JRF! Literacy Coach Academy Training

Facilitator's Guide

Module 2 - Building Knowledge of Adult Learners (slides 1-9)

90 minutes

Materials:

Handouts 02-06 – articles for research activity
- Handout 02 Characteristics of Adult Learners websites
- Handout 03 *How to Engage and Inspire Adult Learners*
- Handout 04 Professional Paper *Andragogy*
- Handout 05 *the Impact of Adult Learning Theory and Literacy Coaching*
- Handout 06 *Characteristics of Adult Learners*

Chart paper
Post-it Notes
Markers/highlighters
Laptops/IPad
Internet connection

Slide 1	Share with participants: Coaching requires specialized knowledge – knowledge of adult learning theory, knowledge of content and knowledge of differentiation. As you guide the participants through Module 2, keep in mind how adults learn best and allow for opportunities to collaborate, and give participants choices for presenting and sharing information.
Slide 2 **Video** 3:29 minutes	View the video *Vision of an Adult Learner* After watching the video ask participants: How do you learn best? What are the implications for your coaching after viewing this video? You may want to chart the participant's answers to refer back to during the training. Share with the participants: Just as we saw the different goals and perspectives of the teachers in the video, all of our teachers have different goals and different perspectives as well.
Slide 3	Share with participants: Part of being an effective coach involves understanding adult learners. Just like our students, the teachers we work with are all different. As we support teachers as they learn, grow, and make shifts toward change, we need to really know and understand them – What is this teacher **excited** about? What do they **care** about? What

	motivates them? How are they **thinking about their work**? What are their **beliefs and assumptions** about their role as teacher? Give participants an opportunity to identify specific teachers and answer the questions above. Share with participants: For coaching to be as effective as possible, we need to work at establishing a culture of adult learning.
Slide 4	Share with participants: As coaches, how we approach interactions with teachers may differ depending on teacher knowledge, experience and desire to change, **but our interactions must always be built upon a respect for the goals and beliefs of individual teachers about teaching, learning and literacy.** Most adults enter a learning experience to create change – whether it's for a change in our skills, our behavior, beliefs or attitudes or our level of knowledge. We know that our goal as coaches is to support teachers in ways that will have a positive impact on student learning! This visual of the AIM is a framework that shows how we can provide professional learning experiences that will address adult learners as they look to change knowledge, skills and beliefs. We know that our ultimate goal is positive student outcomes and academic results. (circle) What students know, understand and DO, will impact their achievement in the classroom. (orange bar) Underlying that…we see that what a teacher ***actually does*** in the classroom will impact student understanding and actions. **(green bar)** At the very foundation of this model is what a teacher does, or does ***not,*** "KNOW," "DO" or "BELIEVE," will impact the ***actions*** the teacher takes in the classroom. (black bar) Ask the participants to discuss the following: Discuss the implications of this model as it pertains to your coaching. How do we help teachers implement change? How do we support our adult learners as they make changes after new learning experiences? How does knowing this impact our coaching?
Slide 5	Share with participants: As we saw in the video, all adults approach learning from different perspectives - knowledge varies, skill levels vary and we all have different backgrounds and experiences. Share with participants the difference between Pedagogy and Andragogy. **Pedagogical model** – gives the teacher the responsibility of making decisions about the learning and development is based on the transmission of the content.

	Andragogical model –adult learner's development is based on a process of facilitating the acquisition of content rather that transmitting the content. Adults learn differently from children- adults require different instructional strategies.
Slide 6 **Video** 1:48 minutes	View the video *Characteristics of Adult Learners* The video will prepare the participants for the next activity.
Slide 7 **Handouts 02-06**	Share with participants: Many educators have researched the characteristics of adult learners – some have recognized more, some less, however, they all agree that adult learners can be distinguished from young learners. These characteristics of adult learners serve as a foundation for any professional development and our coaching practices. **Handouts 02-06** Assign a different characteristic to each table or partners Participants will: Research the characteristic. Create a visual using the information on the slide. Have participants share their findings. Post charts around the room to refer back to during the training.
Slide 8	Share closing remarks with participants
Slide 9	Reflection Ask participants to reflect on the quote – in writing. Ask for volunteers to share their reflections.

