

INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF WORK WITH DISADVANTAGED ADULTS



CONCEPTS OF AN INNOVATIVE APPROACH TO ADULT EDUCATION



- ✓ The process of turning an idea into a creative deed is known as innovation.
- ✓ To generate new ideas, a new atmosphere that fosters creativity is needed amongst both educators and learners.
- ✓ Innovative teaching methods simply entail being aware of and using a more supportive (or learning-assured) approach while educating students about a subject, topic, or idea.
- ✓ The method itself might not be fresh, and frankly, may be commonly used. However, an educator who is aware of the way the method works i.e.. How it facilitates learning, as well as how suitable the method is for the individual learners, it will become more effective, in particular if several teaching methods are combined.

PRINCIPLES OF AN INNOVATIVE APPROACH TO ADULT EDUCATION




- ✓ Teaching should focus on activities, and examples should be related to everyday situations.
- ✓ Innovative approaches should involve lot of interaction with the learners to capture and maintain their attention and encourage long-term cognitive processing of learnt material.
- ✓ It should be assured that the lessons help students strengthen their skills. As an educator, you might want to explicitly state the skills you have taught the group because doing so will boost their self-confidence and allow both you and them to track their development.

PRINCIPLES OF AN INNOVATIVE APPROACH TO ADULT EDUCATION



- ✓ An educator's alertness, interest taken, will keep the class also alert & motivated. It is important that as an educator you provide a model example by being inquisitive, respectful, helpful and knowledgeable. It will also help you spot unmotivated, confused or stressed learners so you may deal with them appropriately to facilitate their learning. This is key when working with disadvantaged adults.
- ✓ It takes confidence and courage to adopt a trial-and-error strategy, embrace failures along the way to success, and the willingness to set aside judgement in order to be inventive.
- ✓ In truth, there are no tried-and-true solutions to innovation. However, the idea that creativity cannot be taught is untrue. On the contrary, discipline is required to achieve creativity and innovation.

PRINCIPLES OF AN INNOVATIVE APPROACH TO ADULT EDUCATION

-  Such principles must be learned through a series of explorations rather than by following an instructional manual. Every journey is different.



WHAT BARRIERS TO LEARNING DO ADULTS FACE?

There are three main types of barriers adults may face when it comes to education:

Situational barriers:

personal and family life or situations. These can include time or financial pressures, young children, single parenting, or health.


Institutional barriers:

indifference of educational institutions to the situation of the individual or a lack of flexibility on offer. These can include schedule issues, lack of hybrid options, 100% attendance mandatory, or even no free parking at the site.

Dispositional barriers:

attitudes, perceptions and expectations of adults. These can include lack of confidence, not finishing the educational system, belief they are too old to learn new things, or an idea that they are not welcome.

WORKING WITH DISADVANTAGED ADULTS



Dispositional barriers can prevent adults from taking steps towards learning. While very individual, learning opportunities should be created to boost confidence, for instance through bite-sized lessons or discrete modules that can be expanded as students advance. Disadvantaged adults may also believe that they are not who the institution is looking for when requiring for an educational course if they are of a different race, ethnicity, religion than the majority, or have physical, mental or educational disabilities. Highlighting that aid can be arranged is key.

If the possible outcomes are evident and appreciated, adults are more motivated to learn as they can clearly see the benefits as well as track their needs and progress later on. Therefore, information about the benefits of adult learning and its potential effects should be broadly disseminated. High-profile awareness-raising initiatives and/or improved information accessibility to the potential benefits of learning could fall under this category.

Disadvantaged adults struggle with conflicting priorities including financial, career, family, and caring obligations. This calls for flexible learning options, such as learning outside of regular working hours, online learning, and/or blended learning.

Working with adults in an unfavorable situation

1

Disadvantaged learners also face a cumulative effect of multiple barriers to education. People who are in financial stress may also have poor health, therefore more likely to need flexible educational conditions such as hybrid work or subsidised education

2

Practical barriers such as cost, and childcare can be challenged by an educational institution with funding.

3

Campaigns which highlight that learning is for everyone can be helpful to increase motivation of disadvantaged groups.



HAVING A DISABILITY OR LEARNING DIFFICULTY

- ✓ Research has found that people with a disability are less likely to participate in learning.
- ✓ This in turn means that they are also less likely to participate in the labour market due to a lower level of education compared to people without a disability.

