

# Adult Learning Andragogy Teaching Adult Learners

John P. Kemppainen, Ph.D.

University of North Florida

College of Education and Human Services

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# Principles of Adult Learning

We must make sure that people (adults) learn what we want teach them. There are many different approaches or principles (all good for the most part) that can and should be incorporated into your lessons or program design so that you can ensure your adult learners are learning what you would like them to learn. Since the 1920's – 30's, theorists like Eduard Lindeman, Cyril Houle, & Malcom Knowles, to modern day theorists like Steven Brookfield, Sharan Merriam and Rosemary Caffarella, to mention only a few, have conducted literally hundreds of research studies on “how and why” adult peruse learning or lifelong education. We will cover five basic principles in our presentation today.

# So What Do We Really Know About Adults?

Definitions of Adults.... Who are they?

- A human being after a specified age.....
- A person who is fully grown...
- A person who has reached the age of majority...
- Having attained full size and strength....
- A human being that has reached sexual maturity...
- Someone who is independent, self-sufficient, & responsible...

However, we do have some contradictions. One may be of legal age to be an adult, yet they have not matured, are not independent, self-sufficient nor responsible.

And then we have individuals who have assumed great responsibilities, but are not yet considered adults...legally....

# Eduard Lindeman

Lindeman's key assumptions....

1. Adults are motivated to learn as they experience needs and interests that learning will satisfy.
2. Adults' orientation to learning is life-centered.
3. Experience is the richest source for adult's learning.
4. Adults have a deep need to be self-directing.
5. Individual differences among people increase with age.

Lindeman's vision for education was not bound by classrooms and formal curricula. He viewed education as life. The whole of life is learning, therefore education can have no ending

# Eduard Lindeman (Continued)

Lindeman felt our academic system to be in reverse order with subjects and teachers constituting the starting point and students secondary.

In conventional education the student is required to adjust to an established curriculum; in adult education the curriculum is built around the students' needs and interests. He believed:

- Education should be coterminous with life
- It should revolve around non-academic and non-vocational ideas
- It should start with the lives of the learners
- It should look to the learner's own experience as its most valuable resource

# Cyril Houle

## 1913 - 1958

- Born in Sarasota, Florida in 1913
- Received both his bachelor's and master's degrees in Education from the University of Florida in the early 1930's.
- Earned his Ph.D. from the University of Chicago (Education) in 1940.
- Wrote and published numerous books on Education including "The Inquiring Mind".. which focused most on the Adult Learner.

# Cyril Houle (Continued)

The text, “The Inquiring Mind” was based upon his research while at the University of Chicago where he focused on “Motivational Research”.

What were the motivating factors behind adults seeking to advance their knowledge and education?

Although his sample population was considered small by many research standards... it was considered to be statistically significant.

And he identified three major reasons and placed them into three different categories. These three included: 1. Goal Oriented; 2. Learning Oriented; 3. Activity Oriented.

# Cyril Houle Typology

## Goal Oriented:

Houle found out that a large percentage of those who returned to further their education were goal oriented... in other words they;

1. Were pursuing a higher position in life... like seeking a promotion.
2. They wanted to be able to make more money and needed the additional skills, training or education to make the money.
3. They wanted to maintain a certain social status or lifestyle within their community.
4. They wanted to be able to help their families or community achieve a better lifestyle.
5. This accounted for approximately 40% of those in the study.

# Cyril Houle

## Learning Oriented...

Here Houle identified these adult learner as seeking out learning opportunities just for the sake of learning something new.

1. There was no pressure from any outside entity to learn something new.
2. They had become acculturated throughout their life to seek out new learning opportunities to be knowledgeable.
3. This new knowledge would help them or support them in whatever their chosen careers might be.
4. An individual learns to play a musical instrument because they choose to do so.. Not because they want to become a professional musician.
5. Again, Houle found that approximately 40% of those in his study identified this as a reason for their continuing their education.

# Cyril Houle

## Activity Oriented..

Here Houle identified those who sought out learning activities for the social aspect of it.

