



Training Adults in Telecommunications

Chris Law and
Jon Adams



Today's Facilitators:

Chris Law
Jon Adams

Chris Law - Kitsap 911 Training
Supervisor - claw@kitsap911.org

Jon Adams - Spokane Emergency
Communication Training Manager -
jon.adams@srec911.org



Agenda

Andragogy

Malcolm Knowles Five Principles of Adult Learning

How they work in Emergency Telecommunications

What can I do to make my Training Program more effective and efficient?

Who here is...

-a Training
Manager?

-a CTO?

-interested in
helping your
agency's program
grow?



Andragogy

The method and practice
of teaching adult learners



Andragogy

The method and practice of teaching adult learners

1. Term originally coined by Alexander Knapp in 1833, a German educator.
2. Malcolm Knowles, an American educator, published his four assumptions about the characteristics of Adult Learners in 1980. He added a fifth in 1984.
3. Andragogy has been studied and refined at length over the years. A google search will return many versions of this concept.
4. We will base today's discussion on the Five Assumptions of Adult Learners made popular by Knowles.

Question for the group:

Why would it be important to have insight on how adults best learn?



Knowles' Five Assumptions

By designing and delivering instruction to adults with these assumptions in mind, you can maximize the effectiveness and efficiency of your training programs.



Principle #1

Self Directed

Principle #2

Experiential

Principle #3

Relevant

Principle #4

**Problem
Centered**

Principle #5

**Motivated
Students**

The Five Principles of Adult Education

Self-Directed

The direction of a student's learning needs to be decided by the student.

Experiential

Adult learners need to be able to relate their previous experiences to the content of their current learning.

Relevant

The lessons must be applicable to the skills and knowledge required for success.

Problem-Centered

Exercising their problem-solving skills will reinforce the lessons they are being taught.

Motivated Students

An adult's learning will not begin until they are ready to learn.

The Five Principles of Adult Education

- Learning objectives, methods and processes are most effective when defined by the Adult Learner.
- Adult Learners are usually mature enough to know how they best learn, and what are their own strengths and weakness.
- They must feel an ownership of, or autonomy over, their own progress.

- Can you provide a scenario the describes *self-directed* learning?

1. Self-Directed

Self-Directed

What challenges does your agency face to make training address this principle?

What can your training program do to address this principle?



Self-Directed

Challenges?

1. How can students direct their own learning when the agency has defined learning objectives?
2. Time constraints to achieve learning objectives, how to allow flexibility in training?
3. How do self-directed adults stay on topic/task?
4. Adults learn in different ways. How does pre-determined training methods address learning styles and preferences?

How to overcome them?

1. Allow the Training Program to guide adults to the desired outcome. Build in self-direction. When possible, let the learners dictate how instruction is presented.
2. Build in conversations to allow learners to discuss their own strengths and weaknesses.
3. Empower the learners. They, and they alone are ultimately responsible for their own learning. Ownership and autonomy are essential.

- Experiential learning is an engaged process, where Adult Learners learn by doing, then have an opportunity to reflect on the experience.
- Adults come to learning opportunities with their own backgrounds that can, and must, be leveraged to maximize efficiency and effectiveness of training.
- Can you provide a scenario that describes *experiential* learning?

2. Experiential

Experiential

What challenges does your agency face to make training address this principle?

What can your training program do to address this principle?



Experiential

Challenges?

1. Not all experiences are obviously relatable to emergency communications.
2. If a trainee has never experienced (or has limited experience) emergency communications, how can they make the learning relatable?

How to overcome them?

1. Empower trainees to explore their prior experiences. Help them discover what experiences they have that are relatable?
2. Build in “doing” elements to instruction. Let trainees do, practice, or simulate the actual processes that are being taught. After the “do” allow them to review and explore the process.
3. Complex tasks need to be broken down into components, and then build upon them to allow relevant experiences.

- The lessons must be applicable to the skills and knowledge required for success.
- Adult learners often need the "why" AND the "how" the lessons are applicable.
- Can you provide a scenario that describes *relevant* learning?

3. Relevant

Relevant

What challenges does your agency face to make training address this principle?

What can your training program do to address this principle?



Relevant

Challenges?

1. Isn't everything we teach obviously relevant?
2. How do we know when a learner doesn't see the relevance of the material?
3. How do we stress the relevance?

How to overcome them?

1. The topics are readily obvious to the person instructing or developing the instruction material. Not always to the trainee!
2. Discuss with the trainees. It easy to check for understanding of the material itself. Teach yourself to check for the understanding of the relevance of the material.
3. Build into the instruction the "why" along with the "how". It will help make the "how" more attainable.

- Adult Learners need to exercise their problem-solving skills to reinforce the lessons.
- The "doing" portions of instruction quickly becomes more important than the "reading, writing and studying" as training continues.
- As training continues, the lessons need to be able to adapt and continually present more, or deeper, problems as the Adult Learner becomes more proficient.
- Can you provide a scenario that describes *problem centered* learning?

4. Problem Centered

Problem Centered

What challenges does your agency face to make training address this principle?

What can your training program do to address this principle?



Problem Centered

Challenges?

1. Much of the information necessary is taught through traditional written materials (handout, power point, read-write-quiz formats).
2. Problem-centered instruction can be time consuming.

How to overcome them?

1. Remember that if the goal of your Training Program is to be its most efficient and effective, time spent recreating learning materials and processes is time well spent.
2. Moving forward with less than effective learning (instruction that embraces adult learning principles) can set learners up for failure. Failing the learners is exponentially more time consuming than adjusting your instruction methods.

- An adult's learning will not begin until they are ready to learn. A student who is hungry will be a more efficient and effective learner.
- Training must acknowledge an Adult Learner's hunger.
- Training must be able to adapt. Rabbit-holes of conversation and instruction, when led by the student, can fuel their hunger, thereby makes related lessons more efficient. This is closely tied to Principle #1, Self-Directed.
- Can you provide a scenario the describes *motivated* learning?

5. Motivated Learners

Motivated Learners

What challenges does your agency face to make training address this principle?

What can your training program do to address this principle?



Motivated Learners

Challenges?

1. Motivation can not be simply given to learners. Common belief is that learners either have it or they don't.
2. Acknowledging a learner's hunger/motivation can be time consuming and can derail planned courses of instruction.
3. What do we do if a learner's motivation does not align/supported by the agency? (Example - 10% raise - not a viable option)

How to overcome them?

1. Correct, motivation can not be absolutely provided for a learner. But, if the relevance of instruction is properly explained, motivation is easier for students to demonstrate.
2. Allowing learners to 'rabbit-hole' to develop their motivation, explore the relevance of instruction and make connections their prior experiences is much more relevant in the long run and well worth the time spent.
3. Creativity by staff and learners... what will work AND what is viable?

Summary

The goal of any Emergency Communications Training Program should be to educate, train and develop employees in the most efficient and effective way possible. Continual examination of current processes for areas of improvement is essential. Implementation of the Adult Learning Principles, wherever possible, will help maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of your Training Program.



Does anyone have
any further
questions?

Were there any
questions asked that
haven't been
answered?



Thank you

Chris Law - claw@kitsap911.org

Training Supervisor - Kitsap 911

Jon Adams - jon.adams@srec911.org

Training Manager - Spokane Regional
Emergency Communications

