

Principles of Adult Learning

Adults need to be involved in the planning and evaluation of their instruction.

Experience (including mistakes) provides the basis for learning activities.

Adults are most interested in learning subjects that have immediate relevance to their job or personal life.

Adult learning is problem-centered rather than content-oriented.

Andragogy (the method and practice of teaching adult learners) makes the following assumptions about the design of learning:

- (1) Adults need to know why they need to learn something
- (2) Adults need to learn experientially,
- (3) Adults approach learning as problem-solving, and
- (4) Adults learn best when the topic is of immediate value.

In practical terms, andragogy - popularized in the U.S. by Malcomb Knowles - means that instruction for adults needs to focus more on the process and less on the content being taught.

Strategies such as case studies, role playing, simulations, and self-evaluation are most useful.

Instructors adopt a role of facilitator or resource rather than lecturer or grader.