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Module 2
Building Knowledge of Adult Learners

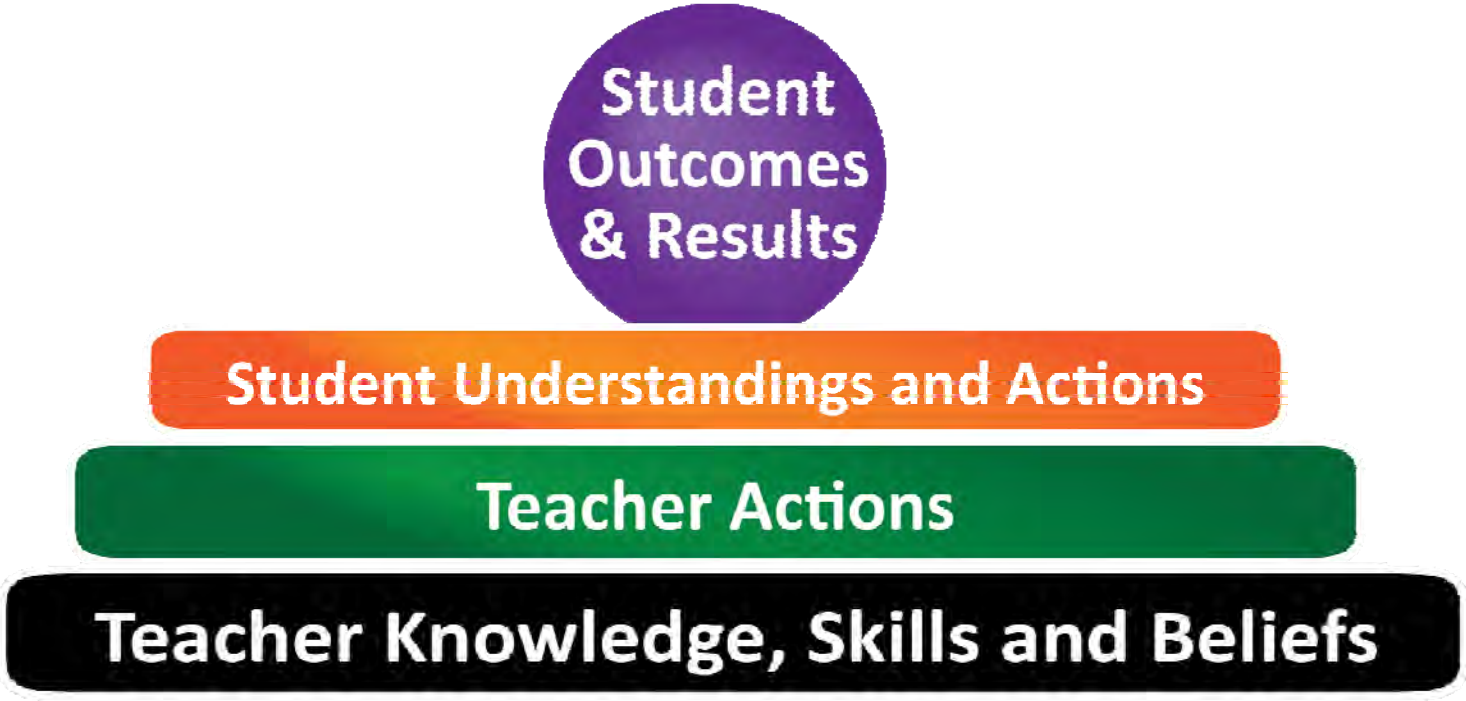
Video

Vision of an Adult Learner

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tu24QNtRado


"As we start a new school year, Mr. Smith,
I just want you to know that I'm an Abstract-
Sequential learner and trust that
you'll conduct yourself accordingly!"

Academic Impact Model



Adapted from Teach For America

Adult Learners

Andragogy

- "The art and science of helping adults learn…based on certain crucial assumptions about the differences between children and adults as learners" (Knowles, 1968).

Video

Characteristics of Adult Learners

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K1OSh6vN-6E

What Does the Research Say?

- Each table will use articles and or websites to research a characteristic of adult learners.
- Describe the characteristics of the learner you have chosen.
- How is this characteristic different from a young learner?
- What are the implications for our coaching?
- What are some strategies you can use with teachers?

In Closing…….

- Literacy Coaches honor the characteristics of adult learners.

- Honor each adult learner as an individual whose needs and interests are respected and incorporated into the coach/learner relationship.

Reflection

"There needs to be a clear vision of how to lead adult learning processes and a culture of adult learning needs to be in place in order for there to be significant student growth over time."

Bredenstein et al. (2012)

Characteristics of Adult Learners:

http://elearningindustry.com/8-important-characteristics-of-adult-learners

http://theelearningcoach.com/learning/characteristics-of-adult-learners/

http://ctle.hccs.edu/facultyportal/tlp/seminars/tl1071SupportiveResources/Ten_Characteristics_Adults-Learners.pdf

http://www.txprofdev.org/apps/onlineteaching/time/Adult_Learners.pdf

http://www.slideshare.net/Angelicacent/adult-learners-characteristics-2033683

http://blog.intradiem.com/six-characteristics-of-adult-learners/

http://nelearn.myelearning.org/mod/page/view.php?id=185

https://elearningindustry.com/11-tips-engage-inspire-adult-learners

http://theelearningcoach.com/learning/characteristics-of-adult-learners

How To Engage And Inspire Adult Learners **Handout 03**

Designing eLearning deliverables that motivate and engage adult learners can be challenging. However, creating top notch eLearning deliverables that cater to adult learners comes with its own unique set of challenges. The good news is that there are a number of tips and techniques that can help you to create meaningful educational experiences for adult learners, which can be applied to eLearning courses and online training events.