People with disabilities may also face additional or cumulative barriers such as:

- Other health conditions as a result of the disability
- Medication
- Lack of accessibility at the education institution
- Negative past experiences
- Intimidation and being labelled



TECHNOLOGY AND DISADVANTAGED ADULTS

- ✓ Slower adapters to technological advances experience greater barriers to learning.
- ✓ Research suggests these individuals are more likely to be:
 - People in social housing
 - People with lower incomes or who are unemployed
 - People with disabilities
 - Rural populations
 - Older people
 - Traveller communities
 - Homeless people



TECHNOLOGY AS AN INNOVATIVE EDUCATIONAL TOOL



- ✓ The biggest ground-breaking innovation in education today has been technology, which has made it easier for both adults and children to study.
- ✓ The adults, belonging to all categories and backgrounds are taught how to make use of technology to conduct research and prepare assignments and reports
- ✓ Errors and mistakes can be easily fixed while writing on computers.
- ✓ Through the internet, one can increase his knowledge and comprehension. One can get a broad variety of knowledge and facts through the internet. Technology makes it simple to perform additional tasks including mathematical computations, spreadsheet preparation, letter writing, notice posting, and brochure production.

Source:

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/323829608_Innovative_Strategies_and_Methods_in_Adult_Education

TECHNOLOGY AS AN INNOVATIVE EDUCATIONAL TOOL



- ✓ When used appropriately, integrating technology into a course curriculum has proven to be beneficial for enhancing and extending both educator's and learner's experiences.
- ✓ Electronic mail and communication apps such as whatsapp have shown to be a useful tool for fostering communication before, during, and after classes and meetings.

Source:

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/323829608_Innovative_Strategies_and_Methods_in_Adult_Education


ADVANTAGES OF AN INNOVATIVE APPROACH TO THE EDUCATION OF DISADVANTAGED ADULTS

Teamwork – Working cooperatively with a group of people to accomplish a common goal is the process of teamwork. That is, in order to carry out any task, members of any community, such as family members, friends, sports teams, etc., communicate with one another. When all members: share equal responsibility for the group; maintain flexibility to complete team duties; encourage communication; and communicate information, the groups typically function smoothly.

Effective Communication – Adult learners bring in varied and valuable life experiences into the class environment therefore they may all wish to communicate differently, and conflict may arise. Verbal, nonverbal, electronic, written, or visual forms of communication are all included. Group rules are key in maintaining effective communication.



