

TEETCH

Teetch Teaching Methodology

How to Teetch Adults

Pedagogy, known by many to be the science of teaching, actually refers to 'walking beside' or 'leading the child' in its Greek translation. Over the last 150+ years, research into the science of teaching adults specifically has led to the term **Andragogy** being used. Translated, this means 'leading the adult' in Greek.

Adults learn in a different way from children. Most notable in this field is the research and work of [Malcolm Knowles](#). His conclusions define a number of key differences:

1. Adults need to be involved in the planning and evaluation of their instruction.
2. Experience (including mistakes) provides the basis for learning activities.
3. Adults are most interested in learning subjects that have immediate relevance to their job or personal life.
4. Adult learning is problem-centred rather than content-oriented.

In late 1997, [Daryle Abrahams](#) undertook research into what it takes to create an effective leadership development programme for application in the corporate world. Through work with a number of consultancy firms at the time, and his own research Daryle developed his main leadership pipeline development product, "**How to Manage Things and Lead People**". [Teetch Ltd](#) now provides this product across the corporate world at senior levels to small, high-potential, high-performance groups of professionals.

Whilst in the process of developing this product Daryle took his experience of running youth organisations / groups (from 1984 to date), experience of teaching in primary, secondary and college classrooms (from 1992 to 1997) and experience of organisational development within banking (from 1997 to date) to create his own andragogic principles. These are similar to those suggested by the main researcher in this field, [Malcolm Knowles](#), however, they are more than just theory as they've been the basis for the successful application of adult development on the open market-place since 2005, consistently, uniformly and at the most senior levels of the corporate world.

TEETCH ANDRAGOGIC MODEL

For learning, behavioural change and results to occur the following five ingredients are key. Further detail beyond that which is outlined below is proprietary knowledge to our organisation and is only shared with our most highly accomplished and trusted faculty, much as the recipe for Coca-Cola might be within the walls of their HQ. Here is an outline of those key ingredients:

For adults to learn:

1. **They should have the opportunity to choose the content**
Where adult students are involved in content selection they are most likely to subsequently follow the curriculum with enthusiasm. This is key for neuronal change to take place; "*the brain must be in the mood for learning*".
2. **They must have an awareness of the need to learn**
Being invited to attend a training course does not necessarily create the conditions under which learning takes place. Not only do adults need to be aware of **'the'** need for change, they need to be aware of **'their'** need for change. They need to know why it's important for them to learn a given topic area.
3. **They must develop a sincere desire to learn**
The adult may be aware of their need to learn but may choose not to do anything about it. The teacher / manager must have made a connection between learning and their career / performance so that the desire to learn is uncovered or created in the individual.
4. **They must have the opportunity to practice what they've learned quickly after the lesson**
Where we learn a language and do not subsequently use it the words soon disappear from our memory. The same is true for all theory – it needs application to move it from the conceptual to the concrete in terms of our actual behaviour. If a student is in a position to apply lessons rather than have them sit as theory or concepts abstract from their daily reality, their behaviour will lead to results and then to belief in the

¹ Michael Merzenich's work confirms that connections between neurons are capable only when the brain is attending (by choice) to a given topic area; focus is the key. See "The Brain that Changes Itself" by Norman Doidge for a helpful discussion of this concept.

Email: info@teetch.com • Web: www.teetch.com

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Registered Office: 120 Collinwood Gardens, Gants Hill, Essex IG5 0AL
VAT No: 918 91 44 95

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lesson/practice as having value in their lives. Belief is key to behavioural change. Whether a person believes they can or believes they can't, either way they're probably right.²

5. **Their personal learning style must be taken into account by the teacher and the environment**

Neuroscience today is proving the models of the past to be more or less useful. One such model is that presented by [David Kolb](#) called "[Learning Styles](#)". In the late 1970's Kolb theorised a cycle of learning. His typology was interpreted by [Peter Honey and Alan Mumford](#) some years later and given four key labels: pragmatists, activists, reflectors and theorists. Modern neuro-psychology is now confirming that these styles are incredibly accurate as they mirror our current understanding of temperament, type or cognitive style. Due to a natural neuronal efficiency in one of four discreet cortical regions we are pre-disposed to either learning that which will have a real impact on our lives (pragmatists), learning through movement and activity (activists), learning through sequencing and subsequent reflection (reflectors) and learning by understanding the root formula or the underlying model (theorists). The teacher must not only understand how each of these styles needs to be catered to, but also how their own teaching style may have its default and what it takes to overcome this to create a differentiated learning environment for competency and preferred cognitive style.

CONNECTING THE THEORY TO THE WORKPLACE

In our thirteen years of experience in the corporate world and twenty years of research into what must happen for humans to learn we can state the following two conditions as essential:

1. **The student must be willing to learn**

We have found this to be true and evidence from the field of neuroscience supports this: the brain is more receptive to connections where the individual is motivated to learn.

2. **The student must be ready to learn**

Now must be a good time for them to apply what they're learning to their real world to ensure it moves from the classroom to the workplace as soon as possible; from theory to practice to results.

Experience (including mistakes) provides the basis for learning activities. Our programme presented is based upon a series of small group activities where the experience of the students is applied to their programme-based research on a given topic. This is later combined and subsequently applied in a business setting.

Structurally speaking, we run programmes that are designed around the concept of stimulus, application, review, conclusion and around again to stimulus. Our events are specifically run with **application** in mind. This creates a new set of experiences from which students learn.

In the past, attendance at "training programmes" has been an event, rather than part of a behavioural change initiative or the blood of the organisation. We've found, over ten years of running the same leadership pipeline development programme, that if you task students with applying what they've learned, knowing that they'll be expected to explain their application and ensuing success or failure, that they very soon put their lessons into practice. Thus, they create new experiences based upon their new ideas, usually leading to a positive change in results.

Adults are most interested in learning subjects that have immediate relevance to their job or personal life. Teetch Ltd advises a thorough needs analysis, before any programme is designed, to suit the content to the group. Every student is interviewed to understand his or her history, current role, future aspirations and requirements from the ensuing programme. They are then taken through content and challenged at each event to plan how they will put their lessons into practice.

For a cohort of one hundred and fifty staff this can be done using group sessions of approximately forty minutes with up to forty people per meeting.

Adult learning is problem-centred rather than content-oriented. Each student is tasked with research prior to learning events. The aim is to engage the student with the topic and for them to find relevance to their current role / environment. They then teach their colleagues what they've learned and take forward what is relevant into a meeting with their manager subsequent to the event. At that stage they're tasked with planning how they'll put what they've learned into practice in their immediate future tasks to improve on-the-job performance.

To summarise, we believe from our own experience, research into modern andragogy and evidence from the fields of neuro-psychology and neuroscience, that adults learn best where they want to learn, have the opportunity to practice what they've learned, where what they're learning is relevant and where learning is based upon activity rather than theory or research alone. Ours is a 21st century approach to adult education AND an ongoing research project into what else we can do to advance the science of andragogy.

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² Blair Justice's work "Who Gets Sick" is a powerful text alerting us to the fact that it is not what happens to us in life that makes us perform or suffer, it is how we 'choose' to respond. Belief is key to mental health.

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