SUPPORTIVE COACHING

STEP 6: WE MUST APPLY THE LEARNING TO REAL-LIFE PROBLEM SOLVING

STEP 7: WE MUST BE ABLE TO DETERMINE OUR PROGRESS AND SKILL LEVELS, REFINING AS NEEDED

STEP 8: WE INTEGRATE THE LEARNING INTO OUR LIVES WITH OUR OWN ADAPTATIONS

1. Engage
2. Share
3. Practice
4. Perform
step 1: connect

Each step of the 4MAT design model gives clear direction on what the learner is doing, the trainer is doing and the desired outcome for that part of the learning process. For example, in the first step of the 4MAT model, Connect, this is what is happening:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step of the Learning Cycle</th>
<th>The Learners are...</th>
<th>The Trainer is...</th>
<th>Examples of Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Connect: Create an Experience | establishing a relationship between the content and their personal lives. | constructing/facilitating a learning experience that connects the learners personally. | • stories  
• simulations  
• scenarios that really take place  
• interactive dialogue |

how do I build a 4MAT® design?

4MAT leads live and web-based train-the-trainer certification programs that teach you how to apply the 4MAT model to your content. Here are the steps you will use to build a 4MAT training design in our train-the-trainer courses:

Step 1: What are the outcomes?
You will define four key outcomes that will shape the design process and influence the delivery approach.

Step 2: What key behavior will you observe and measure as a result of this training?
You will design the final step of your training to intentionally focus on performance of the critical learning behavior(s) that will drive ROI.

Step 3: What content needs to be included?
You will sift through all the content, using the four key outcomes you crafted.

Step 4: What concept, or over-arching idea, will connect all the content?
You will determine the “big idea” that will engage the learners and use the 4MAT Conceptual Framework Tool and the “6 Trick” to define your concept and a dynamic opening.

Step 5: How will you ensure the learner can apply the content?
You will create activities to practice the content, ensuring the learner understands the real-world application of the content.

Step 6: How will the learner assess their performance?
You will design activities in your 4MAT Training Design to demonstrate learner performance and assessment of their application.

Step 7: How can you tap into the learner’s experiences?
You will create an engaging opening that will connect the learner to the concept and generate learner commitment.

Step 8: How will you encourage learners to pay attention to emerging insights?
You will create a right-mode strategy to help the learner visualize the desired outcome.

Join 4MAT 4Business for 5 web workshops to put the best-selling book, Hold On, You Lost Me, into action. In this series, you will learn and apply the 4MAT 8-step process for designing effective training. Visit www.4mat4business.com to view our calendar and register.
Let’s take a look at a training design “before” and “after.” This is a pre-design shared by a Alan S., a participant in a 4MAT Web Series workshop. Alan’s design was focused on “6 Secrets to Successful Presentations.” Alan placed his original content into the 4MAT training design wheel to discover what was missing:
As the course evolved, so did Alan’s design.

First, Alan dug deeper into the desired outcomes. Using the tools provided in the course, Alan crafted four outcomes (one for each 4MAT quadrant). The final outcome, the ability to assess one’s own progress in applying the strategies was the critical behavior that Alan focused on delivering.

Engage (Value): Learners will appreciate and value the impact of their own actions on the energy level of participants in a learning experience.

Share (Knowledge): Learners will understand when to apply specific presentation strategies to shift the learner’s energy level to create the desired learning climate.

Practice (Skill): Learners will apply and demonstrate presentation strategies to their own content.

Engage (Value): Learners will assess their own application of presentation strategies using course criteria and refine, as needed.
Next, Alan reviewed his content and placed it in the appropriate parts of the 4MAT wheel.

