

SNAPSHOT

# Introducing the Teach ME Model into Your Classroom

A Practical Guide to Teaching in the Fourth Industrial Revolution

BY ARMAND DOUCET



## The Fourth Industrial Revolution Classroom

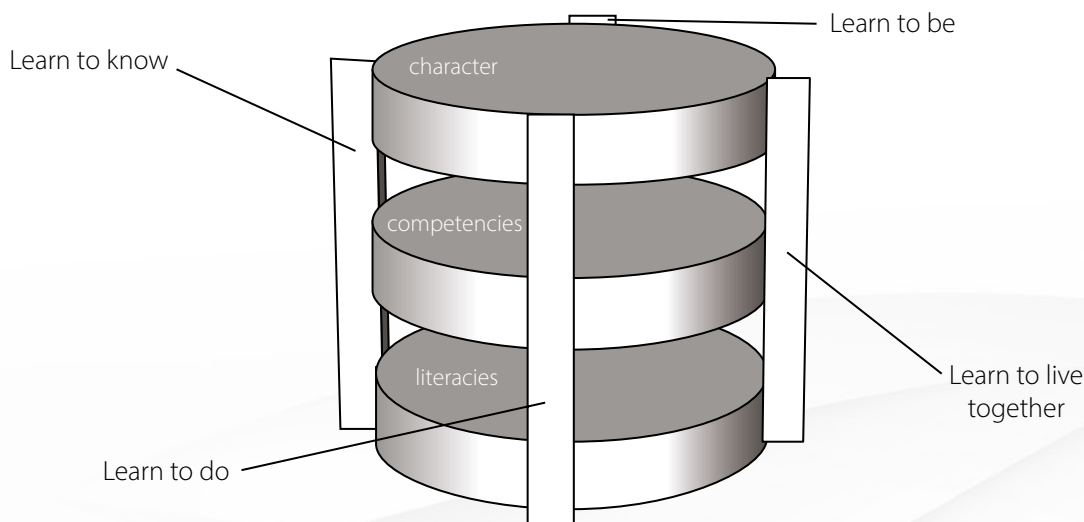
Training students to be adaptable learners in this era of economic, social, environmental and technological transition will require a different set of teaching and assessment methods. To accomplish this, teachers must change how they teach and interact with students, abandoning their traditional role as classroom leader. Instead, they should adopt the mantle of guide and chief designer of a classroom culture focused on three foundational skills – literacy, competency and character.

Key to accomplishing this professional transition, teachers will need to create personalized learning pathways for each student that recognize their unique abilities and challenges. This will require teachers to invest more one-on-one time in the first few weeks of the school year to get to know each student – an important step not only for building trust, but also for ensuring greater equity in the classroom. As we set out to design the Fourth Industrial Revolution classrooms, teachers need to be open to evolving their professional practice.

This Snapshot provides an overview of the Teach ME model, a practical blueprint for introducing new teaching methods into your classroom. It has been adapted from my book, *Teaching in the Fourth Industrial Revolution: Standing at the Precipice* (Routledge 2018), which I co-authored with my fellow Global Teacher Prize finalists Jelmer Evers, Elisa Guerra, Dr. Nadia Lopez, Michael Soskil and Koen Timmers.

## The Teach ME Model

I believe that teachers have always taught competencies and character. Many of us could learn from early childhood and guidance teachers, who assess and monitor student progress. Teachers of older students who are focused on content may not realize they are also developing competencies and character. I propose the Teach ME model, which combines the WEF's three foundations – literacies, competencies and character – with UNESCO's four pillars (4Ls): learning to know, learning to do, learning to be and learning to live together.



The Teach ME model can be the foundation to design your curriculum outcomes to address the whole child. This way when you are choosing to assess from projects you can also do formative assessment for character, competencies or the 4Ls. The Teach ME model will help teachers design classrooms to prepare students for a world in which they will work and live among people of diverse cultural, religious and racial origins who may hold different worldviews. The Teach ME model provides teachers with a holistic approach to design student development, learning and assessment.

## Introducing Teach ME into the Classroom

My practical guide to designing for the Teach ME model is a three-pronged approach that includes the creation of Culture, Design and Passion Projects for the classroom.

