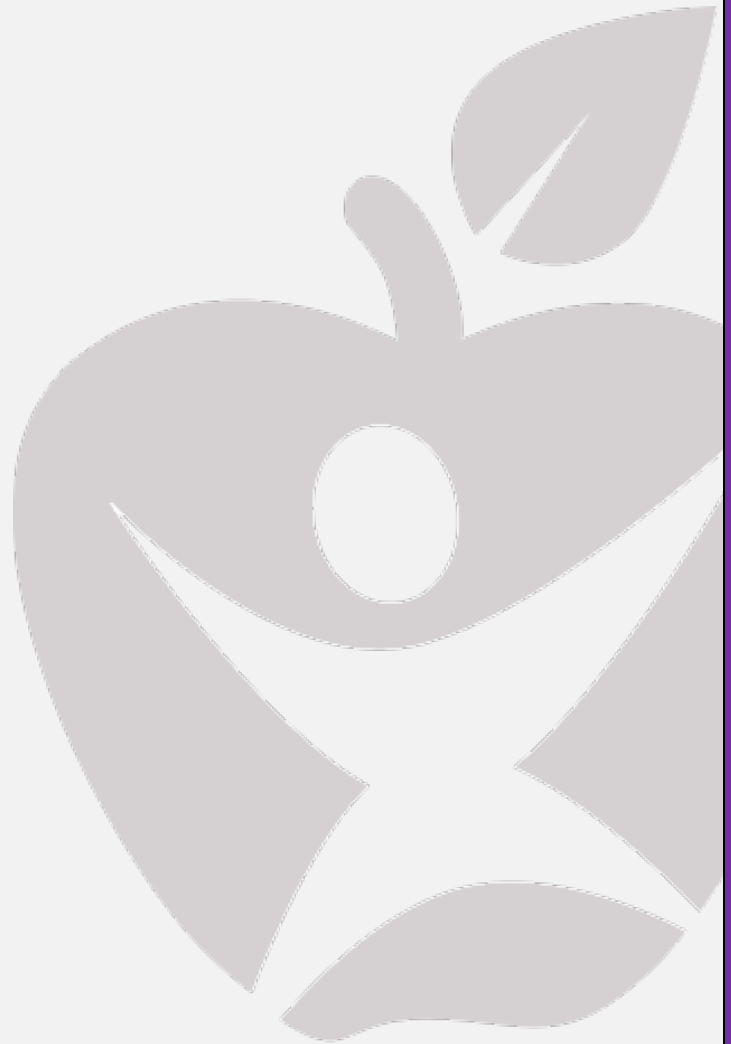


The “Super Six” Principles of Andragogy: Take Your Program from Good to Great



The “Super Six” Principles of Andragogy

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The “Super Six” Principles of Andragogy

Take Your Program from Good to Great

Andragogy is often referred to as pedagogy, but for adults. However, there is much more to andragogy than that. Andragogy has just as much to do with skill development, motivation, reaching one’s lifelong potential, and putting theory into practice as it does rote memorization of a collection of facts. Andragogy, as it is known today is made up of six principles, each of which contribute to an educational framework to best serve adult learners. In this handbook, there will be an examination in the goals and delivery differences of pedagogy and andragogy. There will also be a close examination of each of the six principles, with examples of how they can be incorporated into every Adult General Education (AGE) classroom. Finally, one will find planning tools to help an early adopter navigate planning for each of the six principles in every lesson.

Andragogy: A Brief History

The term *andragogy* was first used by German High School Teacher Alexander Kapp (1833) to describe educational theory of Greek Philosopher Plato. More than just teaching adults, making sure each individual rises to their full potential, for self-actualization, and for the benefit of society. It's about excellence.

Eugen Rosenstock-Huussy (1925) developed the theory of adult education being derived from necessity, taking history and theory and moving them towards practical application of learning.

Malcolm Knowles (1967), known as the expanded on this foundation to explain his theory on adult education, refocusing the distinction between pedagogy and andragogy as being process driven instead of content driven. This theory included five assumptions about adult learners (Figure 1) and four principles to guide the planning of instruction (Figure 2). These have been condensed into six guiding principles.

KNOWLES'

5 ASSUMPTIONS OF ADULT LEARNERS

In 1980, Knowles made 4 assumptions about the characteristics of adult learners (andragogy) that are different from the assumptions about the characteristics of child learners (pedagogy). In 1984, Knowles added the 5th assumption.

