

EMDRIA Trainer Day - 16 May 2025

# Learning Theories into Practice: Designing for the Adult Learner

Be sure to check out or print out the guide from the EMDRIA Trainer Day webpage

Traci Van Prooyen, EdD - Education and Standards Specialist at EMDRIA

## ZOOM POLL QUESTIONS

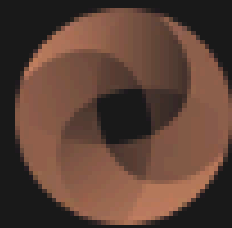
Before we get started:

1. How long have you been an EMDR trainer?
2. What is your primary work setting?
3. What is your favorite aspect of being an EMDR trainer?

<https://padlet.com/emdria/1>



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# What was the greatest life or professional lesson you have learned AND how did you learn it?

Share your greatest life lesson by clicking on the '+' button

Be kind - you never  
know what someone is  
going through

My grandmother / mom



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# Agenda

## KEY TOPICS DISCUSSED IN THIS PRESENTATION

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1. Learning Theories tied to Adults
2. Learning Myths Debunked
3. Designing Learning for Adults

# Learning Objective

HOW LEARNING THEORIES IMPACT WHAT YOU CAN CREATE AND DELIVER IN YOUR EMDR BASIC TRAININGS

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1. Participants will be able to identify key learning theories related to adult learners.
2. Participants will be able to tie key learning theories to their practical applications for EMDR basic trainings.
3. Participants will be able to identify learning enhancements to make their EMDR basic trainings more engaging, effective, and efficient.

## ZOOM CHAT QUESTION

In general, what are a few ways that adults learn differently than children and/or adolescents?

# There are many different learning theories with ties to adult learners

Highlighting a few here today for reflection on your own EMDR Trainings



# Learning Theories for Adults: Past



## **Behaviorism (Watson - 1913; Skinner - 1940s)**

External behaviors | Actions



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## **Humanism (Carl Rogers - 1950-1960s)**

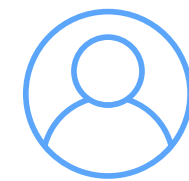
Self-directed learning | Personal growth of the whole person |  
Intrinsic motivation | Facilitative teaching | Safe learning  
environment

# Learning Theories for Adults: Past



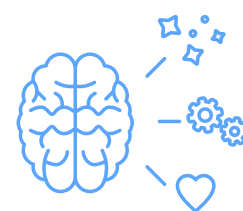
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Self-directed learning | Personal growth of the whole person |  
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environment



## **Cognitivism (Jean Piaget - 1960s)**

Combine old and new information together:  
Accommodation | Assimilation | Equilibrium

# Constructivism



## Piaget | Vygotsky | Indigenous Cultures

Learner creates own  
meaning/knowledge through:

- Life experiences
- Social interactions - Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)
- Contextualizing old/new information using personal cultural experiences

Indigenous experiences - Learning is:

- A communal activity (vs. individual)
- Lifelong
- Informal
- Holistic (brain, body, spirit, emotions)



# Andragogy (vs. Pedagogy)



## Malcolm Knowles (1968)

- *“Father of adult learning theory”*
- Self-directed
- More internally motivated
- Relevant / practical application
- Readiness to learn
- Use life experiences
- Participatory
- Hands-on

# Learning Theories for Adults:

## More Recent



### 1950s - 1960s

- **Taxonomy of Learning Objectives (Benjamin Bloom; Revised in 2001)**
- **Conditions of Learning (Robert Gagne)**

Analysis of different learning conditions and complexities

# Learning Theories for Adults:

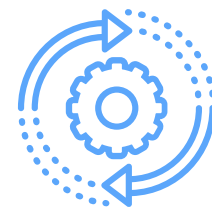
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### **Transformational (Jack Mazirow - 1978)**

Solve problems by including different points of view | apply evaluations/analysis | 'ah ha' moment

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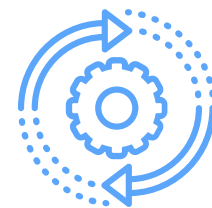
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**Experiential (David Kolb - 1984)**

Actively participate and then reflect on experiences:  
Concrete experience (new) | Reflective observation |  
Abstract conceptualization (plan) | Active experimentation



# Connectivism



## Siemens and Downes (2005)

- Focus on knowledge creation rather than just consumption
- Technology in learning
- Existing knowledge is constantly changing/evolving
- Link information together
- Maintain connections to build knowledge

