

A Philosophy of Adult Education

- Nearly 50% of all college students are already 25 years old or older (*National Center for Educational Statistics*).
- Business and industry spend between \$30 and \$40 Billion annually on education and training of adults, generating an equivalent of 2.55 million FTE's (Full Time Equivalents), the size of 65 Universities of Michigan.
- Adult learning is the largest and most rapidly growing education sector in the United States (Nell Eurich in *The Learning Industry*).

A Philosophy of Adult Education

- An educational investment in adolescents reaps dividends in the distant future (10-15 years).
- An educational investment in traditionally-aged college students reaps dividends in the near future (5-10 years).
- An educational investment in adults reaps dividends immediately!
- *What an adult learns in the classroom on Monday night can be applied in the Church, at the office, in the board room, in the home, or at the civic group on Tuesday morning.*

Andragogy vs Pedagogy

- Malcolm Knowles introduced the term *Andragogy* to North American educators in 1970. He had discovered it was first used by the German Social Sciences in 1833.
- Andragogy = “The art and science of helping adults learn.”
- Pedagogy = “The art and science of helping children learn.”

Andragogy vs Pedagogy

- The andragogical model is not an *ideology*, it is a system of alternative sets of assumptions.
- The pedagogical model *is* an ideological model which excludes the andragogical assumptions.
- The andragogical model is a system of assumptions which includes the pedagogical.

Andragogy vs Pedagogy

	Peadagogy	Andragogy
Learner	Dependent	Self-Directed
Learning Experience	Builds on Experience	Resource for Learning
Orientation to Learning	Subject Centered	Problem Centered
Motivation	External	Internal

Characteristics of Adult Learners

- Self-directedness toward goals
- Learning in relation to congruence with goals
- Problem (need) centered rather than subject centered
- Need to attach instruction to relevant application
- Stress increases desire for learning (coping response)
- Single topic has more appeal than survey

Characteristics of Adult Learners

- Adults will commit to learning when the goals and objectives are considered realistic and important to them. Application in the “real world” is important and relevant to the adult learner’s personal and professional needs.
- Adult learners need to see that the professional development learning and their day-to-day activities are related and relevant.

Characteristics of Adult Learners

- Adult learners need direct, concrete experiences in which they apply the learning in real work.
- Adult learning has ego involved. Professional development must be structured to provide support from peers and to reduce the fear of judgement during learning.

Characteristics of Adult Learners

- Adults need to receive feedback on how they are doing and the results of their efforts. Opportunities must be built into professional development activities that allow the learner to practice the learning and receive structured, helpful feedback.
- Adults need to participate in small-group activities during the learning to move them beyond understanding to application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.

Characteristics of Adult Learners

- Adult learners come to learning with a wide range of previous experiences, knowledge, self-direction, interests, and competencies. This diversity must be accommodated by planning of the learning experience.
- Transfer of learning for adults is not automatic and must be facilitated. Coaching and other kinds of follow-up support are needed to help adults transfer learning into daily practice so that it is sustained.

CREATING AN EFFECTIVE ADULT LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

- Developing an atmosphere in which adults feel both safe and challenged should be the goal.
- Any anxieties learners might have about appearing foolish or exposing themselves to failure should be eased, but they should not feel so safe that they do not question their current assumptions or are not challenged in other ways.

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CREATING AN EFFECTIVE ADULT LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

- An ideal adult learning climate has a nonthreatening, nonjudgmental atmosphere in which adults have permission for and are expected to share in the responsibility for their learning.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

- Capitalize on the first session. First impressions are frequently lasting ones.
 - The first session should create the foundation for a healthy learning partnership and set the tone for the balance of the program.
 - Consider informal furniture arrangements with chairs in a circle or around a table and allow time for introductions, including information about the instructor.
 - Assignments should be discussed at the outset. Adults do not like surprises.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

- Incorporate group work.
 - Well-designed group work can contribute to the development of a collaborative, participative learning environment in which the instructor is perceived as a partner.
 - Small group activities foster the development of positive peer relationships among learners, which frequently have a much greater influence on learning than teacher-learner relationships.

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SUGGESTIONS FOR THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

- Informal, spontaneous groups can be used for short-term activities such as brainstorming; groups can also be formed around ongoing projects.
- Formal, ongoing groups often result in stronger affiliation among members of the small group than among members of the whole class.

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SUGGESTIONS FOR THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

- Break the traditional classroom routine.
 - Deviating from the conventional practices associated with classrooms can help create an effective adult learning environment.
 - Snacks during a class break can create opportunities for interaction and break down barriers between instructors and learners.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

- Use humor.
 - Humor, which must be incorporated into regular classroom activities, can free creative capacities by providing novelty and helping learners break out of ruts.
 - Humor can also help learners see the “human” side of the instructor. For example, by laughing at their own mistakes, instructors can help learners understand that errors are a normal part of the learning process.

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

- In an essay entitled, “The Marks of a Christian College,” D. Elton Trueblood listed several practical steps by which a model Christian [institution] might be achieved. His list included the pursuit of excellence, the quality of teachers, the importance of spirituality, and finally, “ADULT EDUCATION!”

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

- Writing in 1957, Trueblood said:
 - “I predict that the day will come when a good college will have as many students thirty years old and older as those who are eighteen to twenty-two. I don’t see why not. Plato thought that a man really ought to be over thirty before he studied philosophy seriously, and maybe he was right.”