

Adult Learning

Slide 1: Introduction

Welcome to the Adult Learning lesson. This foundational lesson is for participants enrolled in the Instruction Seminar course at the BLM National Training Center; it is a requirement before attending the online webinars as well as the live, instructor facilitated portions of the course at the NTC in Phoenix, AZ.

According to ASTD Learning Systems Module 2, Delivering Training, "...adult learning theories and techniques lay the foundation for all training and performance improvement programs. Understanding these concepts helps professionals to develop programs that reach the core needs of adult learners. When delivering training, these concepts help put the environment, motivation, and ability of participants in proper perspective."

This excerpt from ASTD is uniquely relevant since the BLM relies on subject matter experts like you to develop and deliver training for other employees within the organization. Instruction Seminar is specifically designed to prepare you to deliver training that is tailored specifically toward improving the job skills of adults within the BLM.

However, please keep in mind people go to school for years in order to earn degrees in instructional design and adult education. Therefore, there is no way any week-long course could build the same level of competency. Remember, you are taking this course because you are an expert in your career field or job, and the Bureau is asking you to share your expertise. Instruction Seminar and its associated lessons are specifically designed to introduce key principles that will assist in making you a more effective trainer for your specific program. With that said, let's take a look at our objectives for this lesson on adult learning.

Slide 2: Introduction

By the end of this lesson (which includes the online webinar) you should be able to...

- 1. Differentiate between education and training.**
- 2. Define andragogy and pedagogy.**
- 3. Identify Malcolm Knowles' five core adult learning principles.**
- 4. Explain why each adult learning principal should be important to the instructor.**
- 5. Define learning styles and the V-A-K model.**
- 6. Explain why each component of the V-A-K model should be an important consideration to the instructor before delivering a training presentation.**
- 7. Define competency-based training.**
- 8. Explain why competency-based training is important to the instructor.**

Slide 3: Introduction

In order to reach our intended training objective you will need to have some background knowledge in the following: andragogy vs. pedagogy, education vs. training, competency-based training, Malcolm Knowles' six principles of adult learning, and learning styles.

Hello, my name is Kerry Kinslow.

And I'm Curtis Smith; we are instructional system specialists at the BLM National Training Center. Both of us have extensive backgrounds in training adults as well as designing, developing, delivering, and evaluating training for numerous organizations.

Let's begin by going over the difference between education and training.

Slide 4: Education vs. Training

Sometimes people use the terms education and training synonymously. Some place a higher value on one term over the other. How about you? What comes to mind when you think of each term? Take a moment (hit the pause button) and write down a couple of ideas that you associate with each of these two words.

Slide 5: Education vs. Training

Kerry, what are your thoughts on the difference between education and training?

According to Harold D. Stolovitch and Erica J. Keeps, authors of Telling Ain't Training, "...education conveys a more long-term and broader connotation than do training and instruction, which is generally short-term and narrowly focused. Education is the result of a variety of life experiences and highly generalized learning principles and events."

On the other hand, Harold D. Stolovitch and Erica J. Keeps go on to state, "In training our purpose is to create a change in learners...that they consistently produce without variation. Through intense training, the learner becomes increasingly able to reproduce the learned behavior with fewer errors, greater speed, and under more demanding conditions."

From these two definitions we can deduce that education is normally associated with formal schooling and traditional paths of learning. Furthermore, the goal of education is to give the learner "knowledge" which may be applied to a variety of life situations. Early knowledge becomes the foundation for subsequent learning stages; it is often described as the "building blocks".

Slide 6: Education vs. Training

However, when we talk about training, particularly work place training, we're talking primarily about building the skills necessary for employees to perform their jobs. It's often said in training and education circles that education gives you the knowledge needed to do a job task but training lets you practice the actual job task you will perform out in the field or on-the-job.

So Kerry, if I'm hearing you correctly it would be a dramatic overstatement to say that a student can swim just because he sat in a classroom, learned the theories behind buoyancy, saw pictures and demonstrations of someone swimming, and practiced arm and leg movements on the side of his chair?

That's correct...well-stated Curtis!

However, if you really think about it, the real test of whether or not he has been trained actually comes from letting him practice the swimming techniques taught in the classroom. To do this, you have to get him in the water, let him practice, and then observe to see if he can demonstrate swimming without any assistance.

That's the idea...training someone involves the practical application of a required job skill. If you can see someone practicing the required skill and eventually witness them performing the skill without assistance...then training has occurred!

Now that you have some information on difference between education and training let's move on to pedagogy vs. andragogy.

[Slide 7: Pedagogy vs. Andragogy](#)

Curtis, what's the difference between pedagogy and andragogy?

Well Kerry, as *Elaine Biech, author of Training for Dummies (2005)*, points out, "Pedagogy is a traditional style of teaching based on a didactic model, or lecturing. Generally, this model is content-centered and instructor-led. Pedagogy literally means the art of teaching children."

