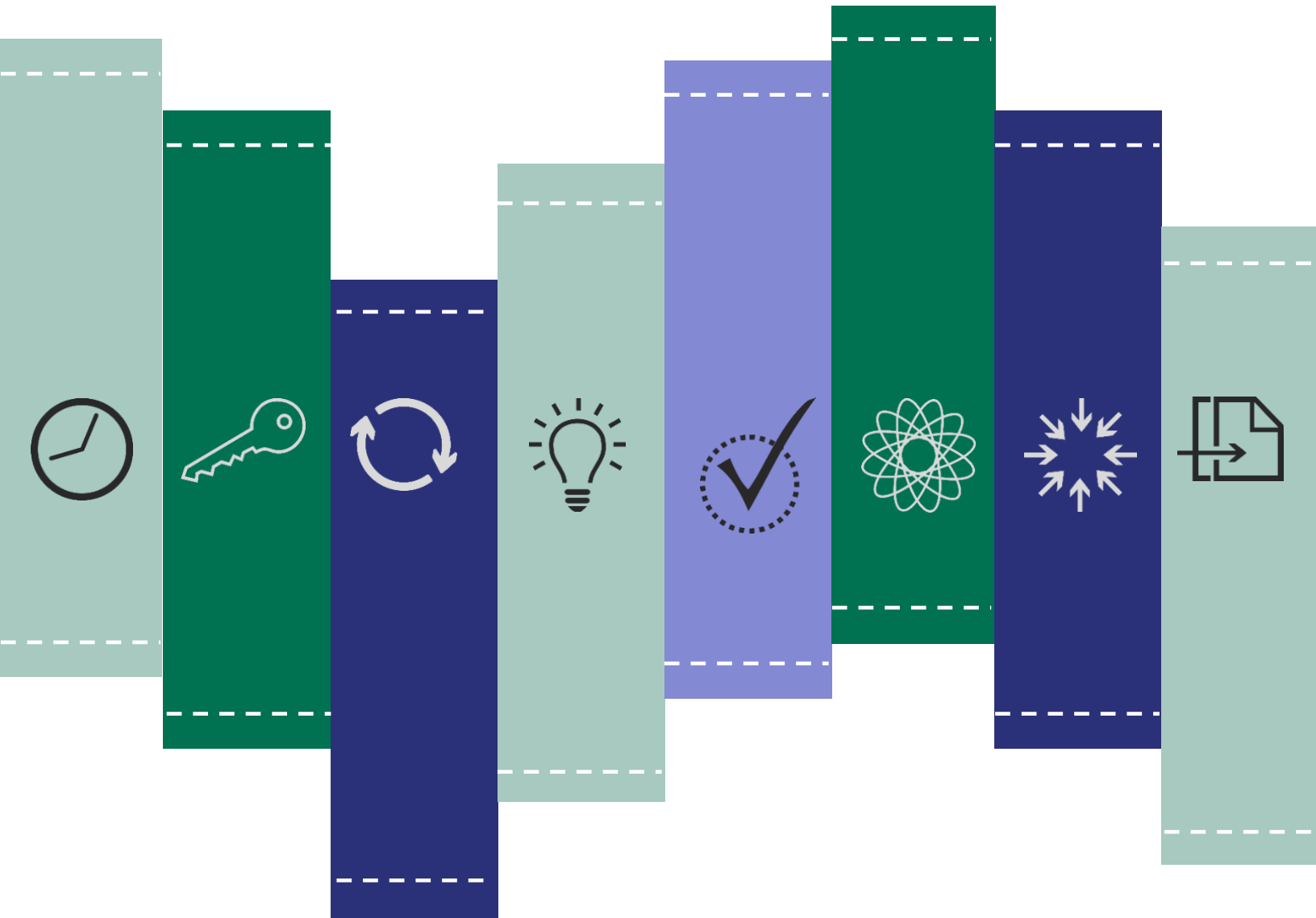


HOW ADULTS LEARN



# PRINCIPLES OF Engagement



David D. Doerrier • [PYWTSuccess.com](http://PYWTSuccess.com)

# How Do Adults Learn?

There are several educational theories that create an effective learning experience by challenging adults to process information at different cognitive levels and employing cognitive - behavioral skills.