1. They enjoyed with others and by studying or learning together it became socially pleasing.
2. Learning to play golf, or tennis, or some other type of sport or activity made it possible to have those enjoyable moments that add to our quality of life.
3. Houle found that approximately 20% of those in the study identified this as their primary reason for pursuing further learning.

# Malcolm Knowles

- Malcolm Shepherd Knowles (1913-1997)
- Harvard graduate, B.A. 1934
- Executive Director, Adult Education Association of USA 1951
- University of Chicago, M.A. 1959, PhD 1960
- Student of Cyril Houle

# Malcolm Knowles

- Popularized the term andragogy as comprehensive theory of AE
- Wrote the first major accounts of informal adult education and the history of adult education in USA
- Wrote many works on self-direction and group dynamics
- Charted the development of AE movement in USA—book form
- Developed first statement of informal AE practice

# Malcolm Knowles

Adult Learning Theory..... Andragogy..

- Adults need to know why they are learning something
- Adults have life experiences to be used as ongoing resources
- Adults use a hands-on problem-solving approach to learning
- Adults desire to apply new knowledge and skills immediately
- Adults internalize the motivation to learn as they mature

# Stephen Brookfield

- Born in Liverpool, England in 1949
- Received Honorary Doctorate from the University System of New Hampshire in 1991
- Received Honorary Doctorate from Concordia University in St. Paul, Minnesota in 2003
- Currently serving as a Distinguished Professor at St. Thomas University in Minneapolis, Minnesota.
- Previously served as a Professor of Adult and Continuing Education and Columbia University and a Visiting Professor at Harvard.

# Theoretical Frameworks for Understanding the Field.... Brookfield

Conditions that best foster learning, sequencing instructional activities in certain ways, and presenting ourselves as teachers at the start of a course have practical actions and theoretical dimensions. They meet the three conditions for theoretical frameworks and understanding..

1. They arise out of a comparative analysis. That is we ask someone, like a colleague how they deal with certain situations... or we consult a text or reference book and.. We think about our own past experiences.
2. These actions become predictive. We do them because we believe that they will have certain consequences making them more understandable, keeping the energy high and /or improving the students' abilities to see connections between the new knowledge they are seeking and that what they already know..
3. We extend our explanation of one event to cover other situations that seem similar. We assume that what seemed to work for one student in the class will work for the others as well.

# Theoretical Frameworks for Understanding the Field.... Brookfield

Critical Reflection now moves us closer to try to understand what people need to learn to oppose the social and economic forces that attempt to turn us into privatized individuals connected automatically via cyber space. So Brookfield examines some of these theories..

- Africentrism draws on African-centered values and traditions to argue that the African American learners and educators need to work in ways shaped by the African values and traditions rather than follow the Eurocentric norm. What this has done is promote efforts in racially based scholarship of the awareness and of the importance of these racially based ways of knowing.
- Queer Theory focuses enjoining adult educators to consider how people constantly learn to construct, dismantle, and reconstruct sexual identity and how they understand and practice desire.

# Theoretical Frameworks for Understanding the Field.... Brookfield

- Critical Theory provides for ways people learn to communicate and in particular to come to agreement. Habermas posits the ideal speech situation which is to form a dialogue where all relevant knowledge is considered and where all strive to understand each others points of view.
- Critical Race Theory assumes that a state of permanent inequity has become accepted as the norm in the U.S..
- Feminist Theory places women's concerns and the centrality of gender at the forefront of analysis and undertakes a power of analysis of gender-based inequality across personal and social relationships, work, politics, and ideologies of sexuality.
- Postmodernism appears as a more or less "intellectual attitude" on a project rather than a fixed theoretical take on the world. The big ideas come in to play such as democracy, progress, equality and rationality.