- **Facilitator Assessment with video**: Alan decided this step was too theory oriented. He needed a stronger opening.
- **Why are presentations important?**: Alan decided this step was too theory oriented. He needed a stronger opening.
- **Deliver a presentation**: This step was missing. Alan was doing most of the talking.
- **Summarize and review**: Learners didn’t have a chance to practice before jumping into delivery. Alan needed an activity to help him determine if learners understood the lecture.
- **6 Secrets to Success**: Alan realized the learners did not have a chance to assess their own presentations.
- **Presenter’s Checklist**: Alan decided he needed a stronger call to action.
Then, he began to add in the missing elements of the design.

Alan decided that summarizing and review did not accomplish his outcome. Instead, he chose to have team members agree to take turns observing each other doing presentations in the next month. Accountability partners would complete a self- and partner assessment and compare results.

Alan focused on the desired outcome of enabling participants to assess their own performance. He chose to have learners self-assess and then group-assess their video-taped presentations using the Presenter’s Checklist as the assessment criteria.

Share your stories with your table group. Identify the common elements in your “energizing” experiences. Contrast this with elements that detract from the energy in the learning experience.

Notice how Alan is creating dialogue around learner experiences. The participants are beginning to generate a collective definition of “energizing” delivery. Alan will be able to tap into this, as he delivers lecture later.

Four Elements Cards: What quality of energy is needed at the opening, lecture, practice and ending parts of a presentation?

Alan wanted the learners to begin to see how energy can feel different throughout a presentation. To do this, he created four cards, each with a different element (fire, water, earth and air). Learners chose a card that represented the ideal energy/climate for the opening of a session. This was a highly effective activity that generated lots of interesting comments.

Alan included interactive exercises in the inform part of his design. He also added fun clips that illustrated key points.

Alan needed to give participants a chance to try out the information before the actual presentation. He provided a presentation planning template that mirrored the Presenter’s Checklist.

Develop a presentation outline using the template provided.

6 Secrets to Success

Presenter’s Checklist

Alan included interactive exercises in the inform part of his design. He also added fun clips that illustrated key points.

Deliver a presentation

This step remained the same.

Reflect on a learning experience in which you were engaged and inspired to move into action.

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This step remained the same.
Most training designs emphasize the sharing of information. Some designs include practice. Better designs include assessment and feedback loops. The best designs do all of this and connect to the learner’s personal experiences, desires and current beliefs.

Most emphasize lecture.

Some add practice.

Better designs add real-world application and assessment.

The best designs add an opportunity for learners to tap into their own experiences and understanding.

The 4MAT 4Business 4MATion® Online Training Design Center allows users to design, create, store and collaborate online. The 4MATion 10-step Wizard includes step-by-step instruction on how to create an effective 4MAT Training Design. To experience, visit www.4mat4business.com.
**FAQ: Is one learning style more effective in a training role than another?**

The key to being an effective trainer is the ability to satisfy the needs of all learners while delivering the desired learning transfer. All trainers, regardless of style, can use stretching strategies to reach all learners. The 4MAT Training Style Inventory (TRSI) measures your strengths in all four training dimensions.

**FAQ: Is it possible to have preferences in more than one quadrant?**

Yes, we all have strengths in each of the four quadrants. When you take the Learning Type Measure®, you receive a visual display of your strengths that looks like this:

Notice that there are strengths in all four quadrants. You may find that there are two styles that seem to describe your learning approach. Below are some common combination styles:

- Type 1-4 learners have high people skills in nurturing and influencing.
- Type 2-3 learners combine theory and application easily.
- Type 3-4 learners generate ideas and ask, “Will this really work?”

**FAQ: I am tasked with creating and leading an in-house Train-the-Trainer program. How can 4MAT 4Business help me?**

4MAT provides a common language for training design and delivery. Beyond improving instructional design and delivery, 4MAT increases collaboration and speed-to-market. We offer live, web-based and blended trainer certification courses. We can customize any of these to suit your needs. Smaller teams may want to join our public courses. If you have 10 or more trainers to train, it makes sense for us to come to you. You can also become certified to deliver 4MAT within your organization using our materials. For more information, visit [www.4mat4business.com](http://www.4mat4business.com) or call 866.888.4MAT.
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