1. **Make it relevant!**
   Adult learners need to be able to see the relevancy of what they are learning. How is this eLearning course going to offer them the skill sets they need to improve their work performance? How is the online training event you're developing going to give them the information they need to master a particular task? When designing eLearning deliverables for adult learners, you have to keep in mind that the content has to be relevant, or else they will not be able see the real value in the educational experience you're providing. While you are writing each block of text or choosing the perfect graphics and images, think about how these are going to serve the primary learning goals and objectives.

2. **Include activities and assignments that encourage adult learners to explore.**
   Adult learners accumulate knowledge most effectively when they are active participants in their own learning process. Design activities or assignments that encourage them to explore a subject matter on their own and learn from personal experience. Pose a question or problem and then ask them to arrive at a solution on their own, or place them in groups and have them collaborate in order to discuss the issue at length and benefit from one another's experience and skill sets. When they acquire knowledge on their own, they get inspired to pursue other avenues of self study and online education, and to become more fully engaged in the eLearning environment.

3. **Consider the experience and educational background of the adult learners.**
   Adult learners have typically gathered more life experienced and accumulated a broader knowledge base than younger students. As such, when you're designing your eLearning deliverables for adult audiences, you'll want to take their experience and educational background into account. In other words, it is of high importance to assess your audience carefully. What is the highest level of education they've completed? Which particular tasks are they usually asked to perform while at work? Do they already know the technical jargon that is commonly used in their profession?

4. **Offer immediate feedback to allow adult learners to learn from mistakes.**
   Make the educational experience more powerful and effective by offering immediate feedback when they make an error, or even when they need to know about an alternative problem solving approach. This will provide them with the opportunity to learn from mistakes by catching them at the moment they occur and seeing the direct consequences of that error, rather than waiting until the moment of need has passed to offer invaluable feedback.

5. **Integrate emotionally-driven content.**
   Adult learning audiences often benefit from content that is emotionally-driven. If they feel emotionally connected to the subject matter, then they are more likely to be engaged, so that

they will actually absorb and retain the information. Use images and graphics that are powerful and relevant, as well as written content that evokes a certain feeling. Even the font you use can convey a certain emotion. Positive emotional elements can also serve to inspire and motivate learners who may feel disconnected from the eLearning environment.

6. **Emphasize the real-world benefits.**
   Can you concisely sum up the real world benefits that your eLearning course or online training event offers to its adult learners? The adult learners need to be informed of the real world benefits beforehand, and should be reminded of these benefits periodically. For example, you can add a side note to every module, explaining how the content will offer them real world benefits. This will allow them to realize the purpose behind the educational experience, so that they become motivated and excited.

7. **Keep cognitive overload in mind when creating content.**
   Break your content up into smaller chunks to help avoid cognitive overload. Avoid using large blocks of text, and opt for bullet points or numbered lists instead. Also, you may want to consider designing smaller modules or eLearning courses that focus on specific subject matters, rather than lengthy eLearning courses that cover a wide range of topics.

8. **Use avatars and storytelling to draw in adult learners.**
   Avatars can guide adult learners through modules to increase knowledge comprehension and retention, while storytelling makes the subject matter more interesting and relatable for them. Keep in mind, that when using characters or stories, you should add at least a touch of realism in order to make the content more immersive and effective.

9. **Create deliverables that can be completed quickly and conveniently.**
   Adult learners often learn while they are on-the-go, meaning that they should be able to access the eLearning deliverables on their mobile devices. By creating eLearning deliverables that can be completed quickly and conveniently, you offer them the opportunity to absorb and retain the information anytime, anywhere and when they need it the most.

10. **Remember that practice makes perfect.**
    Include plenty of practice exercises in your eLearning course to ensure that adult learners are able to fully absorb and remember the subject matter. Repetition is key, so develop tasks that require them to repeat certain steps over and over again and keep on reminding them of the important key points all throughout the eLearning course.