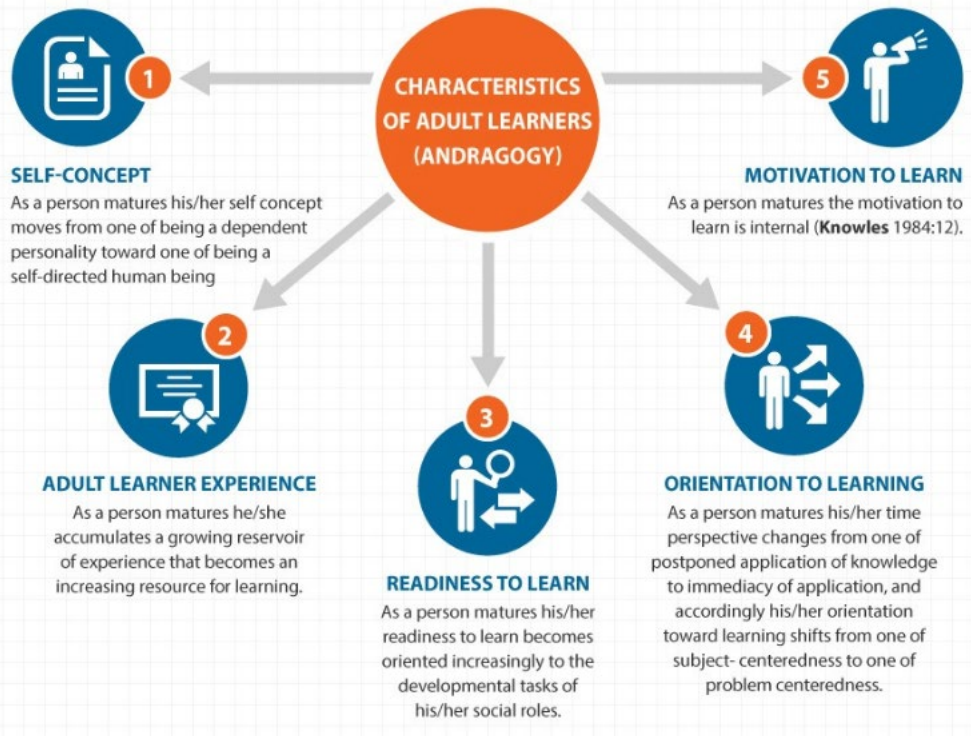


FIGURE 1 The five assumptions Knowles made about adult learners that are distinct from child learners (Pappas, 2014).

1. Self-Concept – Unlike children, adults view themselves as self-directed, rather than dependent, and capable to steer their own learning.
2. Adult Learner Experience – As one matures, accumulated knowledge and experience serves as a foundational resource for continued learning.
3. Readiness to Learn – With maturity, one's readiness to learn increases within chosen disciplines related to social role.
4. Orientation to Learning – Sense of immediacy and application of learning, as opposed to general knowledge for the future.
5. Motivation – With maturity, intrinsic motivation increases.



FIGURE 2 Knowles original 4 principles of andragogy provide insight into the conditions needed for adult learning (Pappas, 2014).

1. **Involved Adult Learners** – Adult learners need to be included in the planning and evaluation of their learning. This could include as small as assignment choice or as large as career cluster and pathway choice.
2. **Adult Learners' Experience** – Adults learn by doing, practicing, and often failing at tasks. Putting theory into practice and creating these types of opportunities are the foundation for adult learning, and recent conceptions indicate, perhaps all learning.
3. **Relevance and Impact to Learners' Lives** – Adults have the ability to choose the type of learning experiences they want to participate in, and therefore, high impact and relevance to the immediate applicability of the learning objectives is critical to create the most sustained motivation.
4. **Problem-Centered** – A tie in with relevance, the learning must be immediately applicable, and therefore more related to putting the learning into practice over the memorization of content that might have some future relevance.

A Comparison of Pedagogy and Andragogy

Pedagogy	Andragogy
The learner is dependent on the teacher. Teacher is the evaluator and responsible for learning.	Learner is self-directed and capable to self-assess and take responsibility for learning.
Learners bring little background knowledge. Teacher has most influence as peers lack also.	Learners' experiences set the foundation for learning, equal opportunity to learn from peers.
Learning and advancement is prescribed based on curriculum.	Learning is differentiated, based on life circumstances, and serves to fill gaps, not instruct comprehensively.
External motivation such as parents and teachers.	Internal motivators such as quality of life, recognition, self-esteem, and mastery.
Acquire subject matter and content.	Acquire applicable knowledge and relevant skills.