# Theoretical Frameworks for Understanding the Field.... Brookfield

- Transformational Learning has risen from within the field of adult education itself building on the work of Mezirow. Here, Mezirow posits that life experiences develops a sense of assumptions or meanings that are increasingly comprehensive and discriminating. It is these experiences then that guide us to new or better understandings.
- As we consider how to assist learners to exert agency and realize collective interests in our complex world where people are increasingly living their lives in self-protected cyber silos and which the economic, social, and political forces are seen as being far removed from daily influence, these theoretical frameworks take on an even greater importance.

# Stephen Brookfield

## Characteristics of Adult Learners

Brookfield identifies 6 different Characteristics of Adult Learners

1. Adult Learners are not beginners, but are in a continuing process of growth
2. They bring with them a unique package of experience and values.
3. They come to education with intentions.
4. They bring expectation about the learning process.
5. They have competing interests, the realities of their lives.
6. They already have their own set pattern of learning.

# Levine

## Characteristics & Suggestions

Levin also listed 6 different characteristics of adult learners along with suggestions in for teaching..

The adult learner is primarily independent/self-directed in what he/she learns.

1. Try not to treat the adult like a child. Introduce yourself and have them introduce themselves.
2. Have name tags if possible.. Remember to call each learner by their name.
3. Allow time for discussion
4. Don't assume that you're the only one with the answers, encourage others in the class who know the answers to contribute
5. Learning does not ONLY occur in class. Have handouts and materials that you provide during your class that can help adults continue to learn on their own outside of class.
6. When adults are learning at their own pace, they can use the speed or rate of learning that best fits their own learning style. Remember, different learners learn at different rates.

# Levine

Adult Learners have considerable experience to draw upon.

1. Provide opportunities for the adult learners to work together and share their ideas/experiences with each other in small groups.
2. When information is presented, ask the adults what experiences they have had in the past that relates to the topic.
3. Ask the adult learners to use their own personal experiences to help provide possible solutions to questions and to what is presented.
4. Because each learner's experience is unique, it may be a barrier to further learning. Adults who have not had positive learning experiences may be hesitant to try again.
5. Try to understand the experiences of your learners. Avoid bad experiences and try to build on the good experiences.

# Levine

The adult learner is most apt to be interested in topics that relate to the developmental stage of his/her life.

1. Don't assume that young adults and older adults are interested in the same thing.
2. When you organize groups for small group discussions, try to organize them according to the stage of life adults who are beginning their career in one group, those in mid-career in another group, and those who are well established in another group.
3. Provide opportunities for the learners to talk about why an idea/concept is or is not important to them.
4. Try to hear from everyone in the group, not just the more vocal ones.
5. An adult who is in transition from one developmental stage to another is more apt to want to learn than an adult who is at a stable period in life.
6. Learning is an excellent way to bring about change in one's life.

# Levine

Adult learners are most interested in information and ideas that solve problems that they are presently faced with.

1. Try to make your lessons or presentations problem-focused rather than just information-focused.
2. Start your class or lesson by identifying the problem(s) that you will be helping the learners to solve.
3. Allow an opportunity for the learners to add their own problems to those you have proposed.
4. Provide time for questions from the adults and urge them to describe their own specific situation and unique problems that each for them face.
5. Try to focus your teaching (facilitating) on responding to the problems you have identified.
6. Work to create interaction opportunities during the presentation which will allow the adult learners to respond.

# Levine

The adult learner is most interested in information that can be applied immediately.

1. Try to focus on ideas the adults can put to immediate use after the teaching session is over.
2. Ask the adults how they will be using, making application of, the ideas and information presented.
3. If they are not able to do so, find out why.
4. The information may not be applicable to them.
5. They may not be aware of the opportunities they have.

# Levine

The adult learner is motivated from within him/herself.

1. Offering rewards for learning does not work very well with adult learners.
2. You must appeal to the learner at the adult level.
3. Try to find out what the adult places value on and recognize these things.
4. Let the adults know that you are concerned with and/or understand those things he/she values.
5. And then really be concerned.

# Facilitating Adult Learning

## Lola Vandenberg , Ph.D.

How to teach so that people learn.