11. **Use aesthetically pleasing design elements.**
    Aesthetically pleasing eLearning courses and modules can be more easily assimilated by adult learners, not to mention that can create a more interactive and visually stimulating experience. Include compelling and inspiring images, colorful fonts, and graphic elements that help to draw their attention to the core aspects of the modules.

https://elearningindustry.com/11-tips-engage-inspire-adult-learners

ELearning Design and Development – Christopher Pappas

Florida Literacy and Reading Excellence Professional Paper

Andragogy
From Subject-centered to Problem-centered

"It is no longer functional to define education as a process of transmitting what is known; it must now be defined as a lifelong process of continuing inquiry."

~ Malcom S. Knowles, 1970
The Modern Practice of Adult Education, p. 38

ANDRAGOGY IS…

Andragogy is a term that has been extensively used for adult education and has been defined as the "art and science of helping adults learn" (Knowles, 1970, p. 38) as contrasted with *pedagogy*, the art and science of teaching children. *Pedagogy* is derived from the Greek word *paid*, which means *child* combined with *agogos*, which means *leading*. *Andragogy* is derived from *andr*, meaning *man* plus *agogos*. The European monastic schools of the Middle Ages are credited with originally developing the pedagogical model of instruction. Several hundred years later, in 1833, a German teacher named Alexander Kapp formulated the term *andragogy* (Davenport and Davenport, 1985). However, not until 1968 did the use of the term *andragogy* widely capture the attention of adult educators. Malcolm Knowles, then a professor of adult education at Boston University, introduced the term through a journal article.

BACKGROUND

In the field of adult education, *andragogy* and the name *Malcolm Knowles* have become inextricably linked. For Knowles, the andragogic model for learning is premised on at least four crucial assumptions about adult learners that differ from assumptions about child learners. (Four made up his original proposal; the fifth was later added.) They are as follows:

1. Self concept: *As a person matures, his self concept moves from one of being a dependent personality toward one of being a self-directed human being.*
2. Experience: *As a person matures, he accumulates a growing reservoir of experience that becomes an increasing resource for learning.*
3. Readiness to learn: *As a person matures, his readiness to learn becomes oriented increasingly to the developmental tasks of his social roles.*
4. Orientation to learning: *As a person matures, his time perspective changes from one of postponed application of knowledge to immediacy of application, and accordingly his orientation toward learning shifts from one of subject-centeredness to one of problem centeredness.*
5. Motivation to Learn: *As a person matures, the motivation to learn is internal* (Knowles, 1984b).

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PEDAGOGY AND ANDRAGOGY

It is important to note that the claims of differences between pedagogy and andragogy are the subject of much debate. The pedagogical model was first used in the monastic schools of Europe in the Middle Ages when young boys were received into the monasteries and taught by monks. The system of instruction required these children to be obedient, faithful, and efficient servants of the church (Knowles, 1984a). The tradition of pedagogy seems to have essentially developed from this origin later spreading to the secular schools of Europe and America. It became and is still the dominant form of instruction.

The pedagogical model gives the teacher full responsibility for making decisions about the learning, and development is based upon **transmission** of the content as the major concern:

- What **content** needs to be covered
- How the content can be **organized** into manageable units or modules
- How the content can be transmitted in a logical **sequence**
- How the content can be most effectively transmitted (**media**) (Knowles, 1984b, Clark, 1999).

In andragogy, development is based upon a process design with the major concern being **facilitating** the acquisition of the content. The teacher's role is

- Designing and managing a process for facilitating the acquisition of content by the learners
- Serving as a content resource and providing leads for other content resources (e.g., peers, supervisors, specialists) (Knowles, 1984b, Clark, 1999).

Until recently, the pedagogical model had been applied equally to the teaching of adults and children. Knowles (1984) proposes that this is a contradiction in terms because as adults mature they become increasingly independent and responsible for their own actions. A sincere desire to solve immediate problems in their lives is an authentic motivator for adult learning. Adults, also, have an increasing need to be self-directing. The pedagogical model, in many ways, does not address these developmental changes (Knowles, 1984a). Because of the need to remedy this situation, andragogy has developed as an alternative model of instruction and has been instrumental in improving the teaching of adults.

Also, it is interesting to note that as the use of the term *andragogy* has evolved, it has taken on a wider meaning and now more often refers to learner-focused education for people of all ages. Knowles, himself, suggests (in the second edition of his original 1970 publication):

> …*andragogy* is simply another model of assumptions about adult learners to be used alongside the pedagogical model of assumptions, thereby providing two alternative models for testing out the assumptions as to their 'fit' with particular situations. Furthermore, the models are probably most useful when seen not as dichotomous but rather as two ends of a spectrum, with a realistic assumption (about learners) in a given situation falling in between the two ends. (Knowles, 1980, p. 43).