By using the adult learning principles outlined in this eBook, any speaker, trainer, and presenter can learn to strategically design engaging materials and facilitate meetings and learning in various settings.

David greatly increased my presentation skills in a few short meetings.

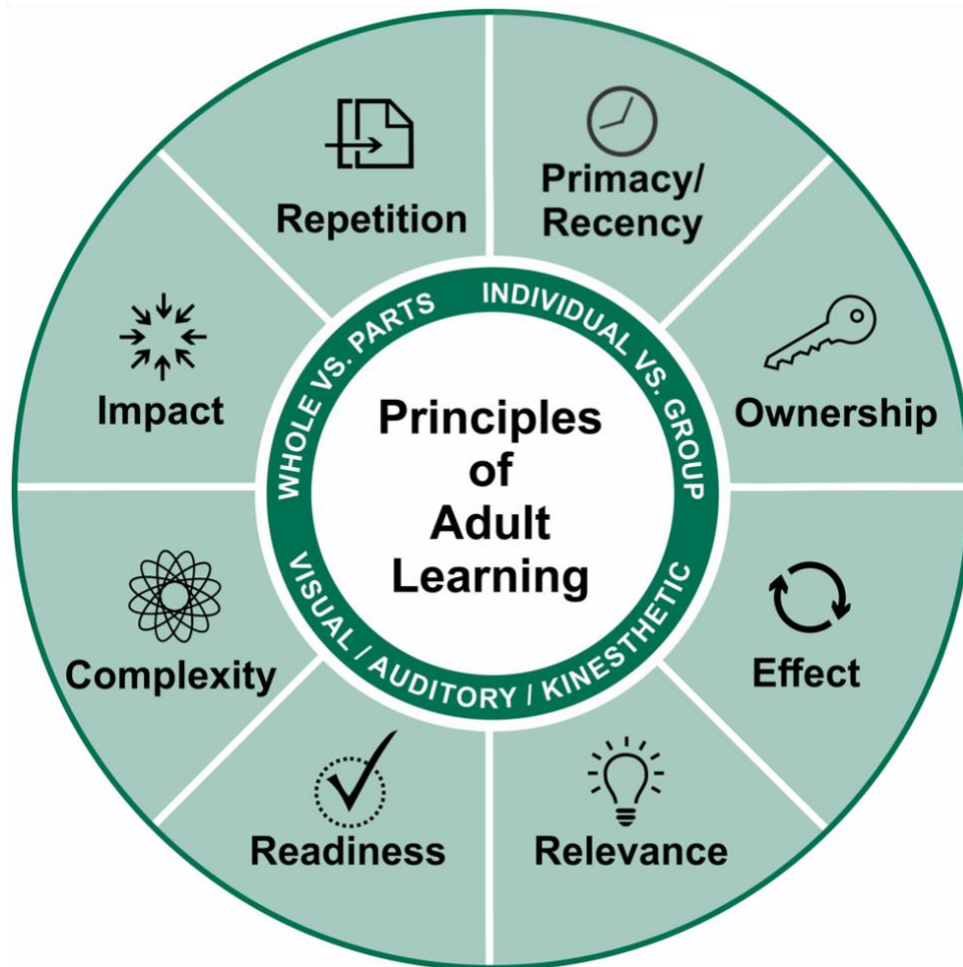
*Brian S.*

Through David's insight and wisdom, he was able to help me prepare for the next couple of speaking engagements.

*Chris M.*



# Adult Learning Theory



Every trainer, manager, salesperson and presenter's ambition is to impact and engage their audience as much as possible. But how?

