

Adult Learning

Saint Paul College

About

Adults learn differently from children. According to Professor Malcolm Knowles, you need to take this into account when designing your courses and instructing them in the classroom.

Major Differences

- 1. Adults are no longer dependent.**
 - They are responsible for themselves, so they are not waiting for orders. Give them space. Let them discover for themselves.
- 2. Adults have a reservoir of experiences.**
 - Draw upon their experience in the class; evaluate their background; make connections.
- 3. Adults are ready to learn.**
 - Adults are more mature and equipped to learn.
- 4. Adults want to use their knowledge immediately.**
 - Make it problem-based, real-world, and relevant.
 - Tell them how it will help them right away.
- 5. Adults' motivation to learn is internal.**
 - Learning is part of a larger goal (A new job, a college degree, a raise, personal pride, or enjoyment), not because they are forced to.

Principles of Teaching Adults

- 1. Adults need to be involved in the learning process.**
 - Explain why they are learning something; give them a say; make it self-directed so they can discover knowledge themselves.
- 2. Experience is the basis of learning.**
 - Make connections to their past experience; account for different backgrounds.
- 3. Adults want to learn relevant information that they can apply immediately.**
 - Focus on issues related to their workplace or personal life; simulate job-tasks.
- 4. Adult learning should be problem centered.**
 - Don't just have them memorize, create problems for them to solve, tasks with room to make mistakes and learn from.