

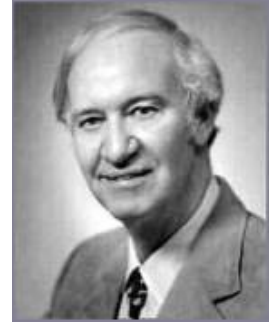
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# Malcolm S. Knowles Ph.D. (1913-1997)

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## General Information:

- Was born in Montana, U.S.A. in 1913
- Was a motivated Boy Scout
- Earned scholarship to Harvard
- Got married and had two children
- After Harvard he wanted to enter U.S. Foreign Service, but was not able to
- Drafted and Served in Navy from 1943 to 1946
- Completed his education with a Ph.D. in Education
- Worked in the field of Education for about 60 years (1934-1994)
- Retired in 1974, but remained active in the field of Adult Education till his final years
- Published 18 books and over 230 articles in the field of Education
- Died of a stroke at the age of 84 on Nov. 27, 1997 (Thanksgiving Day)
- Religious Belief: Unitarian Universalist



## Education:

- B.A. in Education from Harvard (1930 - 1934)
- Earned M.A. in Education from University of Chicago in 1949
- Earned Ph.D. in Education from Boston University in 1960

## Professional Life:

- Deputy State Administrator for the National Youth Administration in Boston (1934-1940)
- Director of Adult Education for the Boston YMCA (1940-1943)
- Drafted and Served in Navy from 1943 to 1946
- Director of Adult Education at the Chicago YMCA (1946 – 1951), while working on his M.A. in Education
- Executive Director of the Adult Education Association of the USA (1951-1959), while pursued his Ph.D.
- Associate Professor of Adult Education at Boston University (1959-1973)
- Professor of Adult & Community Education at N.C. State University (1974-1979)
- Professor at Fielding Graduate University, Santa Barbara CA
- Professor at the University of Arkansas, Arkansas
- Published 18 books and over 230 articles in the field of Education

## Overview of Theory: Six Assumption of Andragogy

- 1) Need to Know (after 1984): Adults need to know why they need to learn something
- 2) Self-Concept (1970): Adults prefer to be in control of their own learning
- 3) Experience (1970): Adults have experiences which can be a good resource for learning new things
- 4) Readiness to Learn (1970): Adults become ready to learn to help them with real-life situations
- 5) Orientation to Learning (1970): Adults will learn if they believe it helps them deal with their problems
- 6) Motivation (1984): Adults learn better to if they are internally motivated

## Influenced By & Similar or Related Theories:

- Carl Rogers (1902-1987): Humanistic Psychologist
  - “Learning should leads to personal growth and development”
  - “Learning should be open, genuine, inviting, respectful, active, collaborative, and student driven”
- Abraham Maslow (1908-1970): Humanistic Psychologist
  - “People have a desire to realize their full potential”
- Eduard Lindenman (1885-1954):
  - Lindenman was influenced by John Dewey who was his friend and colleague
  - Four of Knowles assumptions (2, 3, 5, 6) came from Lindenman educational philosophies

## Is it a “Theory” and is it “Research Based”?

- Yes it is a theory.
- Some research is available showing mixed results.
- The widespread use of Andragogy is a strong testimony to its validity.

## Contribution to the Field of Adult Education

- He was the central figure in US adult education in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.
- He tried to develop a distinctive conceptual basis for adult education and learning.
- He published many popular books and articles on self-direction and on group-work.
- He was a significant factor in reorienting adult educators from ‘educating people’ to ‘helping people learn’.

## Four Relevant Points Regarding Adult Teaching / Learning

Every one of his assumption can be considered a relevant point to the field of adult teaching / learning. Here are his initial 4 assumptions:

- 1) Self-Concept: Adults prefer to be in control of their own learning
- 2) Experience: Adults have experiences which can be a good resource for learning new things
- 3) Readiness to Learn: Adults become ready to learn to help them with real-life situations
- 4) Orientation to Learning: Adults will learn if they believe it helps them deal with their problems

## Personal Reflection

As I read about his personal life, I started to like and respect Malcolm Knowles as a human being. He was a true scientist, because when he saw the short-comings in the field of adult education, and spent his entire life searching for a better way to educate adults. He was open-minded, because he studies other fields, like Psychology, for answers to his questions. He was a humble man, because in his final years he kept revising his assumptions and finally accepted that both Pedagogy and Andragogy can be used to teach children and adults. Finally, he practiced in all aspects of his life what he preached. This can be seen from the religion he chose to follow. He changed his religion to Unitarian Universalism, which was only formed in 1961, when he was at least 50 years old. The main principle of this religion is summed up as “free and responsible search for truth, meaning, and spiritual growth.” This is “Religious Andragogy” as oppose to “Religious Pedagogy”, which is used by almost all mainstream religions. This shows character and integrity.

May he rest in peace

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