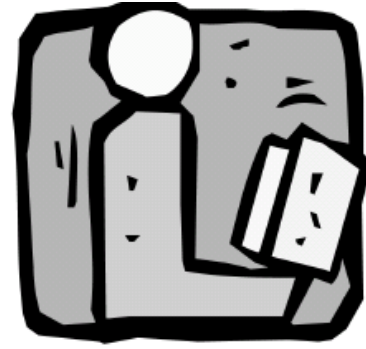


# What We Know About Adult Learners



## A Few Characteristics

- Self directed
- Life and work experienced
- Resourceful
- Task centered
- Motivated through interest and a reason for participating
- Learn by doing; learn by application

## A Few Ideas For Teaching

- Provide a safe, personalized learning environment
- Guide and create opportunities for self reflection
- Try new practices
- Individualize learning
- Vary approaches to learning
- Provide some choice and control

# Adult Learners

The adult learning theory of Malcolm Knowles is a good a description of the average Gen X/Y/Z as well as a typical baby boomer. (Knowles, Holton & Swanson, 2005)

- ⊕ *The need to know:* Adult learners need to know why they need to learn something before initiating the learning process.
- ⊕ *Learner self-concept:* Adults need to be responsible for their own decisions and to be treated as capable of self-direction.
- ⊕ *Role of learners' experience:* Adult learners have a variety of experiences of life that represent the richest resource for learning.
- ⊕ *Readiness to learn:* Adults are ready to learn the things they need to know to cope effectively with life situations.
- ⊕ *Orientation to learning:* Adults are motivated to learn to the extent that they perceive that it will help them perform tasks they confront in their life situations.

## Lies about Learning

<b>The Lie</b>	<b><i>The Truth</i></b>
Learners need the guidance of a top-down learning organization.	People are increasingly aware of their own career development and respond to market forces faster than an organization can.
Learners already know what they need to know; we just have to get out of the way.	The modern work environment is too complex and fast changing for an organization to trust solely in self-development.
People don't really care about learning, just about results.	Presented with interesting and valuable possibilities, people enjoy the learning process itself.
Learners take it on trust that a learning event will be a valuable experience.	In the age of broken social contracts dealing with employment, people need to be shown just why a learning event will be beneficial.
Learners are essentially the same.	Each individual has his or her own need for self-expression, validation, and career development.
Younger learners are inherently different from older ones.	Human beings have much more in common than anything that might set them apart.
Age doesn't matter.	Learners under the age of 30 have grown up in a radically different world compared to their 'elders'. To ignore this fact is to set yourself up for trouble in reaching your audience.

*Lies about Learning*, Murry Christensen ASTD website.