ADVANTAGES OF AN INNOVATIVE APPROACH TO THE EDUCATION OF DISADVANTAGED ADULTS

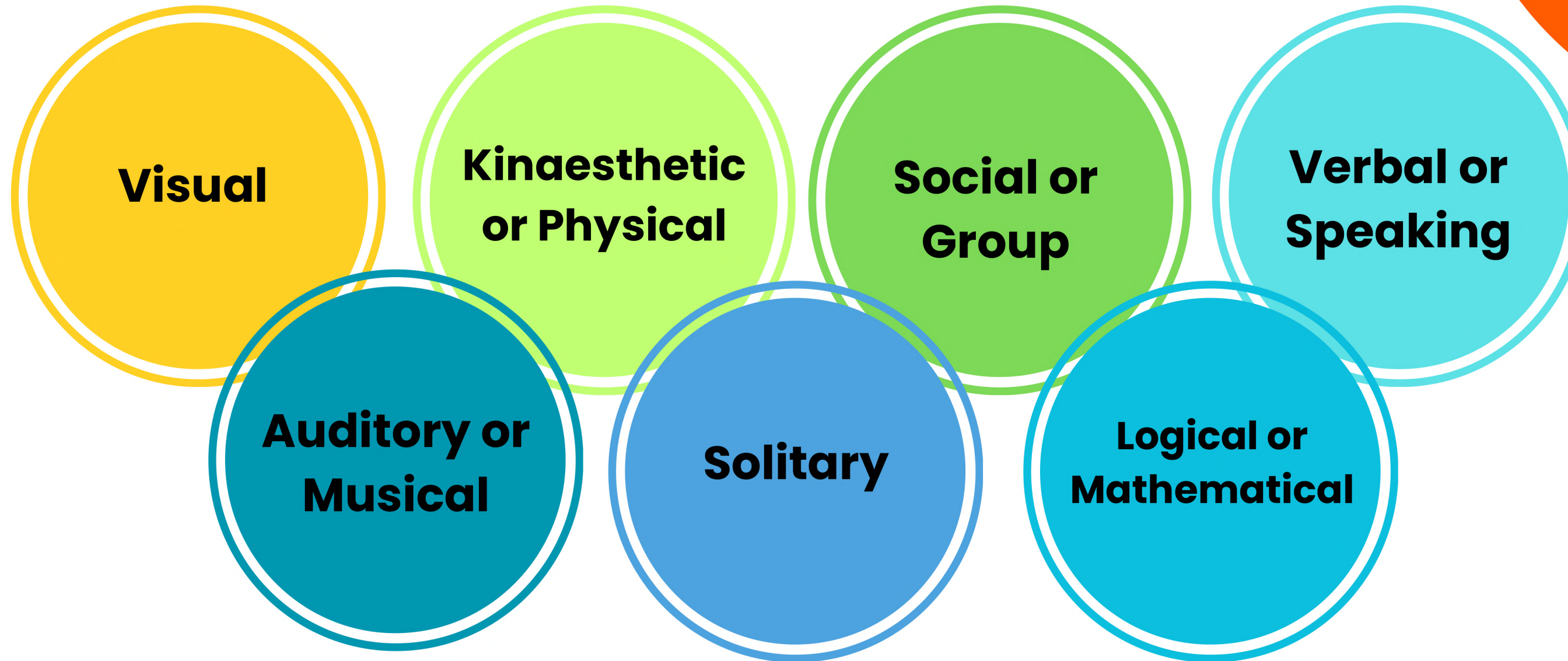


Individual Commitment – Even if the team's members have a shared goal, they all want the tasks they undertake to be successful. Each person has a unique set of talents and abilities that they use to carry out their everyday duties. The ideal scenario would be for the participants to be able to negotiate their responsibilities in order to complete the activities. When working with disadvantaged adults' commitment may be difficult to maintain, therefore a phone call to enquire about attendance, or if you can help with anything may go a long way. Motivational exercises may also be performed.

Conflict Management – Conflict management is not only seen as a procedure for bringing about practical solutions to disputes that arise, but also for preventing their bad elements and enhancing their good ones. Conflict that is properly handled can improve group results. Conflicts must be resolved as soon as possible since they only get worse as time goes on. Unresolved issues can cause dissatisfaction among team members, which can lead to animosity and a breakdown in communication.



