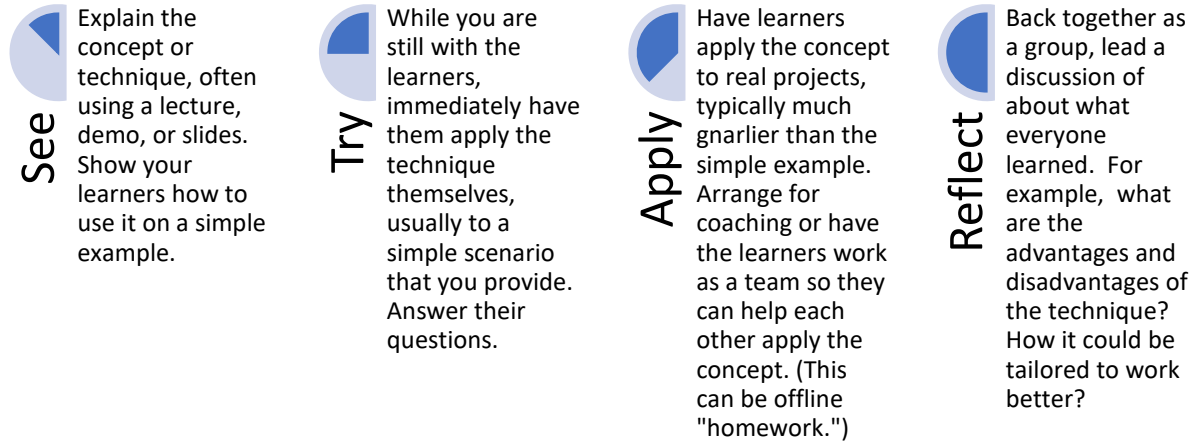## Use the Teaching Cycle

When you want to teach a concept that has real-world applications, follow these four steps to get maximum understanding and action.

See — Explain the concept or technique, often using a lecture, demo, or slides. Show your learners how to use it on a simple example.

Try — While you are still with the learners, immediately have them apply the technique themselves, usually to a simple scenario that you provide. Answer their questions.

Apply — Have learners apply the concept to real projects, typically much gnarlier than the simple example. Arrange for coaching or have the learners work as a team so they can help each other apply the concept. (This can be offline "homework.")

Reflect — Back together as a group, lead a discussion of about what everyone learned. For example, what are the advantages and disadvantages of the technique? How it could be tailored to work better?

Create "head knowledge" → Clarify the concept → Turn head knowledge into pragmatic ability to apply it → Prompt people to think about how to get even better

Why bother with all this? Studies indicate that 10% to 40% of traditional training improves actual job performance. This is more work than reading from a PowerPoint slide, but the impact is much higher.

Pay Attention to Learning Styles

As you're creating teaching and mentoring experiences, try to design your knowledge transfer to cover all four major learning styles. You can often address the needs of several types of learners at once by adding just a bit of refinement to what you already have (which is probably centered on the learning style you personally prefer).

Type of Learner	What They Want	How to Meet Their Need
"Why"	Understand why they should learn about this topic now	Explain the purpose and benefits of what you're teaching
"What"	Learn the relevant facts with a minimum of fluff	Show an outline of the material to be covered and where additional documentation can be found
"How does it work"	Know how this idea fits into the big picture	Give context and describe how the idea connects with key goals
"What if"	Test the ideas you're teaching to them	Leave time in your agenda to discuss the possibilities of the ideas

You can see more tips about learning styles in chapter six of Steve Trautman's *Teach What You Know*, a book about how to set up effective peer mentoring. These four learning styles are based on work by David Kolb, *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development*, Prentice Hall.