Adult learning

There are many factors/theories that influence adult learning. Malcolm Knowles " model for adult learning provides a framework for education that includes principles that value the individual's life experiences" (Hanson, 2004, p. 269). Knowles has given the term andragogy wider recognition. The term andragogy was first invented by Alexander Kapp, a German teacher, in 1833, describing the educational philosophy of Plato (Davenport, 1993). Knowles defines andragogy as the " art and science of helping adults learn" (Tan, nd). Pedagogy is defined as " the art and science of educating children and is often used as a synonym for teaching…pedagogy embodies teacher-centered education. Andragogy " refers to learner-focused education" (Conner, 2005).

According to Knowles, andragogy includes six assumptions from a psychological perspective: Readiness to Learn, Role of the Learner's Experience, Faculty Member as a Facilitator of Learning, Adult's Orientation to Learning, Learner's Self-Concept, and Learner's Need to Know (Fidishun, nd). Knowles premise of adult learning theory is that adults are " self directed, problem centered, readily adapt learned useful information," and create an environment in which to " assume responsibility for their learning" (Norton, 1998,). Knowles (1978) stated that the " ultimate purpose of all education is to help individuals develop the attitude that learning is a life-long process" (Richardson, 2005).

In adult education theory, andragogy refers to " education of adults" while pedagogy refers to " education of children" (2005). Knowles, Holton, and Swanson (1998) discuss 6 assumptions of andragogy. The first is *The Learner's Need to Know* , describes the understanding of knowing how and

why to create a valuable lesson, feedback from reflection can allow the learner to move towards new learning while realizing that learning is an ongoing process. The second is *The Learner's Self-Concept* requires a change in behavior (self-directed), developing a need for autonomy, structure for self-growth, and direct own learning. Previous learning created dependent learning which is why the focus of learner-centered is critical with adult learners. The next is *The Role of the Learner's Experience* is rich with adult experiences. " Adults want to use what they know and want to be acknowledged for having that knowledge." Self-identity, habits, and biases are defined from experiences. The fourth assumption is *A Student's Readiness to Learn* , as Knowles explained, " they experience a need to learn it in order to cope more satisfyingly with real-life tasks or problems" (1980). The next assumption is *The Student's Orientation to Learning* refers to what they are performing, solving, or learning and can be applied to their lives. The last assumption is the Student's *Motivation to Learn* requires motivators such as " internal priorities" with incentives such as " increased job satisfaction, self esteem, and quality of life." This requires adult learners to " take ownership of the learning process"

The adult learning theory is a collaborative effort; it takes initiative, a positive attitude, and taking responsibility/accountability for your own learning. " To succeed, we must unlearn our teacher-reliance...take it upon us to meet our learning needs and demand training providers to do the same. To know our demands, we must know how to process information" (Conner, 2005). Knowles says, " We must learn from everything we do; we

must exploit every experience as a learning experience. Every institution and every person we have access to become a resource.

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