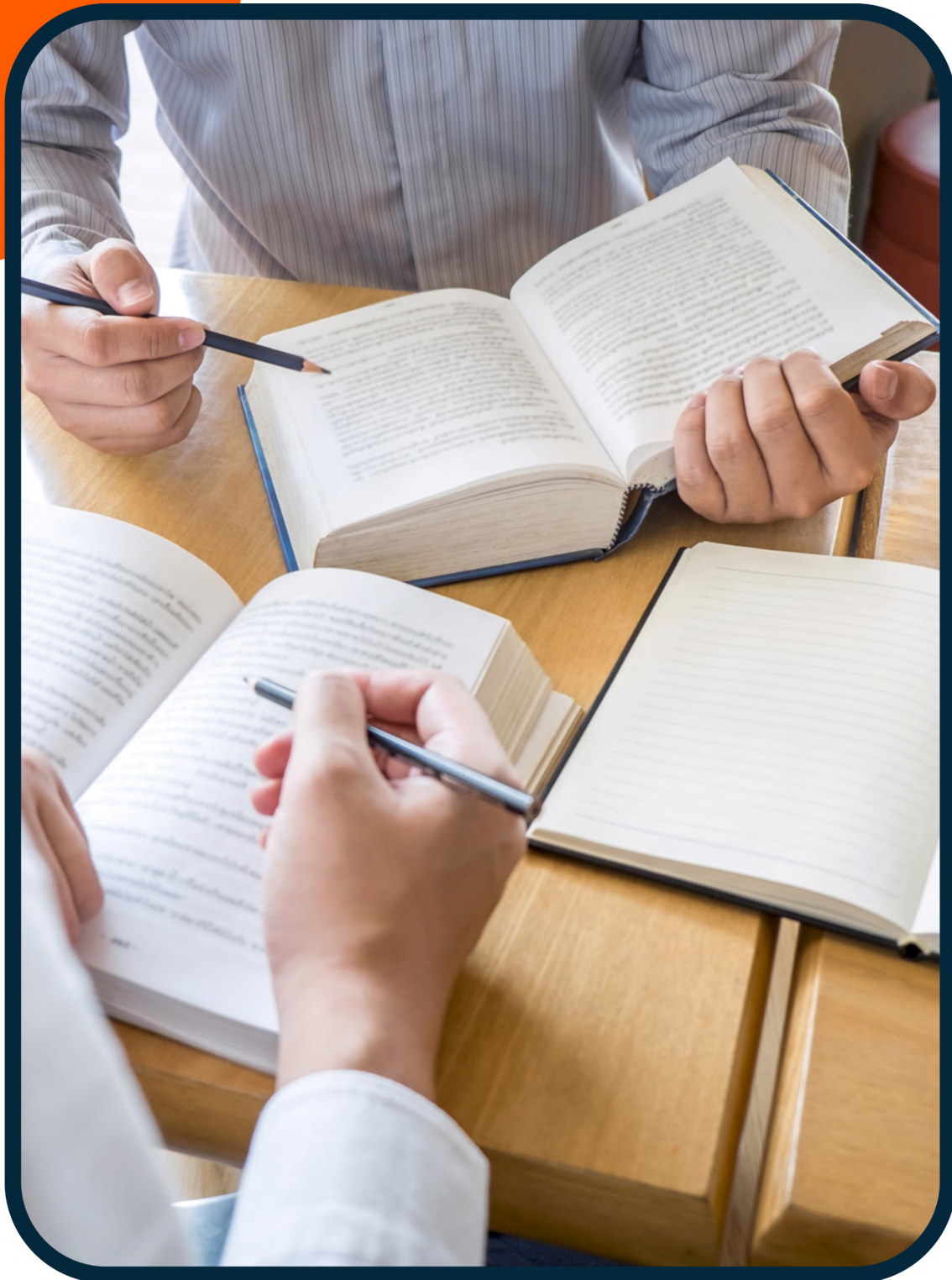
DISCOVERING LEARNING STYLES



DISCOVERING LEARNING STYLES

Sternberg (1995) defines a learning style as: “A way of thinking. It is not an ability, but rather how we use the abilities we have” (p. 266).

He further states that “we acquire styles by modelling those around us, such as parents, teachers, other authority figures and peers”. Learning styles are not set in stone – “people are not locked into any one of style ... rather they change as life’s circumstances and their own predilections” (Sternberg, 1995, pp. 268–69).



DISCOVERING LEARNING STYLES



The lack of a clear consensus on how to describe or assess learning styles is a problem found within the literature. Learning style models and theories come in a wide variety, however they frequently lack empirical backing.

Another thing to keep in mind is that, regardless of personal learning styles, learners can gain a lot from exposure to a range of teaching approaches. Educators should strive to offer a variety of teaching approaches that can appeal to diverse learners.

It must be noted that no matter the scientific literature published, from own experience we can agree that learners do have various requirements and preferences when it comes to education – you probably have your own!

The aim of learning style use is to create an inclusive educational environment for disadvantaged adults.

Source: <https://www.mdpi.com/2674-1032/2/1/7>

DISCOVERING LEARNING STYLES

Methods of assessing learning preferences:

Surveys and Questionnaires:

In surveys, respondents may be asked about their preferred methods of information acquisition, preferred modes of learning, and their strengths and difficulties.

Observation:

To determine your students' preferred learning styles, watch them engage in a variety of learning activities. For instance, one may be a reading and writing learner if they prefer to take notes during lectures or group discussions.

Interviews:

This might help you understand their learning preferences and adjust your teaching strategies accordingly.

Self-Assessment:

You can ask learners to think about their individual learning preferences and inclinations. This can be accomplished by self-reflection exercises, writing, or self-tests.

VARK questionnaire

VARK describes four distinct sensory learning ways suggested by Fleming and Mills in 1992. These are: Visual (sight), Aural (hearing/speaking), Read/write, and Kinaesthetic (touch).

