

3 ways to supercharge your agile learning journey according to science

Expert Training for Government Transformation



A quick introduction from Joe...

Both in and out of work I'm fascinated by mastery - the process of getting better at things.

I've got quite an obsessive personality and I'm forever trying to learn new skills and disciplines. For years I've been trying to document what helps me learn quickly.

Knowing this, my colleague Dennis recently bought me Get Better at Anything, a new book that consolidates what science has to say about the most effective approaches to skill acquisition. What a mensch.

It's a complicated book, but the learning is extremely relevant for folks who have just completed one of our training programmes. Here are three takeaways you can apply immediately in your quest to speed up your onward learning journey.



Tip #1 - Start by copying

Our training sets out how we approach specific challenges people face on projects.

For instance, in our [agile training](#) we walk people through how we facilitate sprint ceremonies in a way that includes everyone in shaping the future and owning the work.

Our approach is one of many, but it's tempting when you know the basics to immediately start coming up with your own approaches. According to the science, this isn't the best strategy.

Early on in your learning journey, it's more effective to copy approaches that already work exactly. Once you've done this a bunch of times you start to understand why these approaches work and can start putting your own spin on them.

As the saying goes, "you can't bend the rules until you know them". For any art enthusiasts reading, the copying approach explains the explosion of incredible artists during Renaissance period.



Tip 2# - Success is the best teacher

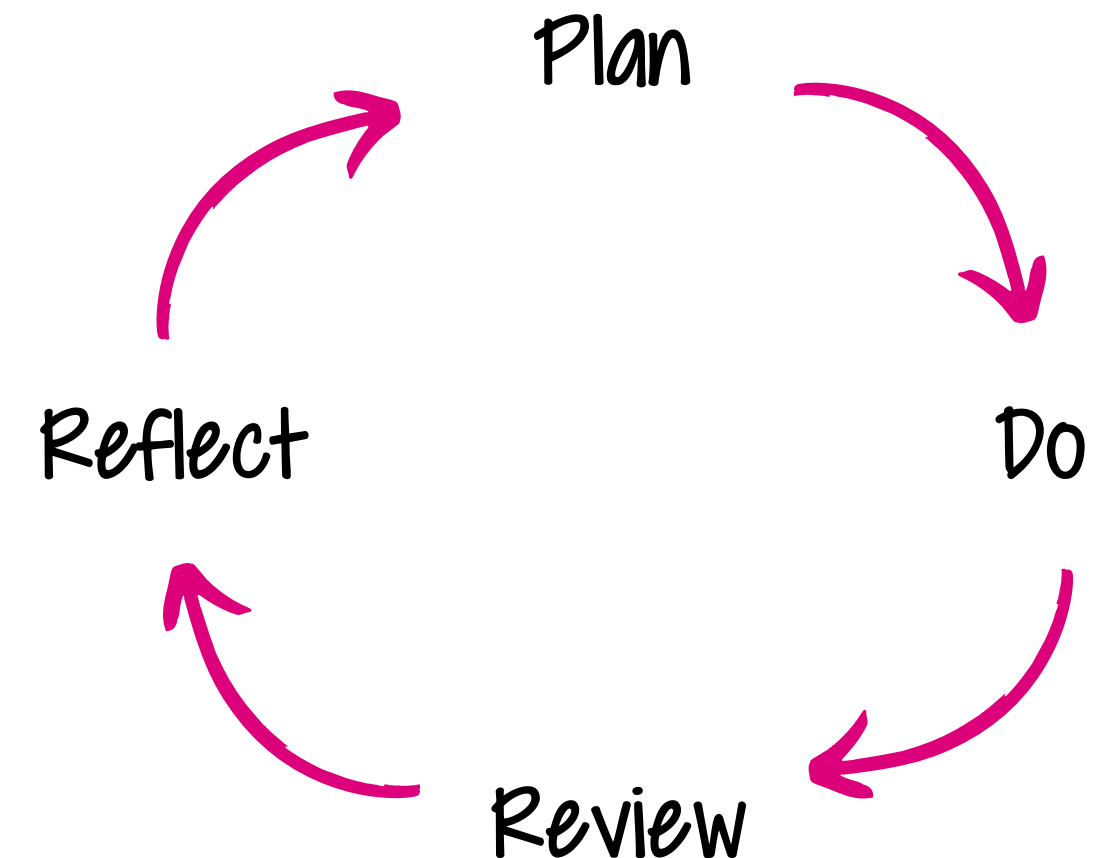
Confidence in applying new ways of working comes from competence.

One stand out message from the book for me was the need to create opportunities for us to succeed in a small way early on in the process.

"Success raises mastery expectations and repeated failures lower them, particularly if they occur early in the course of events".

After finishing our training, one approach you could test is to pick one component of the learning that you feel most confident in testing out and do so in a safe environment.

Your success will increase your confidence in your abilities and reduce the chances of you throwing in the towel too soon.



3# - Fears fade with exposure

Getting better at a skill that needs to be acted out in front of others comes with apprehension. This is logical, because a certain amount of risk is unavoidable.

Let's imagine you've started an agile project and you've got your first big show. This can be a nerve-racking experience.

Many people's natural instinct is to avoid the discomfort and revert back to what they know and feel comfortable with.

The good news is that with repeated exposure, these fears fade. And as your successes begin to stack up, a previously self-reinforcing pattern of anxiety and avoidance can be replaced with confidence and enthusiasm.