ADULT LEARNERS

Adult learners are self-initiated, and the desire to learn tends to last a long time; so motivation is usually not a problem. Adults tend to seek opportunities for learning while also balancing life responsibilities with the demands of learning. These opportunities are often prompted by life changes, such as marriage, divorce, a job change, job termination, retirement or a geographical change (Cross, 1981). Adults usually want to learn something that will better their lives in some way. They are not necessarily interested in knowledge for its own sake; learning may be simply a means to an end. Also, very importantly, these adults bring a wealth of information and experiences to a learning situation and, therefore, generally want to be treated as equals who can assume responsibility for their own learning (Zemke & Zemke, 1984). For these reasons, Knowles hypothesized in his work that adult learning could not follow the principles of traditional pedagogy with teachers making all the decisions about the learning. To fully understand what is meant by "the adult learner", it is important to note that the definition of "adult" is not strictly related to age. As his thinking and work evolved, Knowles (1980) himself defined adulthood as "the point at which individuals perceive themselves to be essentially self-directing".

IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING/PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

With adults being self-directed, goal oriented, practical, problem solvers, and having accumulated life experiences, what implications might these characteristics have for teaching and learning, especially as related to professional development?

Some considerations when planning courses for adults or professional development sessions might include having instructors who:

- Assume a role of facilitator or resource rather than that of lecturer.
- Create an educational program and setting in which adult learners can develop self-directed (perhaps latent) learning skills.
- Involve adults in the planning and evaluation of their learning experiences.
- Involve adults actively in their learning.
- Provide scaffolding for learners (the instructor provides a higher level of support in the early stages of the course or class; this support gradually diminishes as learners become self-reliant).
- Stimulate dialogue and knowledge construction through learner-centered organization.
- Organize learning experiences around competency development.
- Make learning experiences relevant to job and/or personal life.
- Provide explanations as to why specific things are included in the learning experience and/or materials.
- Take into account the wide range of learner backgrounds.
- Include opportunities for reflection, which can account for significant personal learning.
- Involve participants in diagnosing their own learning needs and formulating their own learning objectives.
- Encourage learners to identify and use resources to accomplish their objectives.
- Assist learners in carrying out their lesson plans.
- Include learning for enjoyment and/or personal interest.
- Involve learners in evaluating their learning.
- Establish a climate of humanness, physically and psychologically conducive to learning that includes some of the following:
  - circular seating arrangements
  - collaborative and supportive modes of learning
  - climate of mutual respect among participants
  - atmosphere that encourages mutual trust (Knowles, 1975, 1984a, 1984b; Brookfield, 1986; Zemke & Zemke, 1984).

CONCLUSION

Andragogy as an alternative model of instruction has caught the attention of educators, especially adult educators. It continues to prompt much discussion and debate and has been an impetus for further examination of teaching and learning for children as well as adults.

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FLaRE Center
Teaching Academy – Suite 403
University of Central Florida
4000 Central Florida Blvd
Orlando, FL 32816-1250

Phone: 407-823-4785
FAX: 407-823-4682
http://flare.ucf.edu

FLaRE is a Project of the University of Central Florida College of Education and administered under a grant from the Florida Department of Education and Just Read, Florida!

Journal of Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives in Education Vol. 3, No. 1 (May 2010) 19 - 26

The Impact of Adult Learning Theory And Literacy Coaching

Susan Swift and Christopher Kelly

In the past century, professional development has played a key role in educational reform with a great emphasis on life-long professional learning. There are a wide variety of organizations and businesses presently that use professional development for improving professional competence, for organizational enhancement, or to comply with regulations set by industry and government. The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 requires that states ensure the availability of "high-quality" professional development for all educators (No Child Left Behind Act, 2001). However, NCLB does not overtly define high-quality professional development or how it should be delivered to educators (Borko, 2004). Professional development strategies currently employed in education include: short or long-term training related to a specific discipline or instructional technique, supervision, book studies, professional learning communities, mentoring, consulting, and coaching. In this manuscript paper, we will discuss adult learning theory, and how knowledge of it can enhance professional development in the field of education. We argue that one specific practice, literacy coaching, can result in successful, productive professional development as it pertains to teachers as adult learners. We will also address the issue of the inconsistent delivery of the K-12 coaching model in education today, and steps that can be taken to resolve it.

Adult Learning Theory

Until the mid-1900s, research in academic psychology was relied upon by those who educated adults in a professional setting for a basic understanding of how adults learn. The research was behavioristic by design and often was based on research that involved how children learn, or situations where adults participated in the same studies as children (Merriam, 2001).

Adult learning theory, or andragogy, emerged in the 1960s with the work of Knowles. Andragogy focuses on the learning strategies of adults. It is often defined as the process of engaging adult learners with the structure of learning experiences. Having a sound understanding of adult learning theory is beneficial for anyone providing professional development in education. There is a mosaic of theories, models, sets of principles, and explanations that, combined, compose the knowledge base of adult learning (Merriam, 2008).