The Principles of Andragogy

The Prerequisite Principle

- ❖ Adults must want to learn:
 - ✓ Adults learn best when the learning is self-directed and of their choosing. This works best when they are excited and motivated to learn a new skill or type of knowledge.
 - ✓ This is an easy win for AGE practitioners so long as the learning in the classroom matches the purpose that brought the adult learner to the program.

The “Super Six” Principles of Andragogy

1. Need to Know

- ✓ Adults want to know why the learning targets are relevant and important, in the moment, or how they tie into the overall, cumulative learning objectives. Why is this learning necessary for the learner. This could be improvement in quality of life, job performance, etc.
- ✓ WIIFM – What’s in it for me? This taps into the intrinsic motivation of adult learners by connecting their purpose with the effort required for mastery of the learning targets.

2. Experience

- ✓ Adults will bring many experiences into the classroom, which serve as a foundation for learning. This works as a strong advantage if the teacher can build upon that background knowledge by filling the gaps, rather than revisiting mastered components. This should be done by performing pre-assessments and differentiating the content. Rather than teaching from page one through the end of the text, learning opportunities should be prescriptive to fill gaps. There should be opportunity for students to learn from each other and the wealth of experiences that each is bringing into the classroom.

- ✓ Experience can work as an obstacle at times if students have preconceived routines and ideas that might have to be unlearned in order to achieve mastery of the learning targets.

3. Self-Concept

- ✓ Adult students are not dependent learners. They want to have a voice in the program design and learning options. Lesson delivery is not solely dependent on the teacher's knowledge and ability to lecture, rather adult students want to have some autonomy to determine the course of the learning and discovery of the application. Learning should be student centered, minimizing teacher talk, and explicitly geared towards the activities students choose to engage in. In the gradual release model, more time should be spent in the "you do" phase and less in the "I do" and "we do" phases.

4. Readiness

- ✓ Adult learners need to be ready for the challenge and effort the learning process will demand. This most often comes because the adult learners recognize a problem, or envisions the realization of a goal, and that serves as the driving force for student persistence and motivation. Highlights the need for problem-based learning over knowledge development.
- ✓ To put it succinctly, adult students learn best when the learning allows them to solve an immediate, real-life problem. This helps create a sense of urgency and perseverance in the classroom, along with a connection to the purpose for participation.

5. Problem Orientation

- ✓ Andragogical learning should not be focused on the acquisition of stored knowledge and content. Rather, it must be focused on the practical application of that knowledge to solve problems, perform tasks, and develop specific skills through practice, trial, and error. Rather than being told what is important to remember, students are given opportunities to internalize the learning through discovery and activity.

6. Intrinsic Motivation

- ✓ Intrinsic motivation is stronger than extrinsic motivation. Instructors can take advantage of this higher level of

motivation to improve learner outcomes through determination and effort. Motivation will guide student choice and perseverance only if learning opportunities connect to the student's purpose. If classroom opportunities and activities are disconnected from the other guiding principles, namely immediacy, relevant, and problem oriented, then student intrinsic motivation will quickly dissipate, or the student will search for another learning opportunity more closely aligned with the six principles.

- ✓ Intrinsic motivation is also dependent on a student's ability to track their progress and see learning gains and skills acquisition. Without tangible progress towards the hoped for outcomes, student motivation will wane.

Principles of Andragogy Planning Tool

Principle 1 – Need to Know

- How will you make clear to your adult learners how the lesson is important to their purpose for participation? What's in it for them?

Principle 2 – Experience

- What range of experiences are my adult learners bringing into the classroom that could help (or hinder) achievement of the learning target? How do I determine what gaps exist, and what areas of expertise already exist? How can I create an activity that will allow the students to share their knowledge and learning with each other?

Principle 3 – Self-Concept

- How can I provide some student autonomy with the direction of the learning or through an assignment choice? How will I help students self-assess their progress?

Principle 4 – Readiness

- How will I connect the content to immediate real life problems and needs (or better yet, facilitate students making that connection)?

Principle 5 – Problem Orientation

- What activities and student centered assignments will I employ to minimize teacher talk and maximize student opportunity to acquire application and not just content theory?

Principle 6 – Intrinsic Motivation

- Have I aligned the lesson choices appropriately with the various student motivations for program participation, applied self-assessment strategies, and the above principles?

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