

Being a Teaching Assistant Enhances Skill & Knowledge Level

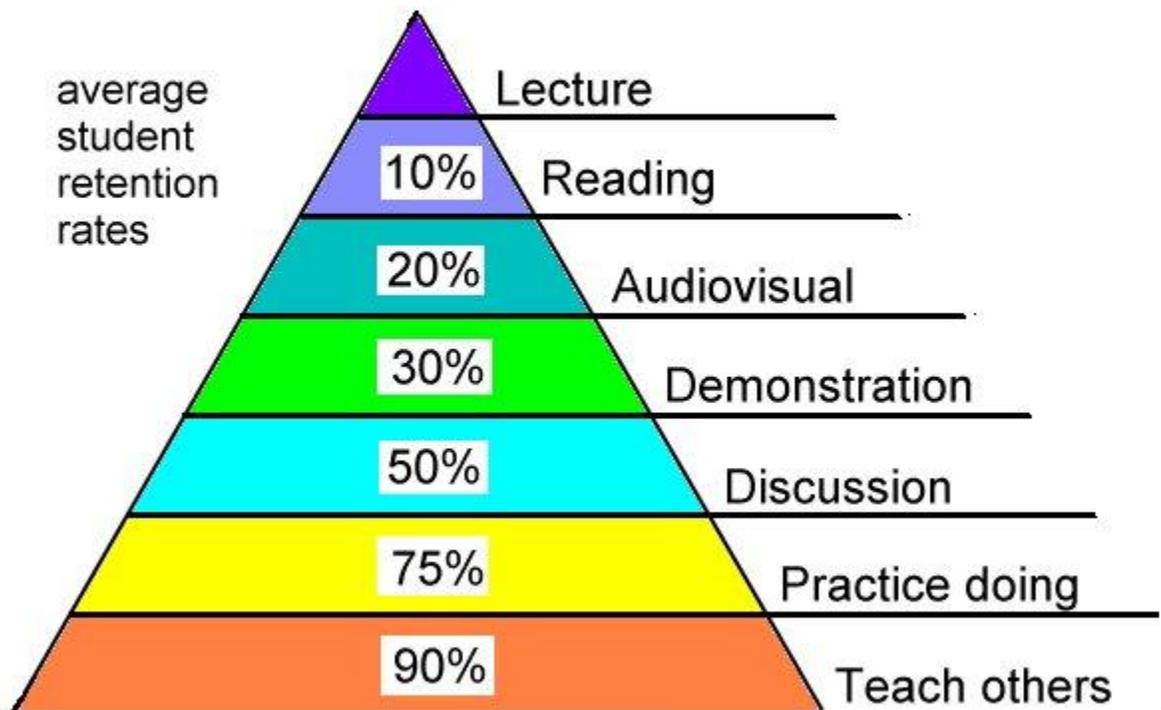
Why Repeating Seminars Makes You a Better Therapist...
and why being a Teaching Assistant Makes you an Even Better Therapist.

The goal of the Barral Institute is to help therapists become the best therapist they can be. In 2013, Alain Croibier shared with the Barral Institute Faculty that Teaching = Learning.



This is congruent with The Learning Pyramid which was developed way back in the 1960s by the NTL (National Training Labs) Institute in Bethel, Maine. To summarize the numbers (which sometimes get cited differently) learners retain approximately:

Learning Pyramid



Source: National Training Laboratories, Bethel, Maine

In written words, it basically says you retain only:

- 5% of what you learn when you've learned from lecture.
- 10% of what you learn when you've learned from reading.
- 20% of what you learn from audio-visual.
- 30% of what you learn when you see a demonstration.
- 50% of what you learn when engaged in a group discussion.
- 75% of what you learn when you practice what you learned.
- 90% of what you learn when you teach someone else.

Our classes usually have a series of **lectures (5% retention)**, which include **reading (10% retention)** (studyguide, powerpoint and pre-req reading) and **audio visual (20% retention)** (powerpoint, flipcharts, etc.) These are followed by **demonstration (30% retention)** and hands on **practice (75% retention.)** When you include the Question and Answers we have interspersed in the classes (**engaging group discussion 50%**), we have the first 6 levels of the learning pyramid. We complete the pyramid (**teach or teach assist 90%**).

So why do you retain 90% when you teach someone else? When you implement or teach, you instantly make mistakes. As soon as you run into difficulty and start to make mistakes, you have to learn how to correct the mistake. This forces your brain to concentrate.

But surely your brain is concentrating in a lecture or while reading? It is, but it's not making any mistakes. What your brain hears or sees is simply an abstract concept. And no matter how clearly the steps are outlined, your brain does not retain a large amount of the information. There are two reasons why.

Reason 1: Your brain gets stuck at the first obstacle.

To prove this, pick up a book and read it for about 10 minutes. Now go back and re-read it, and you'll find you've missed a few of the concepts in just the first few minutes. It's hard to believe, but as you keep reading the same chapter over and over, you'll find more things that you've missed.

This is because the brain gets stuck at the first new concept or obstacle. It stops and tries to apply the concept but struggles to do so. But you continue to read the book. The brain got stuck at the first point, but more points keep coming.

Reason 2: Your brain needs to make the mistake first hand

No matter how good the explanation, you will not get all of it right the first time. You must make the mistake. And this is because your interpretation varies from the writer or speaker. You think you've heard or read what you've heard or read. But the reality is different. You've only interpreted what they've said, and more often than not, the interpretation is not quite correct. You can only find out how much off the mark you are by trying to implement or teach the concept.

So how to work to retain 90% of what you've learned?

Write things down, discuss them, practice them, review them, over and over (**correctly!**)

Four Stages for Learning Any New Skill

The theory was developed at the Gordon Training International in the 1970s. The Four Stages of Learning provides a model for learning. It suggests that individuals are initially unaware of how little they know, or unconscious of their incompetence. As they recognize their incompetence, they consciously acquire a skill, and then consciously use that skill. Eventually, the skill can be done without consciously being thought through, and the individual is said to have unconscious competence.

Unconscious Incompetence

This is where 'you don't know what you don't know.' You do not understand or know how to do something and do not necessarily recognize the deficit. You must recognize your own incompetence, and the value of the new skill, before moving on to the next stage. You are in this stage before you have started studying a new modality.

Conscious Incompetence

In this stage you do not understand or know how to do something, but now you recognize the deficit, as well as the value of a new skill in addressing the deficit. You attend a new modality seminar, and see a whole new world of evaluation and treatment. The making of mistakes can be integral to the learning process at this stage.

Conscious Competence

You have been practicing what you learned in the seminar and are able to apply much of the information. You are able to recall things, or know where to look them up in your textbook or study guide. You understand how to do something; however, demonstrating the skill or knowledge requires concentration.

Unconscious Competence

This is the level you when you have had so much practice with a skill that it has become "second nature" and can be performed easily. As a result, the skill can be performed while executing another task. You have created strong enough cellular memories that you know and understand without having to consciously search your brain for the information. This is the level to strive for to become an excellent therapist.

The fastest way to reach Unconscious Competence is to repeat the seminars and to help teach others.