There is a difference between “Teaching” and “Learning”. Often times, as educators we find that the two foci do not necessarily go hand-in-hand. Therefore, we need to become facilitators of learning.

It is our job to facilitate learning, to do what we can to make sure our learners learn what we want them to learn.

Incorporating five basic principles into your program design can ensure that your learners are ready to learn.

These principles are based upon years of research in the field of adult education.

# Personal Benefit

Adult learners must be able to see personal benefit of what they are learning and how it satisfies a need they have. They will be motivated to learn if.....

- It solves or avoids a problem for them;
- It provides an opportunity for them or increases their status;
- It leads to professional and/or personal growth.

Think of your own personal educational achievements. What were the reasons you all pursued your current degrees? And how many of you would be interested in continuing learning in your field.. Or even in another field?

# Experience

When considering our adult learners in our class or program, we must keep in mind that these learners come to each class or learning event with a unique background and experience. They are motivated to learn if the learning.....

- Involves them in sharing what they know;
- Builds upon what they know;
- Validates their prior knowledge or expertise.

# Self-Direction

Let's not forget that the adult learner is "self-directed". Therefore they must have some control over what they are learning. In this respect, they are motivated to learn if....

- They can take charge of their learning and make decisions about content and process;
- They can contribute to the learning of their co-learners;
- They can have some degree of independence in the learning process.

# Application and Action

Adults are normally busy people. Therefore the adult learner is going to be busy (they come into the learning situation with baggage), they are practical, and they learn by doing. Research has found that they learn best when.....

- There is an immediate application for the learning;
- They participate actively in the learning process;
- They can practice or test new knowledge before leaving class or a learning session.

# Learning Styles

It goes without saying that we all have different learning styles. Adults therefore, approach learning in a variety of different ways, from hands-on and moving... to using their eyes, ears and/or logic or establish and anchor these new skills and knowledge. Adults learn best when....

- The learning taps into a mix of learning styles that fit their preferences and stimulates their “multiple intelligences”;
- Multiple means are used to present and represent the materials being learned.

# Class Exercise

## Multiple Intelligences

Take a few minutes and answer the questions on the brief Multiple Intelligence quiz...

- Share with your neighbors something about you and at least one of your preferred learning styles... Do you agree with this? Why or Why not. Take turns in your group... Sharing...
- Now you tell me... why is this important?

# Techniques that May be Used for Facilitating Learning

There are many ways that we can help learners retain what we teach. For instance.. If you are lecturing, with or without a power point, you might stop every 15 – 30 minutes or so, and engage the learners in an activity to reinforce the learning. Or, there may be topics in which the learners already know some of what you are planning to teach...you might brainstorm with them first... with you filling in the blanks afterwards. When we look at these participatory methods.. We should focus on perhaps, five participatory processes. Reflecting, summarizing, sharing knowledge, teaching and receiving feedback.

# Reflect

- We enhance learning if we are given a chance to reflect, review, and personally relate to the material and how we might apply it.
- We might give the learners a log or journal and then use a variety of ways to have participants stop and reflect periodically for a few minutes on what they've learned and how it might be used.
- After the reflection time... have them volunteer to share, share in small groups, or not share..

# Reflect (Examples)

- *Very Important... Write three things you have just learned... now put a star by the most important...*
- *Three Applications... Write three ways you can use or apply what you've just learned. Circle the one you plan to do first.*
- *One Sentence... Write one sentence explaining what you learned in the last \_\_\_\_\_ minutes.*
- *One Question... Write one question that you have about what you've heard.*
- *Wow/How About... On a sticky note, write "WOW" ... something you learned that was important to you. On another sticky note, write "HOW ABOUT?" question or other idea you might have. Post your notes on two flip charts you have labeled WOW and HOW ABOUT. Build some time to debrief the two flip charts.*
- *Highlights... Spend the next few minutes reading and reviewing the notes and other information.*

# Summarize

Have the learners summarize, in a sentence or two, the most important things they have just learned. This is an excellent way to have them interact with the content and fix it in their minds.