On the other hand, andragogy is the art of teaching adults; it is based on Malcolm Knowles' adult learning theory. According to *ASTD Learning Systems Module 2, Delivering Training*, "Knowles' contends that five key principles affect the way adults learn. These five principles are: self-concept of the learner, prior experience of the learner, readiness to learn, orientation to learning, and motivation to learn. " We will cover each of these five principles in just a minute.

However, before doing so, keep in mind that in pedagogy the teacher often plays a starring role acting as the sage on the stage, while he pours the knowledge into his students. The students age and grade level are the primary factors in determining the curriculum. Students are expected to learn a core body of knowledge, including many basic facts, to the mastery level. Think about some of the fact-based knowledge you learned in school such as the alphabet, basic grammar and punctuation rules (e.g., "l" before "e" except after "c"), and multiplication tables. Each set, group, or category of knowledge was part of the total foundation necessary for increasingly more complex knowledge as each student moved through the education process.

Slide 8: Adult Learning Theory (Malcolm Knowles 5 Principles)

So Curtis, if this is how we teach children shouldn't we teach adults the same way?

Not exactly! Adults have very different expectations when it comes to learning. Malcolm Knowles is certainly not the only theorist with ideas about how adults learn, but his work is the most widely known. Knowles is often referred to as the father of adult learning and is best known for his five, core adult learning principles.

The first principle is "self-concept of the learner". Adults see themselves as responsible for their own decisions. They like to be self-directed and typically resist situations that subject them to being controlled by others. Unfortunately, they may only have classroom experience as a dependent learner due to the time spent in the public school system. All they have ever known is the teacher is the authority figure and controls everything. However, the effective training facilitator is aware that adult learners are responsible for their own learning, and if necessary, will help with the transition from dependent learner to self-directed learner. According to *ASTD Learning Systems Module 2, Delivering Training*, "Adult learners learn best when they have a measure of control over their learning experience."

So, for our students viewing this video lesson, here's a question for you to think about that we will present to you in the upcoming webinar. How will you give control over to your adult learners when you instruct to enable them to become self-directed learners?

The next principle is "prior experience of the learner". Adults come to training full of their own experiences. Make an effort to incorporate experiential learning techniques into your training presentations such as group discussions, brainstorming exercises, case studies that inspire critical thinking, and problem solving situations that provide them the opportunity to incorporate their prior experiences with the new content. According to Malcolm S. Knowles, Elwood F. Holton III, and Richard A. Swanson, authors of *The Adult Learner, a Definitive Classic in Adult Education and Human Resource Development*, "Experience is the richest resource for adults' learning; therefore, the core methodology of adult education is the analysis of experience."

Again, for our students viewing this video lesson, how will you tap into this prior experience during your training presentations? Remember, your students will not be completely void of knowledge or experience on the task you're training them to perform...how will you "tap" into that?

The next principle is "readiness to learn". Adults seek out learning as a way to better perform in real-life situations. This assertion is supported by the BLM competency based training model. Effective training focuses on the immediate or near term needs of the target audience. Simply stated, adults come to training because they want to learn how to do their required job task (or do them better)!

How can you make sure the training you're providing is relevant and/or needed?

The next principle is "orientation to learning". Training will be more effective if it uses real life examples or situations that adult learners may encounter in their life or on the job. Courses presented

in the context of the real life situation or what we call contextual learning, will help the learner incorporate new knowledge and skills, as well as develop desirable work place, attitudes, values, and behaviors.

How can you ensure the training you provide has an “orientation to learning”?

And finally the fifth principle is “motivation to learn”. Although adult learners respond to external motivators such as promotions, performance awards, and pay increases internal incentives such as increased job satisfaction, self-esteem, and improved quality of life are critical in giving adults a reason to learn. Activities (e.g., exercises and performance evaluations) that build student self-esteem or sense of accomplishment should be integrated as much as possible into course/lesson content to help motivate the adult learner.

Now Curtis, when you say “performance evaluation” what do you mean?

A performance evaluation is a “spot check”. Someone, usually the instructor, uses a checklist or scoring instrument and checks to see if the student can actually perform the job skill without assistance before the end of a course or training event. However, performance evaluations can also be accomplished after a course by other experts within the field.

Excellent, thanks Curtis. Alright, let’s now turn our attention to another important concept associated with training adult learners...learning styles.

[Slide 9: Learning Styles](#)

Imagine that you just got a new electronic gadget, an I-Pad, a new cellphone, a GPS, or maybe a new fish finder for your bass boat. You want to use your new gadget but you’ve never tried one before. How would you go about learning how to use your new toy? Do you want some quiet time with the manual so you can read through the directions? Or would you rather call your friend who has the same gadget and let your friend explain? Or maybe you’re the type of person who would rather start using your gadget right away? You’ll figure it out as you go. Which one of these best describes your choice?

These are all examples of different learning preferences or learning styles. Some people are visual learners, and reading the instructions works just fine. Others might be auditory learners, they remember nearly everything they hear, and can then apply that learning in a productive manner. Others learners like to get their hands on things and try to figure it out; they are known as kinesthetic learners. Keep in mind there is no one best learning style. As a matter of fact most of us have what we call a primary learning style, and a secondary learning style.