In the field of education, teachers learn by their experience with individual children, by groups of children, each group having its own needs, and by instructional successes and failures. Honoring the characteristics of adult learners in education can guide professional development to be thoughtful, relevant, and connected to what teachers know and bring to a learning situation.

The concept of adult learning started to take form early in the 20th century as many theories were developed. Notable leaders in the field of adult learning theory are Knowles, Maslow, Kohlberg, and Perry. Looking at work of Knowles and Perry, as well as the current research of Smith, provides us with a broad overview and with an understanding of the similarities and differences among thinking of leading researchers in this field. Knowles was known for his influence in the development of the Humanist Learning Theory and constructed several basic assumptions about adult learners. The first involved motivation. Adult learners are motivated by their immediate needs and interests, or actual problems that need to be solved (Knowles, 1990; Merriam, 2001).

Next, learning is a life-long experience. Most adults continue to grow and learn throughout the course of their lives and careers. Third, Knowles highlighted experiencial learning as the main source of adult learning. Adults learn through

personal and "on the job" experiences. Next, adults prefer to be self-directed in their learning. That is, they have specific learning styles and interests as learners, and like to have input into their learning experiences. Finally, individual differences should be acknowledged and learning should be differentiated for each learner. By respecting and incorporating these principles into learning activities, adult learners will feel that their ideas and presence are "accepted, respected, and supported" (Knowles, 1990, p.5; Merriam, 2001).

An understanding of various models of adult learning theory can be benficial to those who provide professional development within academic settings in offering effective, sustainable professional development activities. Four learning theories, identified by Trotter, specifically impact professional development models. The first, *age theory*, contends that as people age, they do not stop learning. Learning is something that continues throughout the life cycle. As we grow, we engage in the world and are changed by it. Thoughtful professional development programs take into consideration the knowledge and background of educators, yet provide affirmation and feedback for their continued learning. The second, *stage theory*, focuses on distinct qualitative differences in modes of thinking at various points in development. Professional development that provides differentiation for adult learners honors the personal and professional experience of each learner.

Cognitive development is the development of conceptual levels with degrees in abstractness and interpersonal maturity. Perry's research of cognitive development asserts that adults move from concrete to abstract thinking, and operate from internal rather than external criteria. Therefore, the "stand and deliver" model often used for working with adult learners is often unsuccessful and fails to yield changes in instuctional practice. More appropriate professional development is hands-on, with experiences that immerse learners in relevant content and method. Finally, *functional development* contends that instructors and textbooks should play a secondary role with the learner being the primary focus in adult education. Often professional development is filled with lecture and a one-directional delivery method. When adult experience, background and interests are respected, it lead to powerful educational learning as well as produce positive professional change or growth, which affects student learning. A thorough understanding and appreciation of each of these theories can help increase both the relevance and quality of professional development offered to educators (Trotter, 2006).

Along a similar vein, Smith (1985) identified six characteristics that make learning meaningful for adults. Adult learning, according to Smith, is life-long, personal, involves change, is part of human development, involves experience, and is partly intuitive. His theory also promoted the ideas that adult learning should be both non-threatening and should involve or recognize various learning styles. The coaching model, as will be described in this paper, incorporates these beliefs and honors the unique needs of adults.

There have been many theories in the twentieth century that were developed regarding adult learning. It becomes more critical to put in place effective practices that support adult learning as we move further into the twenty-first century. Educational institutions that put theory into practice will stay competitive in the global market. When providing professional development, the needs of adult learners should be addressed. Adults, like children, should receive instruction that is differentiated based on their learning needs, be provided a variety of concrete and relevant experiences, be honored for the experience they bring to their professional development situation, and it should incorporate their ideas and topics of interest.

Adult Learning in the Field of Education

There are several effective strategies that can be applied in order to effectively reach the adult learner. The issue of adult learning has generated much research in the field of education in the past three decades. In 1980, Oja (1980) cited several key "ingredients" for successful adult learning. The first involves using or creating concrete experiences. Often, for teachers, the "make it-take it" workshops are very successful because they provide the adult learner the opportunity to apply what they are learning. Professional development where instructional techniques are modeled and practiced also give teacher a concrete experience and the

confidence to transfoer their new learning to instruction. Coaching allows for this modeling to occur in an authentic, natural way.

The second strategy is to be open and available for supervision and advising (Oja, 1980). Education is known for its one-stop, or "drive-by" workshops, at which an "educational expert" comes, provides professional development, and leaves. There are essentially no systems in place for supporting teacher's questions, concerns, misunderstandings or to celebrate their successes. As with children, if frustration builds, new practice will be abandoned and replaced with a previously mastered instructional technique, although it may not be appropriate or considered to be "best practice." Addtionally, if accountability is built into the equation, either from a colleague or an advisor, teachers are more likely to implement new learning into their instruction. Coaches build relationships with teachers and provide the element of accountibility and support that many teachers need in order to move from learning to implementation (Knight, 2009).