## ZOOM POLL QUESTION

4. Which learning theory best aligns with your EMDR basic training?



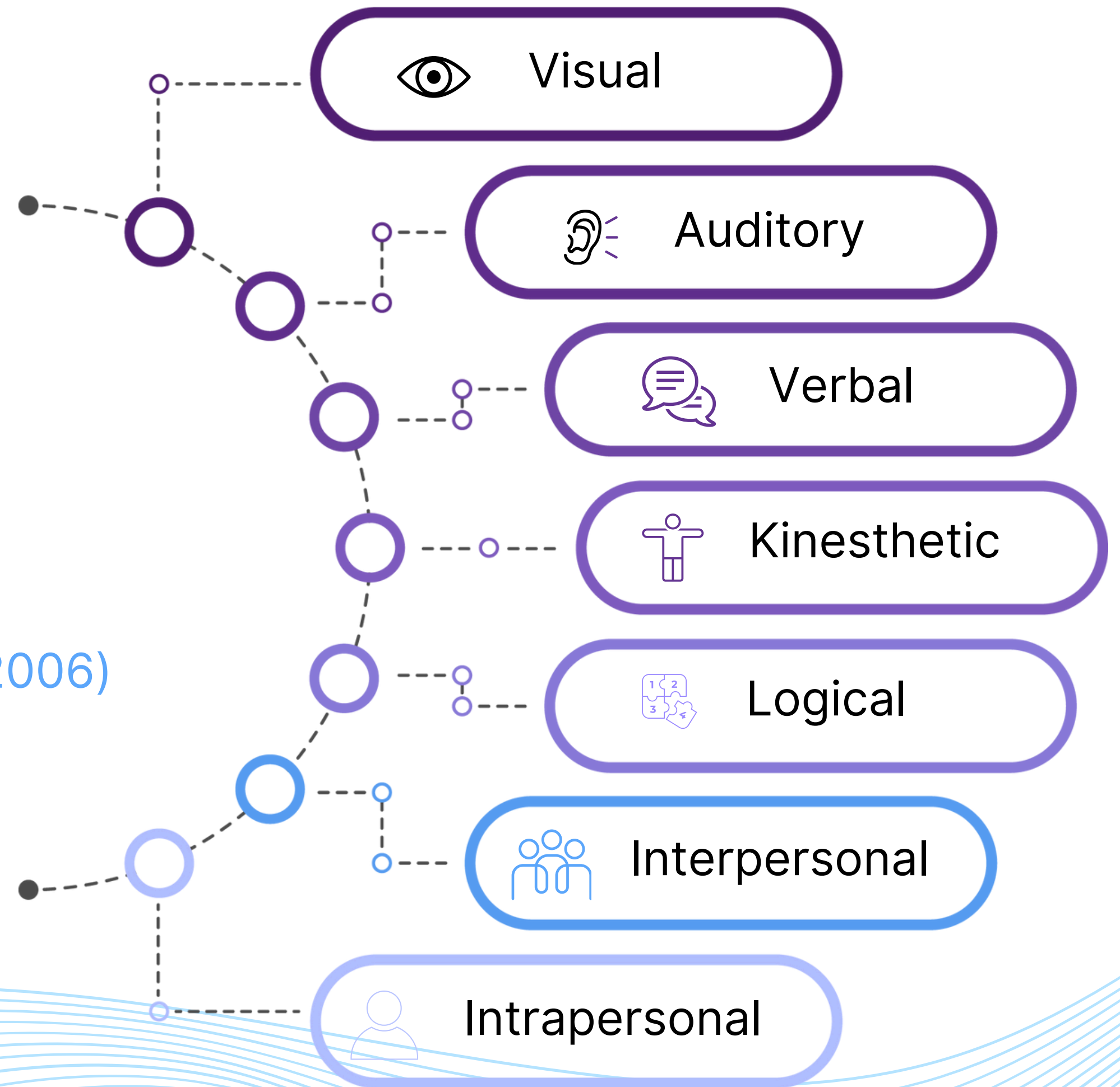
# There are also some popular learning theory myths

Highlighting two primary learning myths

# Myth - Learning Styles

Howard Gardner (1983)

Debunked – Kratzig & Arbuthnott (2006)



# Myth - Learning Pyramid

National Training Laboratories (1960s)

Average learning retention rates

*"Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember,  
involve me and I learn." Benjamin Franklin.*

5% - Lecture

10% - Reading

20% - Audio/Visual

30% - Demonstration

50% - Discussion Group

75% - Practice by Doing

90% - Teach Others



# Myth - Efficient Multitasking

We can do it but...

...we can't do it effectively.

- Cognitive load
- Processing
- Encoding
- Retrieval





# Theories that help us build effective learning experiences

Highlighting two key learning theories used at EMDRIA



# Designing Learning – Bloom's Taxonomy

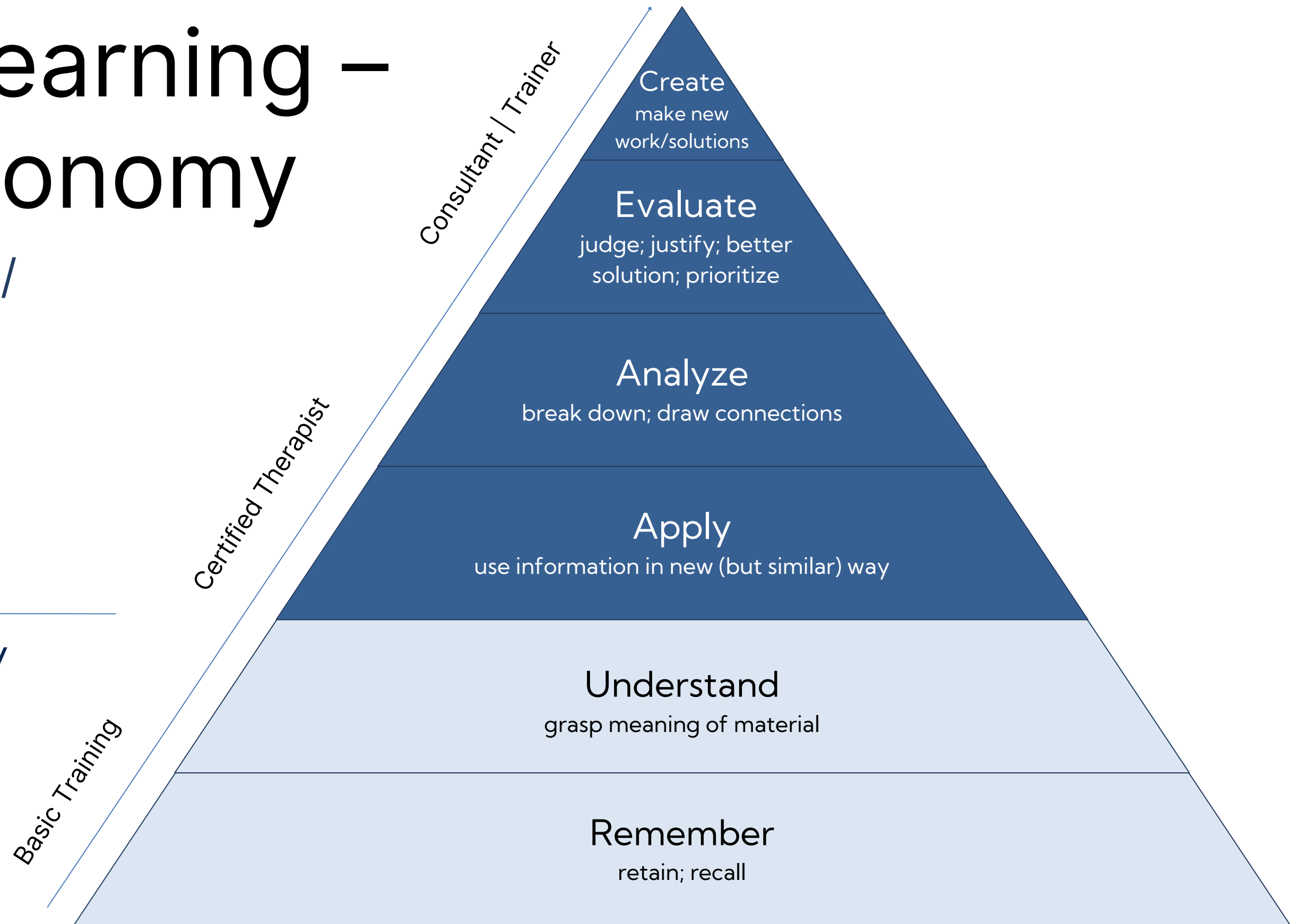
Higher order thinking skills /  
long-term impact