One method to master great presentations is by understanding how the adult mind works.

The Adult Learning Theory is a concept that has been around for years. It highlights the distinct ways adults respond in a learning or collaborative environment and

identifies the learning and engagement styles which suit them best.

This eBook provides you with a basic understanding of how adults learn at different cognitive levels and how they use different cognitive-behavioral skills.

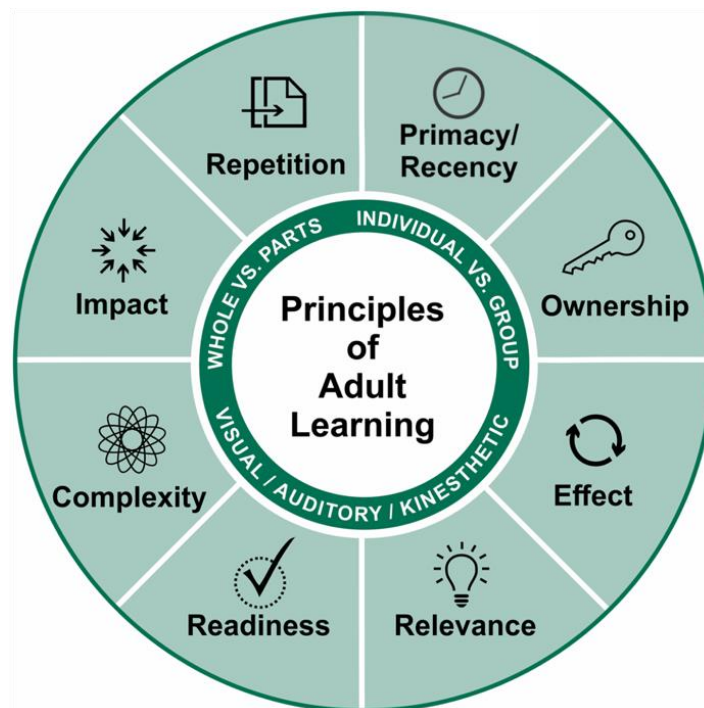
Adult learning is a relatively simple theory to grasp, so let's explain what it is and how its principles can be applied to your next presentation, training, meeting, or sales call.

# Similarities and Differences

The outside of the diagram refers to the similarities among adults in how they learn. We call these similarities, **Adult Learning Principles**. You could think of these as anatomical similarities shared by all adults such as hair, eyes, arms, legs, etc. These similarities are the core principles on which all adult learning and retention is based.

Adults also have individual differences in how they process or remember information. Those individual differences are shown inside the diagram and are called **Learning Styles**. You could think of these as differences in adults such as hair and eye color, length of arms, legs, etc.

To create engaging presentations, you need to provide for the similarities as well as the individual differences in adults.



# Adult Learning Principles



## Principle of Primacy and Recency

In order for adults to have high retention, there must be frequency of beginnings and endings.

**Primacy:** Adults tend to remember “firsts” and beginnings. As an adult, you can probably remember your first kiss, your first job. But, can you quickly remember your twelfth kiss, or your fourth job?

**Recency:** Adults also tend to remember the last or most recent experiences. For example, you are more likely to remember the last movie you saw rather than the third or fourth from the last.







## Principle of Ownership

A learner or participant will accept new concepts, ideas, procedures, and processes when they “**own**” them. Ownership also helps the participant overcome any resistance to change.

To help adults accept new knowledge and skills, assist them with taking “**ownership**” as early as possible by discussing or illustrating the benefit of your product, process, or idea, or the “**What’s In It For Me**” (WIIFM).





## Principle of Effect

Many learners associate embarrassment with previous school experiences and are **fearful** of the entire learning environment. This can block their ability to learn. A good instructor ensures the learning environment is **safe** from harming a learner's self-esteem

What type of training or meeting environment do you *like* as an adult? Adults learn and participate more effectively if the experience is positive and **free from fear**. The environment must be positive and safe for taking risks, and even one that promotes laughter through *appropriate* humor.







