According to this model, adult learning occurs in 4 stages that follow each other.

1. *Concrete experience* occurs when learners do the task in order to learn. This experience enables learners to conceptualize information.

2. *Abstract conceptualization* occurs when learners form a mental picture of an experience. They no longer need to consult an expert source to perform a task.

3. Learners can then *manipulate and modify* the concept through further experimentation.

4. Those modifications can then be *applied again to concrete experience* and the cycle continues. Expert trades people apply their skills through this cycle.

This model fits adult learning in general, but is especially illustrative of learning for the trades. Success in the trades requires hands-on demonstration of skills in addition to working knowledge of a body of theory. Trades workers have to *both* ‘walk the walk’ and ‘talk the talk.’

Academics work in the realm of ideas. They must meet high standards of reading, writing, and defending their ideas. With the exception of some highly specialized applied sciences such as medicine or architecture, academics have to ‘talk the talk.’ It’s interesting to note that at the higher levels of specialization, hands-on demonstration of skill is required for practitioners.