Active / deeper learning /  
problem focused /  
learn to do

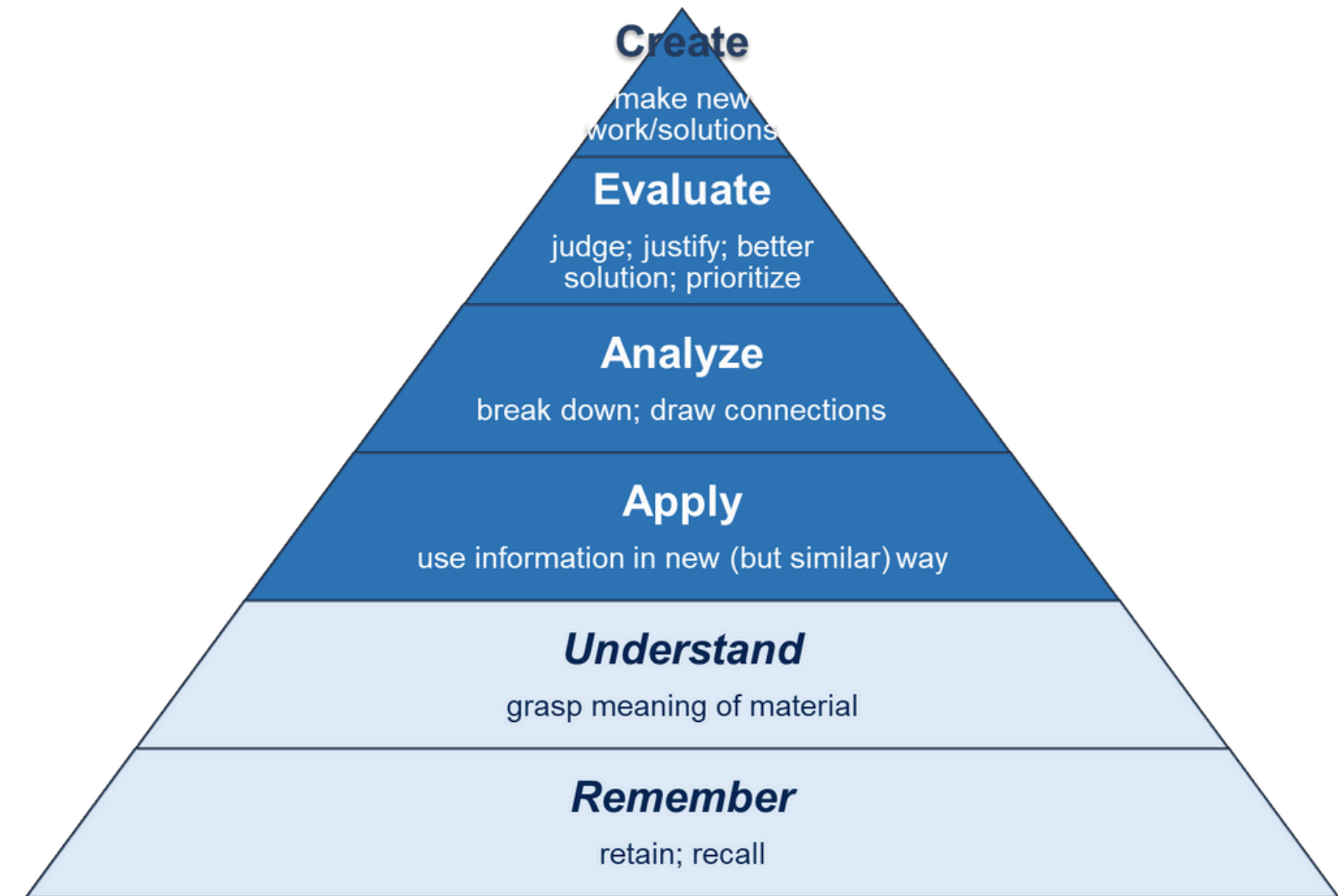
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*Lower order thinking skills /  
short-term impact / basics*