As adult learners responsible for our own learning, we have probably adapted our preferred learning style to fit the delivery methods for training courses we have attended. As an instructor, the important thing for you to remember is to be sure to reach out to all learning styles and incorporate into your training presentations opportunities for each of the three, primary types of learners to be involved and to participate in the training you are facilitating.

Slide 10: Learning Styles

The previous slide refers to one module of the many different theories on how people learn. The visual, auditory, and kinesthetic or V-A-K model, describes learners as having a preference for how they learn best. There are a multitude of theories about how people learn best. In fact Kerry, one of the most frequently asked questions of professional trainers, is which learning style is the best one to use? What are your thoughts?

The simple answer... there isn't one preferred learning style to use, nor should there be. Just think of it this way. Steak might be your favorite meal, but you wouldn't want a diet that consisted of 100% steak, every meal, every time! Using a variety of presentation and delivery techniques will help you in several ways. Variety will help you keep the learners interested, connect with a broader range of students, and assist learners in retaining more information. For example, and this is a big one for our viewing audience, a learner who listens to a lecture on how to take a water sample is less likely to be able to take that information back to the workplace and apply it correctly than a learner who is engaged in a discussion on taking a water sample, watches a water sample demonstration, and then has a chance to practice actually taking a water sample with peers in a learning group.

I think that's a really good answer for any instructor to be able to relate to. With that said, let's move on to another concept all training instructor should be familiar with.

Slide 11: Competency-Based Training

A key concept in workplace training is the focus on specific job competencies. Every job position within the BLM has a specific set of competencies. Meaning, there are a specific set of job tasks that a person in any job position would have to perform in order to fulfill his or her job responsibilities. It is these job competencies, or tasks, that should always be the focus of training at the NTC.

Remember, adults come to training to learn how to do something they cannot currently do. For example, process a right-of-way permit, drive an off-road vehicle, conduct a riparian survey, conduct a NEPA analysis, calculate royalties, and inspect oil and gas facilities. These are just a few of the job tasks being taught at the NTC.

So, for our students, with these job task examples in mind, what do you train your adult learners to "do" when you instruct? Do they get a chance to practice the specific job task? Do they get corrective feedback? Do they get a final check evaluation to see if they can do the task without assistance? If the answer is "no", you may want to take a closer look at the course design and discuss the issue with your program coordinator at the NTC.

Slide 12: Conclusion

In this video lesson we talked about the differences between education and training as well as andragogy and pedagogy. Remember, education focus more on theory and is a long-term endeavor as opposed to training which is more short-term and is focused on teaching someone how to do specific job tasks. Pedagogy is the art of teaching children and andragogy is the art of teaching adults.

Since teaching adults is unique, we also reviewed Malcolm Knowles five core adult learning principles. **Remember, adults come to training because they have an immediate training need (readiness to learn), are self-directed and want to participate in the training since they have numerous life experiences, and are driven by internal motivational factors that are sometimes overlooked such as job satisfaction and helping others to succeed.**

We also talked a little bit about learning styles and competency-based training. Remember, learning styles are as abundant as there are different types of food. Serving and eating one type of food would ultimately depress just about any human being not to mention it would be the epitome of poor nutrition; this same concept applies when training adults. **You should always try to incorporate different delivery strategies into your training presentation to accommodate the many different learners that will be in your classrooms if you want to maximize the effectiveness of the training.**

Finally, remember to focus your training presentations on specific job competencies. Train your students to “do” something that is associated with their job position. More importantly, train them to do something they cannot currently do!

We covered all of this information because we wanted to get you to our objectives for this video. You should now be able to do the following:

1. Differentiate between education and training.
- 2. Define andragogy and pedagogy.**
3. Identify Malcolm Knowles’ five core adult learning principles.
- 4. Explain why each adult learning principal should be important to the instructor.**
5. Define learning styles and the V-A-K model.
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7. Define competency-based training.
- 8. Explain why competency-based training is important to the instructor.**

Please keep in mind that this video does not conclude the lesson. We will also have an adult learning exercise during Webinar 1 (see your course syllabus for more information) that is based on the information covered in this knowledge-based video lesson. Also as a final reminder, please remember to complete the review questions for this lesson and submit them via email to your seminar instructor once complete.

On that note, we leave you with this final quote:

According to David L. Mackaye, director of the Department of Adult Education, San Jose, California, public schools, “A person is a good educator among adults when he has a definite conviction about life and when he can present intelligent arguments on behalf of it; but primarily he does not qualify as an adult educator at all until he can exist in a group that collectively disputes, denies, or ridicules his conviction, and continues to adore him because he rejoices in them. That is tolerance, and

exemplification of Proudhon's conviction that to respect a man is a higher intellectual feat than to love him as one's self....there is positive evidence that no adult education system will ever make a success of collegiate methods of instruction to adults in the cultural fields. Something new in the way of content and method must be produced as soon as possible for adult education, and probably it will have to grow up in the field. No teacher-training-college hen can lay an adult education egg (*Journal of Adult Education*, III, 3, June 1931, pp. 293-294).