

# Chapter 24

## Pedagogy vs Andragogy Organizations

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### ABSTRACT

*Human Resource practitioners have a responsibility to ensure quality learning occurs in their organizations. Therefore, it is important when organizations consider learning in their environment; what constitutes quality learning? Should they be considering a pedagogical approach to learning or should they consider an andragogical approach to learning? Having a better understanding of learning theories will help determine which learning methods may be successful. This chapter compares the pedagogical and the andragogical models. Knowles' self-directed learning theory is discussed, as well as Merriam, Caffarella, and Baumgarnter (2007). Learning contracts are discussed as a way of adults taking responsibility for their learning. The authors describe how adults might take more of an active role for their learning and how educators become more of a facilitator. Reviewing these theories will help organizations maximize learning.*

### INTRODUCTION

A good question Human Resource Development (HRD) and Human Resource Management (HRM) practitioners ask is “why do we explore learning theories?” The simple answer is we want quality learning in our organizations. HRD, HRM interventions and management policies are congruent with the assumptions about human nature and organizational life. In today's dynamic, rapidly changing world, there is even greater need for

learning in the workplace. Today, more so than ever, a ‘job’ changes. It is crucial that organizations explore the theories of learning in order to maximize their employees' learning potential. Naturally, learning theories about human behavior carry with them assumptions about human nature, the purpose of education, and desirable values. Understandably then, a better understanding of the various learning theories will result in better decisions regarding learning experiences and more desirable outcomes (Knowles, Holton III, & Swan-

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son, 2005). Without a doubt, learning theories will contribute to long-run gains in our human capital (Torres-Coronas & Gasco-Hernandez, 2006) .

## BACKGROUND

Pedagogy views the trainer or teacher as the one responsible for the student's learning. The context of what will be learned and how, when and where are fall under the realm of the teacher. The student simply follows direction and offers no input as to how learning will occur (Knowles, Holton III, & Swanson, 1998). However, on the opposite scale, the concept of helping adults learn had been evolving in Europe for quite some time before it was introduced to North American by adult education leaders. It was a German grammar school teacher by the name of Alexander Kapp who coined the term andragogy in 1833 to differentiate it from the theory of youth learning, which is widely called pedagogy, the art and science of teaching children. Andragogy is defined as the art and science of helping adults learn (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 1998, 2005). Art here refers to "style," and science here refers to "method." A number of scholars in the field of adult education helped popularize the principles of andragogy in the field of adult education and training. First, Lindeman (1926) identified several key assumptions about adult learners. Table 1 shows a summary of Lindeman's key assumptions about adult learners.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Knowles added one more assumption related to motivation to learn. At present, the andragogical model has emerged as the theoretical framework to guide adult teaching and adult learning. Knowles popularized this model and devoted his life to adult education and training in North America (Bash, 2003). Table 2 provides a summary of the andragogical model.

The debate regarding andragogy versus pedagogy has been going on in the field of adult education, training and learning organizations for years.

In the 1960s and 1970s, Knowles and his associates distinguished between pedagogy and andragogy (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 1998, 2005). They suggested that children should be taught pedagogically and adults should be taught andragogically (Jarvis, 2002). The pedagogical model assigns the trainer/teacher full responsibility for making all decisions about what will be learned, how it will be learned, when it will be learned, and if it has been learned (Knowles, Holton III, & Swanson, 1998, p. 62). This is what we call teacher-directed education. Based on today's adult learners' needs in today's organizations, the pedagogical model does not work effectively. This is not to say it does

*Table 1. Lindeman's key assumptions about adult learners*

1. Adults are motivated to learn as they experience needs and interests that learning will satisfy.
2. Adults' orientation to learning is life-centered.
3. Experience is the richest source for adults' learning.
4. Adults have a deep need to be self-directing.
5. Individual differences among people increase with age.

*Table 2. The andragogical model*

1. The need to know. Adults need to know why they need to learn something before undertaking to learn it.
2. The learners' self-concept. Adults have a self-concept of being responsible for their own decisions, for their own lives. Once they have arrived at that self-concept they develop a deep psychological need to be seen by others and treated by others as being capable of self-direction.
3. The role of the learners' experiences. Adults come into educational activity with both a greater volume and a different quality of experience from youths. By virtue of simply having lived longer, they have accumulated more experience than they had as youths.
4. Readiness to learn. Adults become ready to learn those things they need to know and be able to do in order to cope effectively with their real-life situations.
5. Orientation to learning. In contrast to children's and youths' subject-centered orientation to learning, adults are life-centered in their orientation to learning.
6. Motivation. While adults are responsive to some external motivators, the most potent motivators are internal pressures.

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