*Passive / superficial /  
content-focused /  
learn to remember*

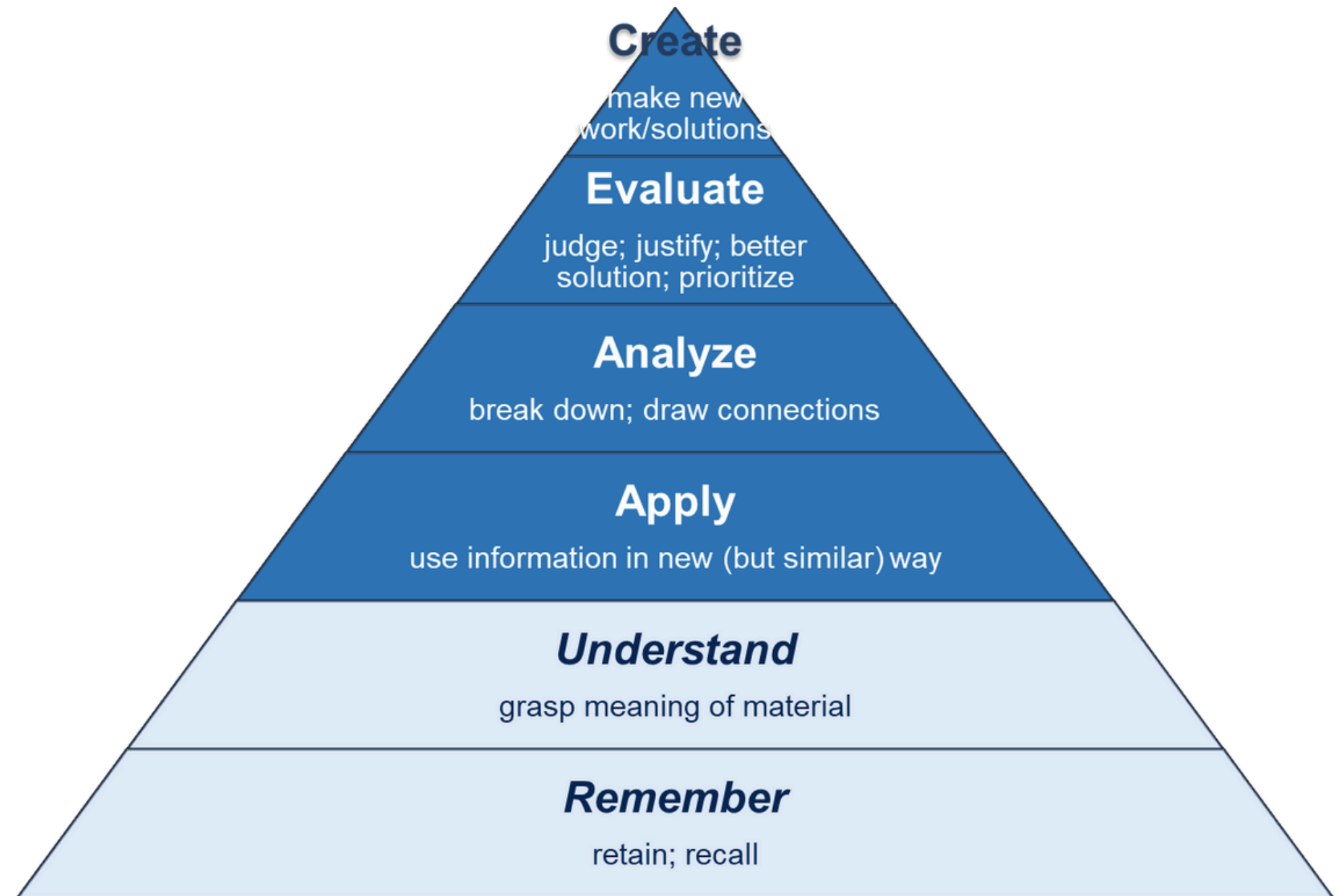


# Designing Learning for Adults – Bloom's Taxonomy Examples





# Designing Learning for Adults – Bloom's Taxonomy Examples

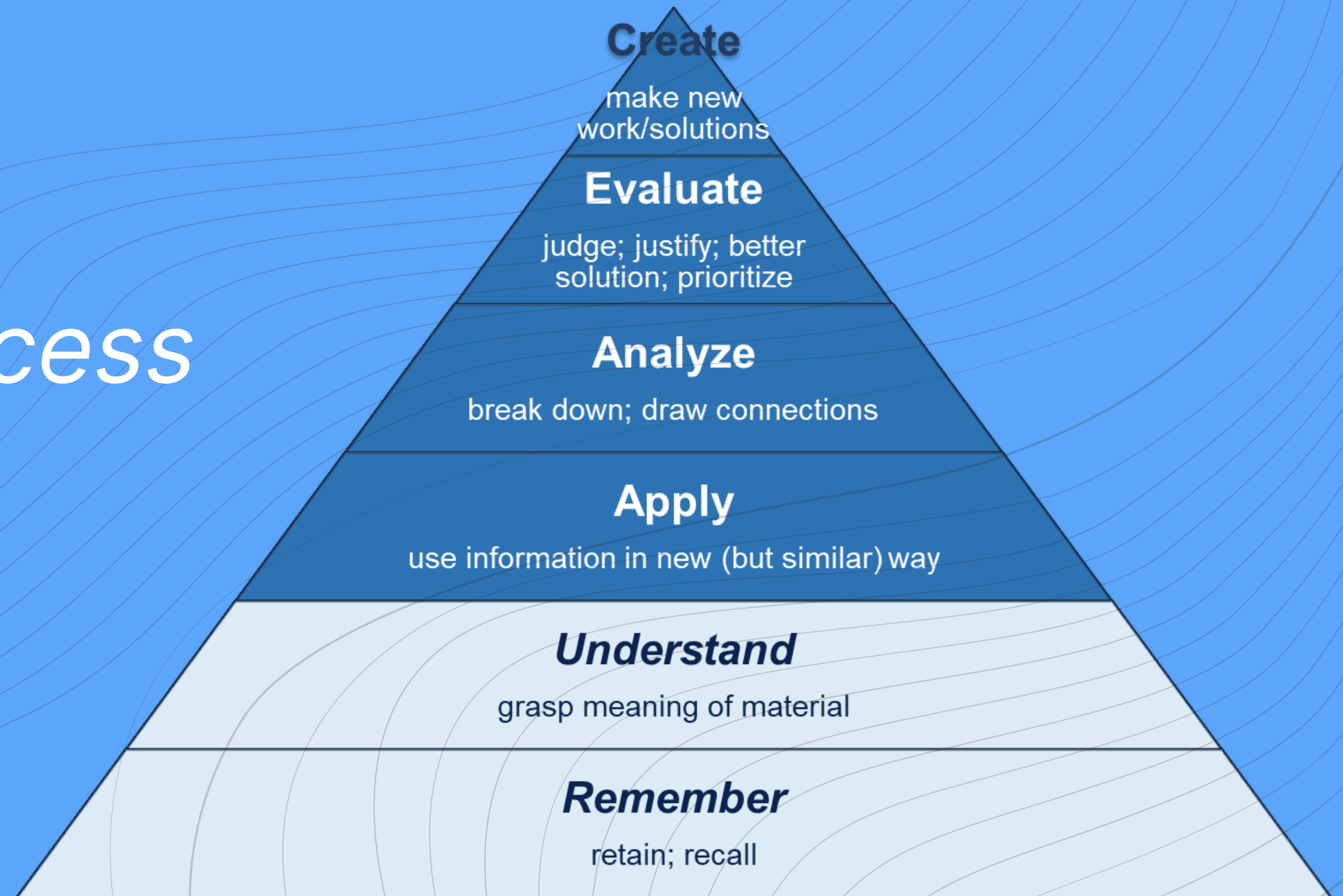


*Learning isn't a spectator sport.*

Chickering and Ehrmann

*Training is a process  
not an event.*

Bob Pike



## REFLECTION QUESTION

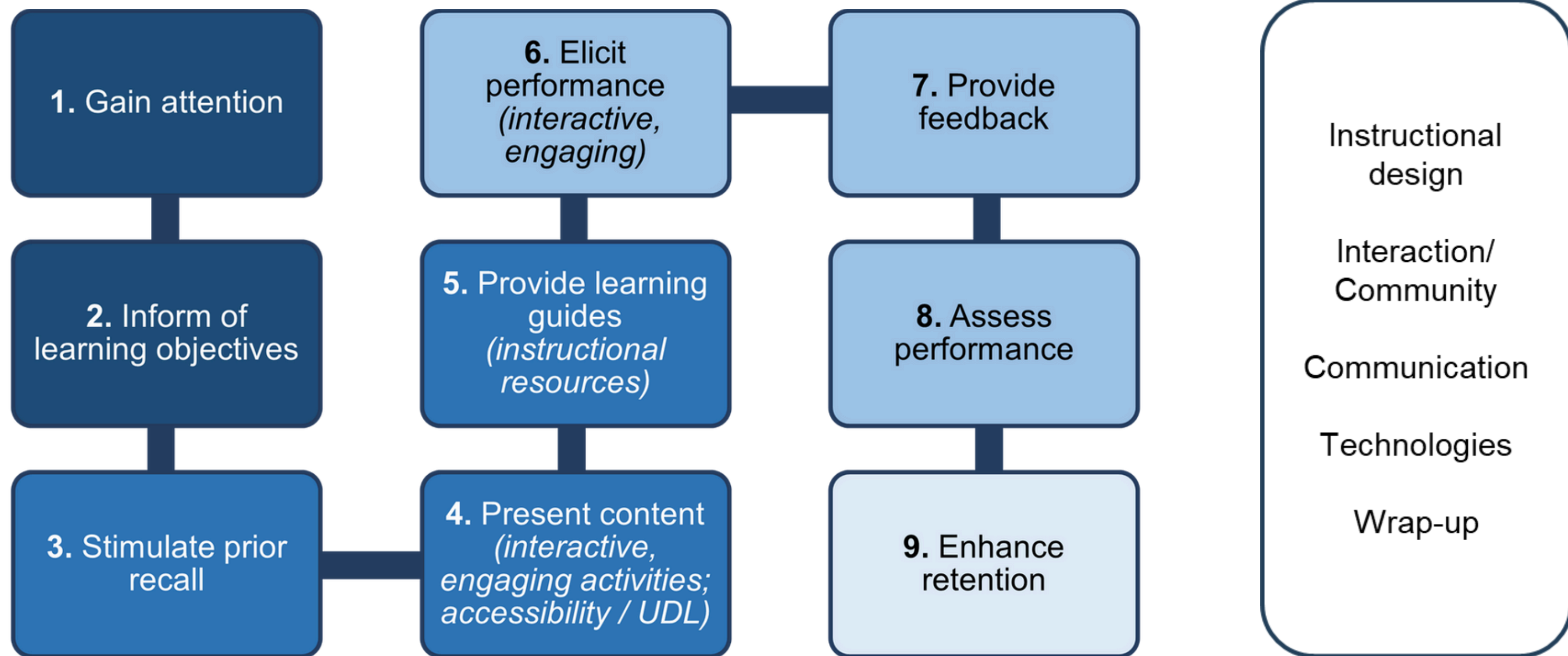
At what level(s) of Bloom's  
**is/are the focus** of your  
teaching/training?