## Principle of Relevance

Right now, would you rather be in a class on improving your presentation skills or learning how to do brain surgery? If you would rather be in a class on presentation skills, then more than likely it is because it is more **relevant** to your job, position, or life.

Adults learn best and are more motivated when new information is provided in a **real- life context**. This helps them solve problems in their work or life.







## Principle of Readiness

You can increase the participants readiness by clearly explaining the benefits of the presentation in terms of the value to the participants.

Adults are more apt to **engage** and **participate** in the event when they are developmentally and emotionally “ready”—when they are given **reasons for listening** and have no barriers that inhibit their focus.





## Principle of Complexity

Adults learn and retain information best when the **environment reflects the complexity** of their actual working and living environment. Think of the incline up a mountain with the lower levels reflecting less difficulty for a mountain climber and higher levels the greatest difficulty for the climber.

Learning should proceed on a similar incline, **starting at a low level** of complexity with demonstrations, examples, and discussions in the beginning and **increasing in complexity** over the course of the engagement.





## Principle of Impact

Adults pay attention to that which has emotional impact and fits with their prior knowledge.

To improve recall, your message must be attached to “hooks.” “**Hooks**” can include such things as prior knowledge and feelings about the subject, and what is already known about something else that is compared to the new information.

Hooks that help **anchor knowledge** include such things as metaphors, analogies, stories, and examples. Using stories, examples, or metaphors with an **emotional impact** provide emotional hooks which increase retention..







## Principle of Repetition

Simple actions can greatly increase **long-term memory** of new information. Use appropriate summaries and reviews at the end of sections. Be creative in review methods.

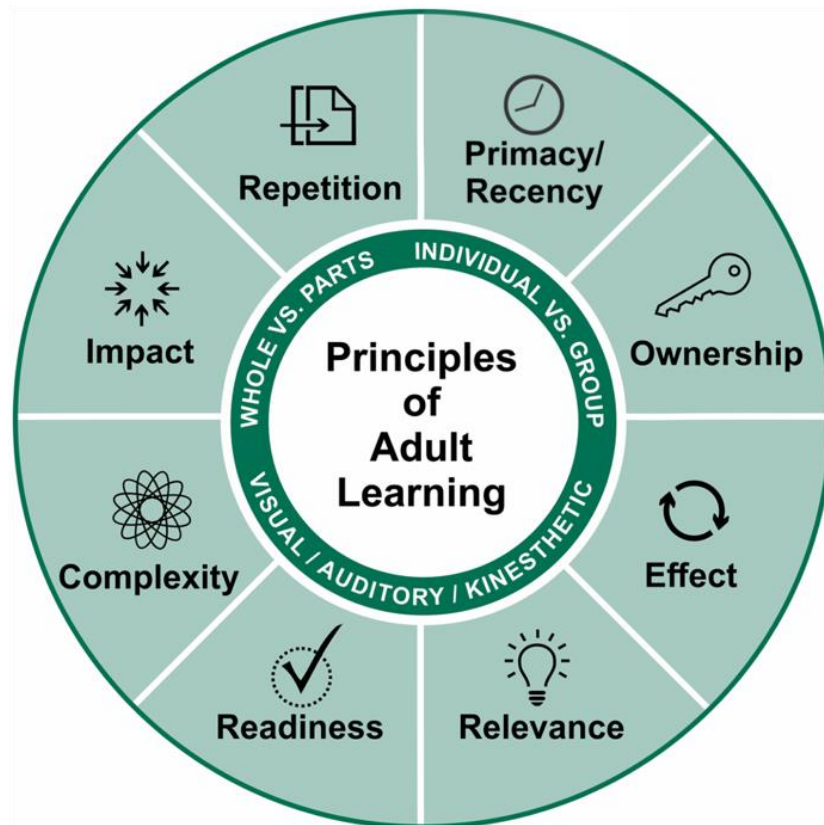
Adults tend to have **better recall** when the information is repeated and reinforced. Without reinforcement and repetition, the majority of new information is **lost within 24 hours!**



# Learning Styles

Have you ever wondered why you and a co-worker have had opposite reactions to an event that you both attended? Perhaps you thought the presenter was excellent and she thought the presenter was terrible. What may have been the basis of your differences in opinions toward the presentation was the difference in your individual learning styles.