So how might we summarize what they have learned in a meaningful but enjoyable way..

- Best Summaries... on index cards, each learner prepares a summary of the main points at the end of a segment or topic. On the opposite side of the card have them put a code or identifying pin. Teams of 4-5 collect the cards and exchange them with another team. The each team selects the best summary from the set of cards they were given. Each team reads the summary to the whole group. Also read the identifying pin so the author can be congratulated.

# Essence

Explain this activity at the beginning of the presentation to spark a competitive spirit and motivate the learners to pay close attention. Following the presentation, divide the group into teams of 4-5. There are four rounds.

1. Tell them to create a 32 word summary of what they have just learned. Have each group read their summary, then the learners (participants) vote for the best by raising their hands. There are two rules: They can only vote once, and they can't vote for their own team's summary.
2. Repeat the process but now the summary must be only 16 words.
3. Repeat the process but now the summary must only be 8 words.
4. Repeat the process for a 4 word summary and finally...
5. Repeat the process for a 2 word summary..

# Superlatives

After a presentation, ask your learners to identify the most important piece of information or concept that you presented. Give them time to think and jot down an idea. Ask for responses. Then ask them to identify the most \_\_\_\_\_ thing you presented and share that with a partner or in their group. Take a few responses from the whole group. Continue the process, substituting superlatives in the blank. Possible superlatives could include:

Useful, controversial, difficult to understand, surprising, universal, obvious, etc.

# Thirty-Five

After a presentation, distribute index cards to the learners. Give them 2 minutes to write one sentence that summarizes an important idea they have learned. Have them stand up and exchange their card, blank side up, with someone else.

They should continue exchanging cards with others for about 20 seconds. At your signal have them find a partner and read each other the sentence on their cards.

Tell them they have 7 “merit points” to distribute between their two cards (no fractions or negative numbers).

They should write the allotted number on the blank side of the card, at the top.

Repeat the process – exchange cards for 20 seconds, find a new partner, read the sentence, assign points – four more times.

Ask them to return to their seats and add up the points for the card they have.

The highest possible score is 35. Last comes the countdown to the winning sentence.

Start counting down from 35. When a learner hears the number that is the total for the card they have, he or she should stand up and read the card.

Do this for between 5 – 10 cards. You can invite the learners to make brief comments. You can also offer to type the cards and distribute them to the learners as a later date.

# Open and Closed

At the end of a lesson or presentation, have each learner write a closed-ended question and an open-ended question on index cards. Warn them ahead of time that you will ask them to do this so they will pay close attention and take good notes. For round one, have them pair up and ask each other their closed questions. Have them switch partners 4 or 5 times. For round two, have them get into triads and ask each other open questions.

# Picture Summary

Divide the learners into small groups and give each one a flip chart or a flip chart sheet. Their task is to design a poster that summarizes the key points they have learned. There are 4 rules:

1. Page limit is one sheet of paper
2. Only pictures can be used, which includes graphics, symbols, icons, or diagrams but NOT words, letters or numbers.
3. Joint effort, meaning that ALL team members must contribute
4. Time limit... they have five minutes.

# Press Conference

Give the outline of your presentation (lesson) to the learners (participants) as well as an overview of key objectives and major topics. Divide the learners into small groups, using the same number of groups as topics you will be covering. Give each group a number of index cards, equal to the number of topics your lesson will be covering. Have the groups write one question for each topic to be covered. They should label each card with the topic OR use a different color card for each topic. Collect all cards; then redistribute them, giving all the cards of one topic or color to teach group. Have the groups take turns grilling you with their questions, as in a press conference. Be sure to ask participants to help you answer the questions they can.

# EG (Example) Hunt

After each presentation or lesson or a portion of the lesson, have small groups of learners brainstorm and come up with specific examples of a principle, concept or skill.

Have each group share their example in the large group.

# TEACH

We learn best what we have to teach. Here are some ideas for engaging the learners in teaching.