## REFLECTION QUESTION

At what level(s) of Bloom's  
do you want your  
teaching/training to focus?

# Designing Learning for Adults - Gagné's Nine Levels of Instruction





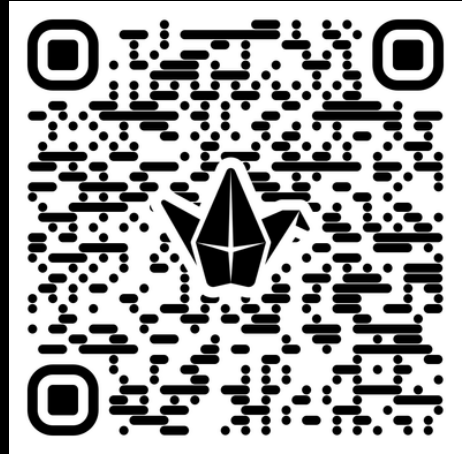
ZOOM CHAT QUESTION

# BREAK

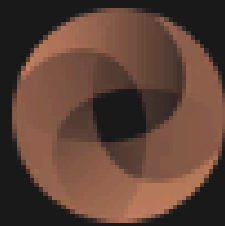
What questions might you have about  
learning theories?

# Designing Learning for Adults

<https://padlet.com/emdria/2>



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## What is the most challenging aspect of teaching/training adults in your EMDR basic training course?

