

Andragogy versus Pedagogy

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Many of the findings from the early research have been integrated into an adult learning model known as *andragogy*. Although the word "andragogy" was in use as early as 1833, Malcolm Knowles is generally credited with popularizing the concept in the United States in the 1970s. Knowles defined andragogy as "the art and science of helping adults learn," which he contrasted with the use of "pedagogy," which he says was originally concerned with helping children learn (as testified to by the etymology of the word). Over time, the use of the word pedagogy became so entwined with instructional design in general that the two have become virtually synonymous. In fact, today most people mean instructional design as a whole when they use the word "pedagogy."

According to Knowles, andragogy rests on four crucial assumptions about adult learners and how they differ from child learners. Andragogy assumes that, as people mature (1) their self-concept moves from dependence to self-direction, (2) their growing reservoir of experience begins to serve as a resource for learning, (3) their readiness to learn becomes oriented increasingly toward the developmental tasks of their social roles, and (4) they begin to want to apply what they have learned right away to life's real challenges.

Accordingly, their orientation toward learning shifts from one of subject-centeredness to one of problem-centeredness.

The tables on the following pages summarize the basic differences between traditional pedagogy and andragogy.

Espoused Beliefs (Mental Models)		
Topic	Traditional Pedagogy	Adult Learning
View of Human Nature (see last table in this series for definition of Theories X & Y)	Theory X	Theory Y
Perception of Nature of Work	Necessary evil	Vehicle for self-expression
Organization Design	Bureaucracy	Reduced hierarchy, team-based high performance
Organization Goals	Stable, slow-changing, highly structured performance	Dynamic, fast-changing, continuous improvement
Organization Climate	Authority-oriented Formal/closed Competitive	Respect-oriented Informal/open Collaborative
Diagnosis of Needs	Supervisor	Mutual/self-diagnosis
Purpose of Intervention	Orientation, Standardization, Instruction (acquisition of existing knowledge)	Change, Development, Creation of new knowledge
Employee Competence	Below minimum acceptable performance	Above minimum acceptable performance
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Underlying Assumptions		
Topic	Traditional Pedagogy	Adult Learning
Learners/employees	Dependent	Independent
Subject matter	One right way	Many ways
Motivation to learn, change, or improve	External, dictated by others	Internal, response to personal/career needs
Role of experience	Unimportant or even discounted	A rich resource that can be the basis for learning, change or improvement Must be integrated
Learner/employee self-concept	Need outside direction	Capable of self-direction
Learning orientation	Subject-centered Logic-oriented	Life/career-centered Process centered
Objective	Minimum requirements	Self-betterment
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Consequent Learning Design		
Topic	Traditional Pedagogy	Adult Learning
Identification of Need	Mandate from above	Choice of learning motivated by life enhancement or performance improvement expectation
Instructional Design	Transmission of prescribed subject matter through lectures, Socratic dialogue, and memorization	Subject matter is life-centered, task-centered, problem centered and learning is facilitated, self-reflective and transformative
Learning Process	<p>Passive learning</p> <p>Instruction, memorization, modeling, demonstration, coaching, etc.</p>	<p>Active Learning</p> <p>Critical and reflective thinking, shared visioning.</p> <p>Simulations through team learning, case studies, role playing, etc.</p> <p>On the job experience, new information, interpretation, practice, adaptation, and integration.</p> <p>Experiential learning such as creative thinking, improvisation, ropes courses, etc.</p>
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