



Teaching Smart People How to Learn

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Why are your smartest and most successful employees often the worst learners? Likely, they haven't had the opportunities for introspection that failure affords. So when they do fail, instead of critically examining their own behavior, they cast blame outward—on anyone or anything they can. In *Teaching Smart People How to Learn*, Chris Argyris sheds light on the forces that prevent highly skilled employees for learning from mistakes and offers suggestions for helping talented employees develop more productive responses. Since 1922, *Harvard Business Review* has been a leading source of breakthrough ideas in management practice—many of which still speak to and influence us today. The HBR Classics series now offers you the opportunity to make these seminal pieces a part of your permanent management library. Each volume contains a groundbreaking idea that has shaped best practices and inspired countless managers around the world—and will change how you think about the business world today.

Teaching Smart People How to Learn Details

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From Reader Review Teaching Smart People How to Learn for online ebook

Hans De Keulenaer says

Short essay on learning organizations that reads in a single sitting of about an hour. The focus is on professional's attitudes towards learning, using the example of management consultants. Though short, the essay is somewhat repetitive. For the professionals under study, all have the right skills or they wouldn't be where they are. Problems are attitudinal.

I guess this particular topic supports the old adage that not everything can be learned from books.

Ryan Barretto says

An interesting read about why the smarter people find it difficult to learn. Or to admit that they don't know.

Fascinating insights here.

Morris Yen says

good identification of problems,
the solutions are not detailed enough though,
not really practical...

Jenny (Reading Envy) says

The first thing I noticed about this text is how tiny it is, and then that it is only 72 pages, and then that the font is quite large and spaced out. I was worried going in, because it appeared that Argyris didn't actually have much to say about how to teach smart people how to learn.

And really, this text is more about how to get your employees to stop being defensive, renamed so that managers would feel okay about reading it at work, I imagine. It was ultra narrow and not that useful.

I'd still like to learn more about dealing with smart people in educational settings, but this text did not get me there.

Maya Gopalakrishnan says

Second order thinking

This book is about a single idea of why highly educated executives don't consider their own roles in

underperformance while they adopt defensive attitudes and blame the external environment. Though the term cognitive dissonance is not used, it is well explained by examples. The methods to address this is not discussed in a concrete manner.

Finlay says

All true, but no practical advice.

Karla Strand says

"First, most people define learning too narrowly as mere 'problem solving,' so they focus on identifying and correcting errors in the external environment... But if learning is to persist, managers and employees must also look inward. They need to reflect critically on their own behavior, identify the ways they often inadvertently contribute to the organization's problems, and then change how they act." page 2-3

"Teaching people how to reason about their behavior in new and more effective ways breaks down the defenses that block learning." page 6

"People at all levels of the organization must combine the mastery of some highly specialized technical expertise with the ability to work effectively in teams, form productive relationships with clients and customers, and critically reflect on and then change their own organizational practices." page 7

The consultants..."have never developed the tolerance for feelings of failure or the skills to deal with these feelings." page 30

"People can be taught how to recognize the reasoning they use when they design and implement their actions. They can begin to identify the inconsistencies between their espoused and actual theories of action." page 44-45

"How can an organization begin to turn this situation around, to teach its members how to reason productively? The first step is for managers at the top to examine critically and change their own theories-in-use." page 47

productive reasoning vs. defensive reasoning
look inward, don't just blame external situations

Nathalie Karasek says

Interesting thoughts about defensive consultants ... hm, somehow interesting viewpoint but actually not what i had expected from the title ...

Peter Hundermark says

Worth a re-read

Nice to remind myself of some of Argyers' constructs:

- single and double loop learning
- espoused theory and theory-in-use

Sparks the desire to re-connect more deeply with his work.