Share your your challenges by clicking on the '+' button

# Designing Learning for Adults - What We Want and Need for Impact



## Engaging

Experiences /  
Contextualized

Interesting

Connections



## Effective

Relevant /  
Practical

Assessments

[Feedback](#)



## Efficient

Design of  
Resources

Milestones

Professional  
Development

# Designing Learning for Adults - Engaging



## **Experiences / Contextualized**

Experiences  
Perspectives  
Contextualize

WWYD?  
Examples  
Analogies



## **Interesting Content**

Engaging  
Variety  
Active

Delivery  
Slides  
Infographics  
Pauses



## **Connections**

STAY-COMPLETE  
Communicating  
Relationships

Before  
During  
After

# Designing Learning for Adults - Effective



## Relevant / Practical

Work  
Directly Apply  
Amount  
Problem Solve

Critically Think  
Cases  
Scenarios  
Simulations



## Assessment

FORMATIVE  
Scaffold  
Frequent  
Accountability

Check-ins  
Self-assessments  
Formal assessment



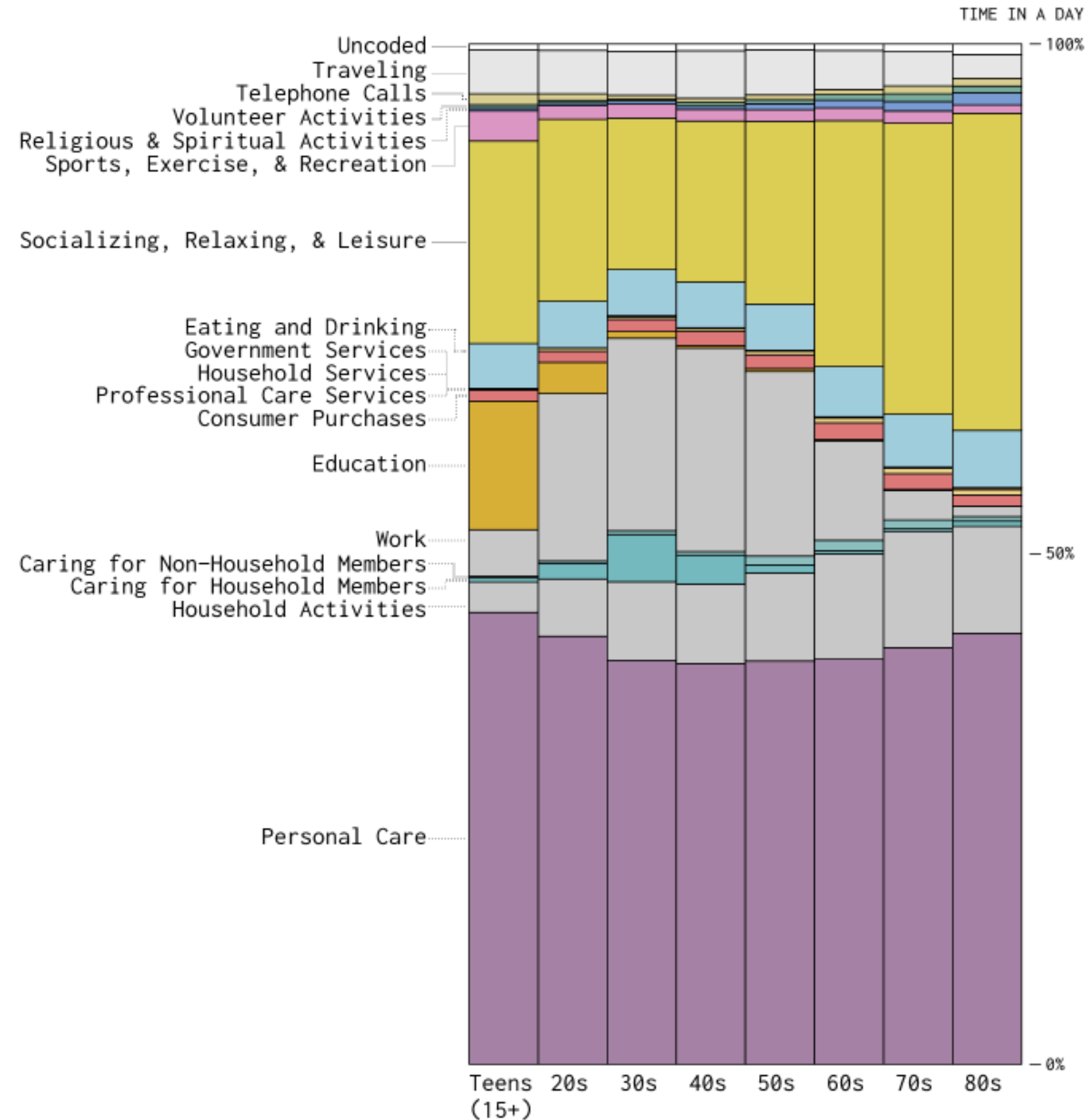
## Feedback

GROWTH  
Specific  
Frequent  
Feedback Loops  
(Dialogue)

To Trainees  
From Trainees

# Designing Learning for Adults - Efficient

How Americans spend their days, by age group



You, N. (2008). | Where time goes with age. Flowing Data.



# Designing Learning for Adults - Efficient

## **Design of Resources**

Work/Family  
Organized  
Accessible

Slides  
Course  
Outside Critique

## **Milestones**

Progress  
Success  
Encouragement  
“Chunking”

Stick to Schedule  
What it Looks Like  
What Next

## **Professional Development**

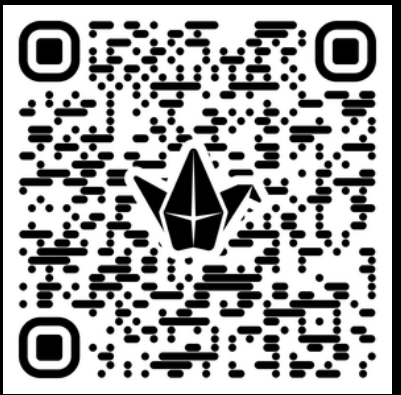
Continuous  
On-demand  
Pathways

Tips  
Context  
EMDRIA Library

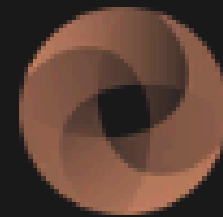
# Designing Learning for Adults - What We Want and Need for Impact