1. Pair share – Have learners take a minute to tell a partner what they've learned and how they will use it.
2. Triad Teaching – Divide the learners into threes and have each person, either verbally or with symbols, icons or drawings, teach each other(s) something they have learned.
3. Showtime – Divide participants into small groups and assign each a portion of the material that has been presented. Have each group prepare and give a short, creative, playful presentation on their topic.

# Receive Feedback

Adult Learners enjoy feedback on what they have learned. Fun ways to self-test what they have learned motivates and empowers them to take more active control of their learning.

1. Bingo
2. Jeopardy
3. Crosswords
4. Team Quiz

# Bingo

In advance, create at least 25 questions that cover the material you will be presenting. In creating the questions, ask yourself: *If they can only take away 25 things from what I presented, what would I want to be?* Create a one-page 5X5 matrix, a grid with 25 boxes.

Put a one-word or short-phrase answer to each of your questions in each of the boxes. Either at the end at intervals during your presentation, ask one or more of the 25 questions.

Have the learners find the answer cards either individually or in pairs or teams. Tell them that as soon as the individual or team thinks they have the right answer, they should stand up.

The first to stand gets to share their answer. If they are correct, they get to cross off an box on their sheet. If wrong, the next one standing gets to give an answer. Continue until someone gets BINGO or until you've gone through all the questions and answers.

# Jeopardy: Before the Training

Think of four or five categories that you would want participants to know about.

Create questions on the most important topics in those categories.

Write each category on a 5 X 7 or 8 X 11 card or sheet of paper.

Assign a point/monetary value to each question.

Write this on the back of the card. Post the categories on a board or wall.

Post the questions with point/monetary value side up so participants can choose a point value.

Finally, choose one special question for the final round. This should be the one thing you want the learners to take away from your lesson.

# Jeopardy: To Play the Game

**To play the game** – Divide the group (class) into teams. Have each group or team choose a number or roll a dice to see who goes first.

Each group chooses a category and point value.

Turn the card over, read the question, and then they try to answer it. The group may confer for a determined amount of time (30 seconds) before giving their answer.

If they answer correctly, they earn the allotted points.

Keep a point list on a flip chart visible to everyone.

Once a team has answered a question, move on to the next team until all the questions are answered.

# Jeopardy: For the Final Round

**For the final round --** Have groups wager a point value for final jeopardy and write these down.

Read the final jeopardy question to the groups. Have them write down their answers in a specified amount of time.

Then have each group read their answers and reveal their point values.

Add or subtract them for their teams' scores.

The group with the most points wins the game. (The groups could be given prizes to help emphasize the learning points.)

# Crosswords

Create a crossword puzzle with clues that test understanding of the key ideas and concepts that you are presenting.

To create the puzzle using words and definitions from the content you are teaching, use the free Eclipse Crossword software available at:

<http://www.eclipsecrossword.com/tour.html> or the “Crossword Compiler” software available at <http://Crossword-complier.com> (for a fee).

Stop at periodic intervals and have pairs of learners complete as much of the puzzle as they can.

# Team Quiz

Before your presentation, tell your learners that you will be stopping periodically (about every 10 minutes) to have them, in groups of 3-5, write two questions for their fellow learners.

One should be factual and the other should be open-ended, requiring some evaluation, synthesis, or inferential thinking.

Give them 3 minutes to write the questions. Debrief by having each team, one-by-one, ask their factual questions.

Then do the open-ended questions. Teams can answer in consultation with each other.

Make sure that everyone gets a chance to answer some questions.

# Adult Learning: Andragogy, Teaching Adult Learners

Material adapted from:

Vandenberg, L. *Facilitating Adult Learning*

Bowman, S. *How to Give it so They Get it*

Knowles, M. *The Adult Learner*

Stolovitch, H.D. *Telling Ain't Training*

Tamblyn, D. *Laugh and Learn*

Vella, J. *Learning to Listen Learning to Teach*

Wlodkowski, R.J. *Enhancing Adult Motivation to Learn*