Advantages of a questionnaire such as VARK is that it encourages meta-cognition, which is the act of thinking critically about your own learning. Meta-cognition has been shown to improve academic performance (Biggs, 1988). Critical evaluation of one's own learning style and development allows students to select appropriate study strategies to better suit their needs and a given scenario. This is particularly important as sometimes we prefer to learn differently depending on the task, the environment, or even how we feel at a given moment. Furthermore, the VARK questionnaire provides the participant with scores based on all four areas as a learner can be a MM style – mixture multimodality – without a specific mode with one learning preference.

A crucial benefit of a learning style discovery questionnaire is that a disadvantaged or demotivated learner can see that educational difficulties they may have faced in the past can be overcome and are just temporary barriers which with appropriate strategies and tools can be eliminated.



VAR K QUESTIONNAIRE

Choose the answer which best explains your preference and click the box next to it. Please click more than one if a single answer does not match your perception. Leave blank any question that does not apply.

I have finished a competition or test and I would like some feedback. I would like to have feedback:

- using graphs showing what I achieved.
- from somebody who talks it through with me.
- using a written description of my results.
- using examples from what I have done.

I want to assemble a wooden table that came in parts (kitset). I would learn best from:

- advice from someone who has done it before.
- watching a video of a person assembling a similar table.
- diagrams showing each stage of the assembly.
- written instructions that came with the parts for the table.

- An example question from the site, available for free use at the link below.
- Multiple answers can be selected to then show the overall percentage of each four modes.

<https://vark-learn.com/the-vark-questionnaire/>

EXAMPLES OF BUILDING CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION AT WORK



- 1 Define goals and vision – draw, map, write, make notes!
- 2 Adopt a flexible work schedule
- 3 Provide space for critical thinking
- 4 Reward creativity with small bonuses
- 5 Promote cooperation, communication, and teamwork
- 6 Create a choice of a stimulating OR calming atmosphere
- 7 Form fresh alliances between departments and individuals who have never collaborated previously
- 8 Prioritise diversity in sectoral groups and within the whole organisation



EXAMPLES OF BUILDING CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION IN PRIVATE LIFE

- 1 Practice learning new skills
- 2 Increase and develop your confidence, as well as challenge your own assumptions of failure
- 3 Give your brain time to relax – sleep, eat, drink water, rest!
- 4 Give yourself time to brainstorm new ideas – mind maps, reading news articles or case studies, as well as networking can be helpful.
- 5 Explore multiple solutions to a problem rather than settling for the first idea – what do your friends or co-workers think? Has this topic been discussed on an online forum? Does your local library have any self-help books?
- 6 Find inspiration: Photography, Nature, Family, Friends, Movies, Art, Museums – be attentive to your environment, you never know what you may find!
- 7 Cooking new meals and trying new cuisines and ingredients – embracing new culture and tastes can give you a new perspective as well as time to relax and recharge, as well as learn new information or skills
- 8 Teach others – this includes new or existent knowledge, changing your approach to fit different people for example children or non-native speakers.

INNOVATIVE LEARNING TOOLS



Blended learning: a teaching method that merges high-tech online education with conventional in-person education. It provides with more freedom to design individualised learning environments and experiences for different groups of people with a variety of educational needs and distinct learning styles. For example, the first half of the workshop may be done from home, where students listen to a podcast and complete a quiz on an online website, to them come into the classroom to carry out a brainstorming mind map activity using pen and paper.

Design-thinking process: this is a problem-solving strategy which uses evaluation and creativity techniques. Students can collaborate and motivate each other, as well as share knowledge, thoughts, and experiences – particularly valuable with adult learners who come from different social, educational, and professional backgrounds. This process is non-linear; therefore, it can be used in any order, based on the topic or activity. It can be broken up, rearranged, or only used in parts. The five stages are:

1. **Empathise** – Research the needs of the group you are developing the solution for
2. **Define** – Define needs, the issues, the problems, the key aims
3. **Ideate** – Thinking time! Generate new, creative ideas. Can be done individually or via a group brainstorm session. Building from ideas, case studies, or word association can be helpful. Challenge your thoughts with creativity and unconventionality.
4. **Prototype** – The beginning of solution development. Create a draft of what you have come up with to evaluate the work.
5. **Test** – Do your solutions work? Let's see! Test, evaluate, gather feedback, and improve.

