

ANCC - Principles of Adult Learning Theory

1. **Adults need to know why** they need to learn something before undertaking to learn it.
2. Adults have a self-concept of being responsible for their own decisions. Thus **self-directed learning is much more effective than 'dependent' learning**.
3. Adults have a large amount of diverse experiences. To an adult, experience is **not** something that happens to him, it is him. To ignore or devalue the adult's experiences is perceived by the adult as ignoring or devalue the **person** of the adult. The experiences of the adult provide great learning resources for that adult. These resources can best be utilized by **individualizing the teaching and learning strategies** used. Experiential learning is especially effective with adults.
4. Adults become **ready to learn** when the subject includes those things they need to know and be able to do **to cope effectively** with their real-life situations. Some ways to develop this readiness to learn are exposure to models of superior performance, career counseling, simulation exercises, etc.
5. Somewhat related to the above: adults learn new knowledge, understandings, skills, values, and attitudes most effectively when they are **presented in the context of application to real-life situations**.
6. The normal adult motivation to keep growing and developing is frequently blocked by such barriers as negative self-concept as a student, inaccessibility of opportunities or resources, time constraints, and **programs that violate principles of adult learning**. **The most potent motivators for adults are internal pressures**. Some examples are desire for increased job satisfaction, self-esteem, quality of life, etc. Some examples of external motivators are promotions, higher salaries, better jobs, etc.

Principles of Adult Learning Theory: Bibliography

Houle, Cyril O. *Continuing Your Education*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964.

Houle, Cyril O. *The Design of Education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1980.

Houle, Cyril O. *The Inquiring Mind*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1961.

Houle, Cyril O. *Continuing Learning in the Professions*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1980.

Houle, Cyril O. *Patterns of Learning: New Perspectives on Life-Span Education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1984.

Knowles, Malcolm A. *The Adult Learner: A Neglected Species*. Houston: Gulf Publishing Company, 1973, 1978, 1984, 1990.

Taba, H. *Curriculum Development Theory and Practice*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1962.

Tough, A. *The Adult Learning Projects*. Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 1971, 1979.

Tyler, R. W. *Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction*. Chicago: University of Chicago press, 1950.