Oja (1980) suggested that trainers and coaches need to provide encouragement and opportunities for adult learners to take on new and complex roles. In some cases, providing opportunities for action research, self-study, and teacher leadership roles can yield high results with adult learners (Oja, 1980). Often, encouragement from a coach or advisor and acknowledgement of good practice is all that is needed to encourage leadership.

The final "ingredient" for successful adult learning is through the practice of support and providing feedback when implementing new techniques (Oja, 1980). This is where job-embedded strategies, such as modeling and coaching, can be highly effective. If teachers are given opportunities to work with a coach in a collaborative, non-judgmental context, to have someone with whom to discuss their concerns, change is more likely to occur (Knight, 2009). A drawback to this method is the cost associated with it, although the return on investment is much higher than it is with other forms of professional development. Making the effort to incorporate these ingredients will assist educational institutions in providing quality professional development to teachers.

In 2009, the National Council of Staff Development recently completed and reported on one of the largest studies to date regarding professional development in the field of education. The study higlighted current professional development practices in the United States, how other, high-achieving countries conduct and implement professional development activities, and what research says about best practices for effective professional development. Among the findings: Sustained and intensive professional development for teachers is related to increased student achievement. Ultimately, the goal of any professional development is to change or improve instructional practice or other school-related issue in order to increase student learning (Darling-Hammond et al, 2009).

Another key finding was that professional development that occurred over an extended period of time and allowed for teachers to practice, discuss, adjust, and reflect, resulted in the greatest change in instructional practice and in student achievement. Professional development activities connected to teacher practice such as content area and school initiatives was determined to be more effective than professional development that was not. Teachers responded positively to professional development that focused on their specific academic content and concerns. Additionally, when it was also related to school-wide programs or initiatives, professional development helped to build strong working relationships among the entire staff.

In other words, collaborative approaches to professional learning can promote school change that extends beyond the classroom. The report concluded by stating that by strengthening the capacity of educators, by building learning communities, and by developing more systematic approaches to professional learning, educators will be more productive and effective in instruction, which will result in student gains (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009). The concept of coaching, specifically as it applies to literacy, incorporates these key findings into its structure.

Literacy Coaching

Understanding adult learning theory and best practices within the field of professional development can influence approaches related to literacy coaching. In the past decade, there has been a shift from the role of reading professionals as "reading specialists" to "literacy coaches." While a reading specialist's primary role is to support literacy within the school setting by working with children, a literacy coach's primary role is to work with teachers, helping them to recognize their core knowledge and strengths, to assist them in strengthening and improving their abilities, and to support them as they grow and learn professionally (Mraz, et al, 2008; Toll, 2005). Whereas a reading specialist focuses on student support, frequently providing direct instruction to and evaluation of students, the literacy coach's primary role is to support teachers, as well as to be a school's literacy leader. They may work with students when modeling or demonstrating for teachers, but much of their professional time is spent working with teachers, thereby building the capacity of their literacy staff and building a professional learning community within their school (Mraz, et al, 2008).

The International Reading Association has also recognized the importance of the coaching model in regard to literacy instruction and learning. According to the *IRA Standards for Reading Professionals* (2003), a literacy coach is someone who provides professional development for teachers, gives support to teachers as need to implement various instructional programs and practices, and provides leadership for the school's literacy program. The IRA asserts that by improving the skills of teachers, literacy coaches more effectively impact a student population than by working with individual students or even small groups of students all day long.

The Effectiveness of Literacy Coaching

Researchers in the past decade support the effectiveness of coaching (Knight, 2009; Matsumura, et al, 2009; Toll, 2005). Some of the benefits of coaching, according to this research, can include that literacy coaching impacts school culture in a positive way, supports change in practice, promotes teacher reflection and incorporates their input and decision making, honors the characteristics of adult learners, and has been shown to lead to student achievement (Toll, 2005). Literacy coaching, by nature, encourages collaboration among professionals, which can promote trust and better working relationships. Because literacy coaches encourage collaboration, reflection, and making decisions based on experiences and data, change can be both significant and sustainable (Toll, 2005). Coaches endeavor to promote reflective practice by establishing relationships based on mutual respect, trust, and common goals. However, the teachers do most of the "work" by thinking, implementing new instructional strategies, and talking about their practice. A strong coach gives teachers the opportunity to do this in a supportive environment, as research supports reflection of practice a strength of the best teachers. In a recent study that examined the roles and perceptions of literacy coaches, teachers favored this type of relationship wiht a coach and cited the collaboration and co-teaching as benefits (Mraz, et al, 2008).