### Culture

To begin, we must create the right culture for growth and design thinking, which builds resiliency of character and the competencies of creativity, entrepreneurship and innovation. If teachers believe that their role is to foster personal development for each student, not dictate curriculum standards, and are happy to relinquish some control, they can make my practical guide work. The goal of this culture change is to encourage students to embrace the problems they face instead of fearing them. We use three actions to create the culture:

#### *Action 1 – Go Slow to Go Fast*

Building relationships sits at the heart of my classroom work, especially in the first 3 weeks of the school year when it is done deliberately and formally. My students share their passions, likes, dislikes and issues in order to start building relationships. For instance, we use Multiple Intelligences and Meyers-Briggs Personality Traits tests to begin to open up conversations with students about their learning processes. Mini-challenges are the order of the day, and I draw a lot of my inspiration from the summer camp icebreakers of my youth, such as the Lava Walk, egg drop challenge, paper to ceiling challenge, cup building contest and other easily set-up challenges. We drastically reduce curriculum coverage for the first 3 weeks, hence the name of this first action item Go Slow to Go Fast. The important part for teachers is to learn how each student reacts to these challenges, where they are in their social and emotional learning (SEL), who takes the lead, who follows, how they brainstorm and how they communicate. Often, divergent thinking, great ideas and creativity in collaboration are stifled at the brainstorming stages because of poor communication skills.

#### *Action 2 – Challenging Paradigms*

In Weeks 3 through 7 students are overloaded in different ways. At this point in the year, my students are being taught in one of two ways. Either they are being taught using a diversified pedagogy including old and new methods depending on their needs, or the students are fully engaged in the proposal/research phase of their Passion Projects, which I consider a curriculum extension. The students are purposely overloaded with tight deadlines to challenge their belief

that they need to have the right answer. My goal is to get them to develop a more fluid, iterative approach to learning. At first, this can be traumatizing for high school students who already have a decade of being taught that the goal is a single, correct answer and are worried that failure will negatively impact their ability to get into the post-secondary institution of their choice. Students' character and competencies are largely challenged in this period, and they quickly realize that they are not confident in many of them. To help me understand what all my students are thinking, I encourage them to create video reflections in their digital portfolios, which allow me to monitor their development outside the time constraints of the school day. Often, issues arise in the video reflections that require both mini formal and informal conferences. If you know your students well and you do Go Slow to Go Fast properly, students will trust you to help them move forward.

### ***Action 3 – Embrace the Problem***

This action combines classroom growth and design thinking with the ability to self-reflect. Competencies and character development is integrated with the curriculum standards touching on the 4Ls. I become a guide in many settings. When I lecture, it is usually limited to the occasional mini-lesson, but each classroom is different depending on the needs of the students at that time. The diversified pedagogy in the classroom is often presented as mini-challenges for individuals or groups depending on what we are doing.

## **Design**

The design of my high school modern history course is built with competencies and character development fully integrated with the delivery of curriculum standards (literacies) using a flexible structure. To accomplish this, I must be able to pivot quickly based on how students are moving through the content and skills, the state of their Passion Projects (see below) and the emerging needs related to these projects. I am less involved in their projects once students embrace the problems and are comfortable self-reflecting and networking. The conversations become about “how to” instead of “what am I doing wrong?” This aspect of the class is often misunderstood and misinterpreted in non-education circles. This type of student-centered approach pushes the development of civic and global literacies by giving them democratic solutions and making students active participants in their learning. Using our Teach ME model, teachers can plan to teach for the whole class or for individual students personalizing their approach to each student. In order to avoid overwhelming students, it is helpful to work with your colleagues in the school to address student needs and avoid the risk of them burning out.

## **Passion Projects**

The purpose of a Passion Project is threefold:

- To personalize student learning
- To empower students to chase their passions in a design thinking and growth mindset
- To further develop competencies and character

These three components are the most important factors required to engage students' personal growth. Passion Projects become play as students take complete ownership of their learning.

Each project is set up using the design process which includes Discovery, Interpretation, Ideation, Experimentation and Evolution in a loop format; students in my class prototype the three aspects of the project at least three times. It starts with the teacher finding out about student passions and talking with students to discover possible ideas. Once they are ready, students create a 3-minute proposal/elevator pitch in their chosen medium. The three prototypes and final product consist of an oral component based on storytelling, a creative piece (think museum piece) and an academic thesis.

Students take ownership of their Passion Projects, which means teachers must relinquish an aspect of the traditional teaching toolkit: how students are evaluated. If the goal is to have competencies and character developed as well as curriculum standards, you need to co-construct with students rubrics for the Passion Projects. Students will develop expertise in content and will be given complete latitude in their presentations. Also, they are given any medium to do their creative part of the project, but with some structure that changes for each student depending on the medium and student need. Students become stewards of their time, with the opportunity to negotiate different deadlines depending on their progress or situation. They network and collaborate with their peers and experts all over the world in many different subjects beyond modern history to help them with all aspects of their projects.

## About the Author

**Armand Doucet** is a visionary award-winning educator, social entrepreneur and business professional. A sought-after leader, inspirational speaker and author, he has led and collaborated with teams from around the world and across different industries to success in health, education, non-profit organizations and business. A two-time Ironman athlete, he teaches at Riverview High School.

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This snapshot has been adapted from *Teaching in the Fourth Industrial Revolution: Standing at the Precipice*

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