INNOVATIVE LEARNING TOOLS



Project-based learning: students can tackle real issues affecting close communities or other groups globally. They can create new solutions over a more extended period rather than during one session (like with design thinking).

Benefits include acquiring new knowledge, improving research skills, independent and group work development, improved communication skills via a variety of mediums, critical thinking, creativity, technology use, maintaining commitment and responsibility to a cause etc.

Examples of PBL include:

- A documentary or presentation about an issue
- Create or plan an event or activity.
- Put on a theatrical show
- Create or design a social media account for a certain objective.
- Describe and assess the causes, effects, and proposed solutions to an issue
- Create a poster by hand or with the aid of technology.
- Create an opening night, exhibition, online page, or gallery to display your work.

INNOVATIVE LEARNING TOOLS



Jigsaw: The jigsaw puzzle is a technique which splits learning into bite sized pieces, useful if you do not want to give students a lecture on a long topic, as students learn a specific amount of information, teach it to the class, and then learn from their peers. It is more interactive and hands on, as well as caters to a variety of learning styles. Instructions:

1. **Divide** your students into small groups or individuals.
2. **Give** each group a subtopic, subcategory, keyword, or date of the main topic.
3. **The** group then explores the concept using preproduced or printed material, books, or the internet to produce a summary of expertise.
4. **Finally**, each group summarises the findings and shares them with the rest of the group. This can be done in order to form a big picture of the overall topic.
5. **If your** class has experienced enough teamwork, break down the topic into smaller pieces of information. This way, you can assign each piece to a student and let them work individually before teaching their classmates what they've found.

Example: History jigsaw – Students are given one aspect of an event, read books, research, watch video clips about the event, and then chronologically a story is told when shared with others.

PROCESS OF DESIGNING EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES



Research: Prepare your design. What are the topics and subtopics? List references to educational and scientific research findings. What are the needs of the group you wish to target? Carry out a survey or questionnaire to find out more about your target group. Collect information such as motivational factors, behaviour patterns, current knowledge, needs, learning styles, barriers etc.

Aims and Objectives: What do you wish to teach others? What skills will participants learn? Name the goals individually and explain how they can be used to measure educational and learner success and progress. Create the curriculum and a learner's profile to summarise their responsibilities, skills, educational and professional experiences, technical knowledge, etc.

Decide on the approach: Decide on the instructional approach. Will the programme have videos, games, lectures, podcasts, or projects? How will it be taught? Who will teach it? Where do learning styles come into play?

Pilot programme: Time to try out your programme. Gather a small group to evaluate your programme. Run your programme fully, or just a section of it, asking participants to fill out a post-evaluation survey, or conduct short interviews to gather participant comments. What did they learn? What could have been done better?

Evaluation: Final step. Using the pilot programme, how can your educational programme be improved? What can you add or take away? Did you meet participant need? Were the instructions or goals clear? Conduct surveys regarding the preview, monitoring, engagement, and review of the programme. You can create a reflection report on the educational design process you wish. The most important questions: Were the learning goals achieved? (did the learners learn?), and did they enjoy the programme? (were they engaged and interested?).

ADDIE Model

The ADDIE model is a Tool or technique often used when in the process of designing educational programmes. It lays out aspects which must be considered when creating a new programme or developing on an existing one. It includes the following steps:

- 1 Analyse:** Describe the situation or need of the participants. Include aims, goals, and educational objectives. What are the requirements, skills, needs of the participants?
- 2 Design:** After identifying the learning objectives, explain in depth how they will be achieved. What will you specifically teach?
- 3 Develop:** The main body of the programme – what tools, techniques, and strategies will you use to educate the learners? How will you develop your instructions in a way that will be coherent and inclusive for participants?
- 4 Implement:** Carry out a pilot study of your programme. Try out scenarios and modules with students.
- 5 Evaluate:** Measure the success of the achievement of learning objectives. Did the students learn efficiently? What did they enjoy? What did they struggle with? What needs changing? How can you develop your instructions? Is the delivery suitable for everyone – the key evaluation point when working with disadvantaged adults! – ask for feedback and ideas from a diverse range of groups, then make the necessary changes.