<https://padlet.com/emdria/3>



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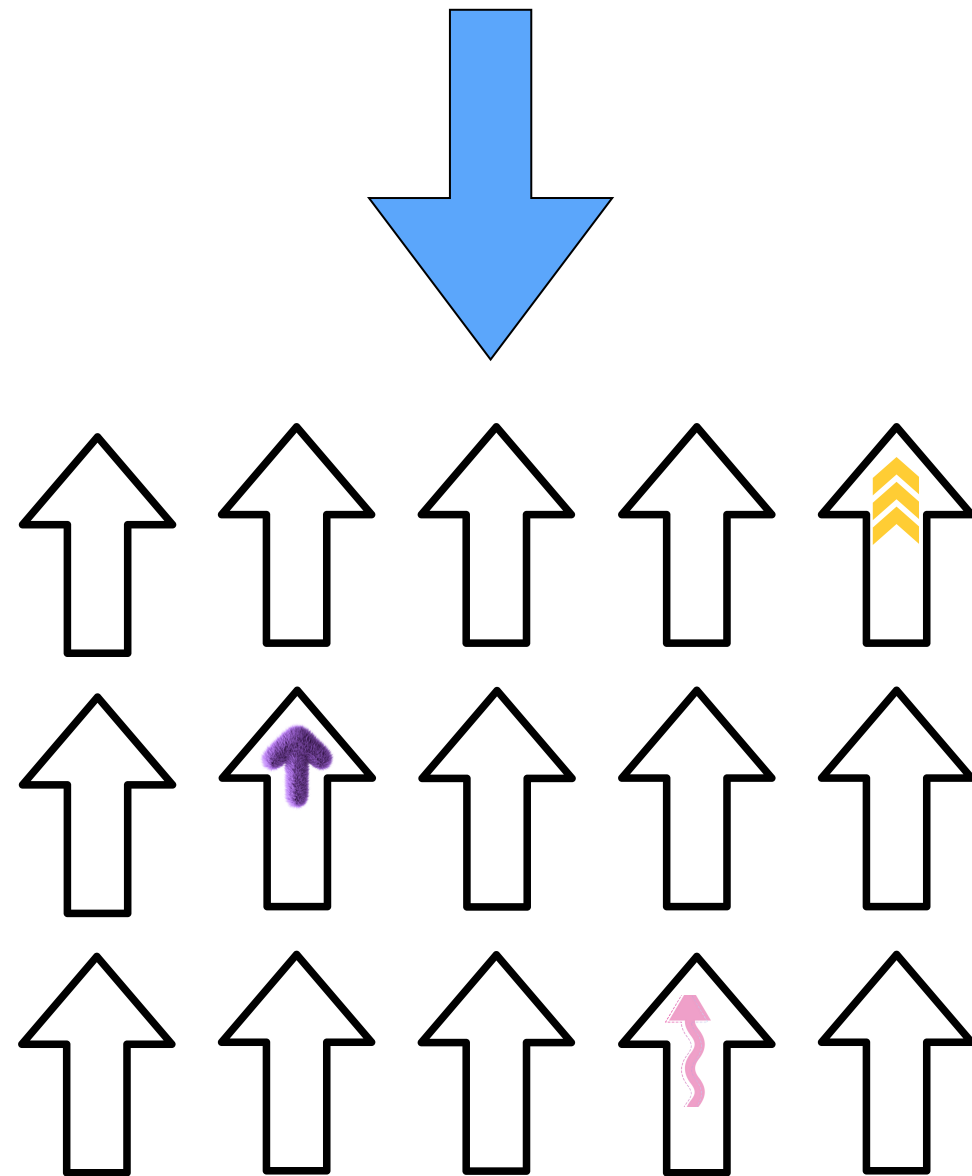


## **What have you done in your EMDR basic training course that has been successful in ENGAGING, EFFECTIVE, and/or EFFICIENT for Trainees?**

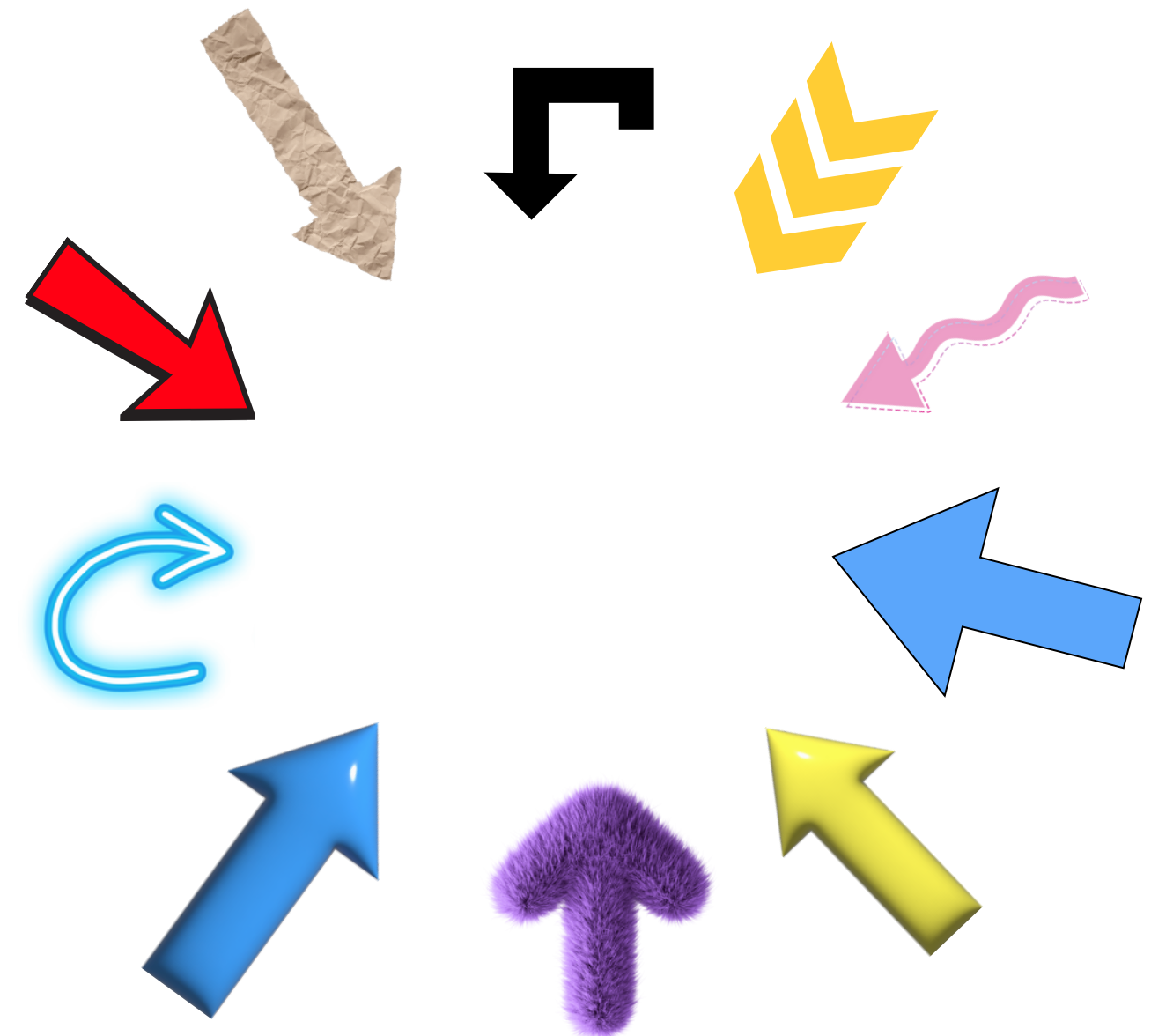
Share your successful ENGAGING, EFFECTIVE, and/or EFFICIENT techniques by clicking on the '+' button