Now we are going to focus on the individual differences in how adults process and remember information. Those differences are reflected by the inner part of the diagram, also known as **Learning Styles**.





## Visual - Auditory - Kinesthetic

In the following quotation, “When I hear, I forget; When I see, I remember; When I do, I understand,” Confucius appears to know something about **Visual, Auditory and Kinesthetic** learners. Most people indicate a preference for one type of learning, although most of us learn through a combination of the three styles.

A high percentage of the population is composed of Visual and Kinesthetic learners while a small percentage is made up of Auditory Learners. The best route to success is to **offer a blend** of visual and kinesthetic opportunities.







## Whole - Parts

The second way adults process information in order to understand and retain it is referred to as Whole versus Parts.

**Whole** or “**big picture**” learners need to see the goal or the end product before they can attend to the details.

**Parts** learners are anxious to dive into the pieces and will figure out the “**big picture**”, building it from the details.





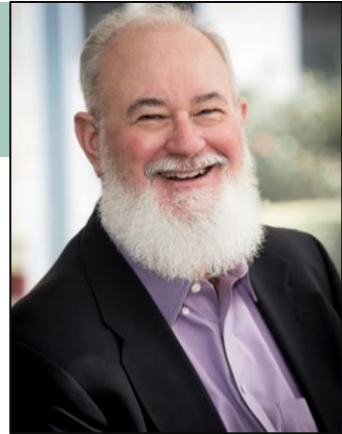
## Individual - Group

The third type of learning style classification is referred to as Individual versus Group. Some people **learn best on their own**. They often lose concentration when distracted by others in the learning environment. They need opportunities for processing information individually.

Others learn best in a group. **Group learners improve focus** and retention when they discuss the content or hear others discuss the content in some type of group interaction.



## About David



A US Air Force retiree, David went on to a highly successful career in instructional design and corporate leadership training.

Today, David guides speakers, leaders, sales and training organizations, through the process of re-creating their presentations to achieve increased audience engagement and impact.

### Benefit from David's technical skill set...

Effectively communicating to your audience involves certain technical know-how, such as how best to structure PowerPoint, lesson plans, training materials, scripts, activities, and the selection of the proper tools and processes that are guaranteed to engage your audience.

### Benefit from David's knowledge of training, facilitation, instructional design, and leadership theory...

Choosing the right engagement theory is your path to delivering a message that resonates and impacts your audience, and has the potential to increase engagement, retention, and sales.



Do your participants sometimes seem confused, unable to determine the importance and value you offer?

### Benefit from David's experience:

- Certified virtual presenter and facilitator
- Train-the-trainer expert
- Instructional designer
- eLearning developer

David Doerrier helps training and sales organizations, business owners, leaders, and other presenters **engage from any stage** and deliver clear, impactful, and memorable presentations – Guaranteed!

The way you structure your training makes it easy to understand and implement.... you have a strong passion for teaching folks how to be impactful when presenting.

*David G.*

I highly recommend David to anyone seeking guidance and coaching for presenting to executive and technical audiences.

*Carlos A.*



# Are You Ready?

With the right processes, the right instruction, and the right amount of constructive feedback, you'll be able to present your message with poise, impact, and engagement.

Get your audience to listen, act, and commit to your product, service, or ideas — Guaranteed!

Speak with confidence, be at your best, Present Your Way to Success!



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