

Chapter 2

Traditional Theorists and You

ABSTRACT

This chapter explores traditional theorists as they apply to our current context in higher education. With a more diverse learner population entering higher education institutions, administrators and instructors need to recognize and utilize the building blocks of the theory that have brought higher education to where it is today. Included are not only traditional theorists, but their back, major concepts of the theory, how the theory applies to current administrators and instructors, and reference materials to learn more. Finally, case studies are included that provide opportunities to synthesize chapter information and provide discussion.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-7998-0145-0.ch002

INTRODUCTION

As this book explores the latest available research, understanding the theories, which helped to form them, is essential. To explore all aspects of each theory would take hundreds of pages and is really outside the scope of this book. Therefore, instead of regurgitating the entirety of each theory, we offer highlights and a summarization of each theory's main points, while also providing references to these seminal works. In this chapter, for each theory, you will find

1. reference materials to consider,
2. an overview of the theory's evolution,
3. major concepts from the theory, and
4. how the theory applies to current administrators and instructors; look for our takeaways in the boxes.

MALCOLM KNOWLES - ANDRAGOGY

Background

Malcolm Knowles is widely credited as the person who brought the concept of Andragogy to North America. As a theorist, his work noted some of the first significant assumptions and differences among adult learners in education and is a staple in almost any adult education course. For our purposes, Knowles (1980) believed several different assumptions would help educators to understand how best to support adult learners, and, in our case, post-traditional learners. Each of these assumptions provides a wealth of information related to post-traditional learner's needs, and how learners aren't offered intentional experiences in the classroom. We'll take an in-depth look at each of these assumptions, and how they serve as the basis for newer theories.

Core Concepts

Malcolm Knowles posits several assumptions, including changes in self-concept, orientation to learning, the role of experience, readiness to learn, and motivation to learn. Each of the following is summarized below.

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