# Designing Learning for Adults - Role of the Instructor

## Sage-on-the-Stage



## Guide-on-the-Side

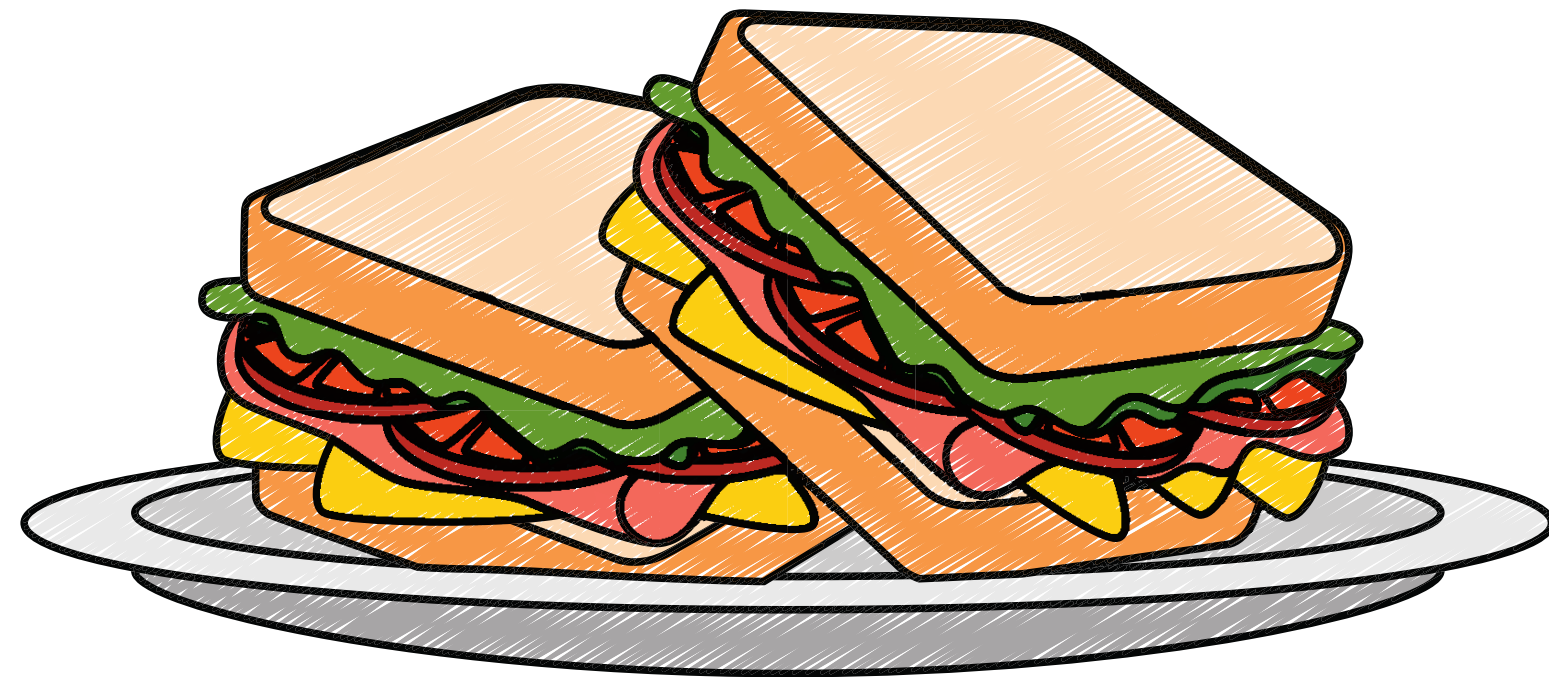




ZOOM CHAT QUESTION

What are some practical ways that  
Trainers can be a guide-on-the-side?

# Building Learning for Adults



Beginning | Design | Preview | Connect

Trainees' Experiences | Trainees'  
Perspectives | Variety | Active Learning |  
Connections

Relevant | Practical | Think Critically |  
Formative | Feedback

Designed | Organized | Accessible |  
Milestones | Professional Development

Closure | Review | Connect

## EMDRIA Approved Trainer

## ZOOM POLL QUESTION

5. What new teaching/design element do you intend to apply to your EMDR basic training after today?



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EMDRIA's Education and Standards Specialist

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ZOOM CHAT QUESTION

Questions you might have...

...please put in Zoom chat or unmute

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