

# The Adult Learning Theory - Andragogy - of Malcolm Knowles

## 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 child learners (pedagogy). In 1984, **Knowles** added the 5th assumption.

1. **Self-concept**

As a person matures his/her self concept moves from one of being a dependent personality toward one of being a self-directed human being

2. **Adult Learner Experience**

As a person matures he/she accumulates a growing reservoir of experience that becomes an increasing resource for learning.

3. **Readiness to Learn**

As a person matures his/her readiness to learn becomes oriented increasingly to the developmental tasks of his/her social roles.

4. **Orientation to Learning**

As a person matures his/her time perspective changes from one of postponed application of knowledge to immediacy of application, and accordingly his/her orientation toward learning shifts from one of subject- centeredness to one of problem centeredness.

5. **Motivation to Learn**

As a person matures the motivation to learn is internal (**Knowles** 1984:12).

## Knowles' 4 PRINCIPLES OF ANDRAGOGY

In 1984, **Knowles** suggested 4 **principles** that are applied to **adult learning**:

1. Adults need to be involved in the planning and evaluation of their instruction.
2. Experience (including mistakes) provides the basis for the learning activities.
3. Adults are most interested in learning subjects that have immediate relevance and impact to their job or personal life.
4. Adult learning is problem-centered rather than content-oriented. (Kearsley, 2010)