Literacy coaches honor each adult learner as an individual, whose needs and interests are respected and incorporated into the coach/learner relationship. Teacher learning style, learning needs, and input are important in the dynamic of the relationship. Finally, and most relevant for the current accountability-oriented educational climate in which educators live, coaching is an effective practice in improving student achievement. Research completed in the late 1980s was among the first to make a positive correlation between coaching and student achievement gains. Additional studies that focused solely on literacy also reached the same conclusion (Knight, 2009; Matsumura et al., 2009; Toll, 2005)).

Bush (1984) examined the rate of transfer from learning into practice in several different delivery models of professional development. Bush found that teachers who had participated in a workshop, modeling, practice, feedback, and peer coaching had a 95% rate of transfer. The next most successful model, which involved workshop, modeling, practice, and feedback, had only a 16-19% rate of transfer (see Figure 2). The impact of coaching is significant in relation to the of transfer to classroom practice as compared to the other forms of professional development (Knight, 2009).

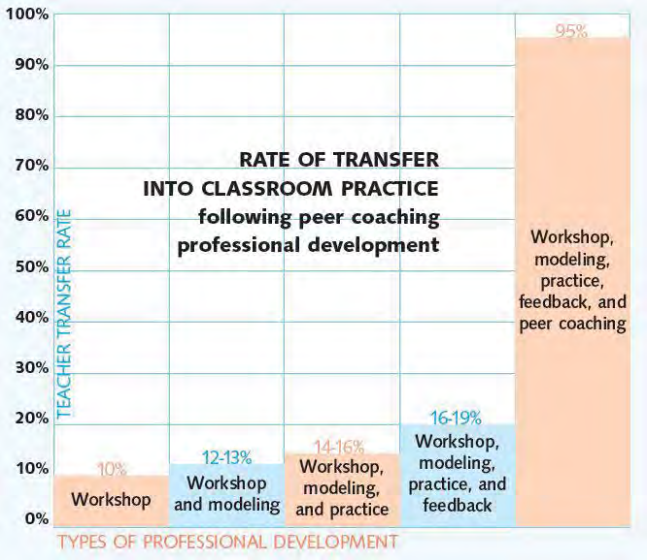

Figure 2 This chart measures the impact of various professional development techniques and their impact on instruction. Knight, J. (2009). Coaching: The key to translating research into practice lies in continuous, job-embedded learning with ongoing support.

In another study, teachers who were coached on a specific instructional routine implemented it at a 90% rate. Those who were not coached implemented the routine at only a 30% rate. The relationship that can exist between coaching and transferring learning into practice after coaching is highlighted in these examples (Knight, 2009).

Elements of Effective Literacy Coaching

If literacy coaching is a successful model of reaching adult learners in the field of of education, what are the specific elements of an effective coaching model? Common themes among types of successful coaching were examined by Knight in 2009, including literacy coaching. Coaching should first focus on instructional practice. Teachers are more engaged and motivated if professional learning relates to their teaching and their content area. Next, coaching takes place in classrooms, or is "job-embedded." Teachers and coaches work together with the children that teacher works with every day. Teaching is modeled and reciprocated, co-teaching and planning may happen, reflection on teaching and learning occur, all of it accomplished within the classroom setting that is authentic for each teacher, not a hypothetical situation or vignette (Knight, 2009).

Literacy coaching is intensive and on-going, meaning it is individual and lasts for an extended period of time. In order for teachers to put into practice what has been modeled or learned, they need to be given time. Additional time is allowed for discussion between the coach and the teacher, reflection of lessons, adjustments, and mastery. During the coaching process, there is an equal partnership is established between the teacher and coach, where the teacher assumes some control and choice in the learning. This is not only an effective element of adult learning, but creates a professional relationship that engages both parties involved (Knight, 2009).

The coaches' role in the relationship is not evaluative, although there can be cross-observation, discussion, and reflection. It is important that teachers understand that a coach is there to provide support and guidance in a collaborative way, not to monitor for observation and purposes of evaluation. That confidentiality is maintained between the coach and teacher is also in establishing trust and building the partnership between teacher and coach (Knight, 2009).

Finally, the importance of open communication is paramount for a successful coaching experience, where both the coach and teacher are respectful of each other. When coaches and teachers can communicate with each other in a professional, non-threatening way, they can confront real instructional issues or challenges honestly. The common threads between adult learning and best practices in literacy coaching weave a tapestry of powerful learning, related to practice and therefore, student learning (Knight, 2009).

There are *additional* conditions for a successful coaching relationship, factors that can make a difference as to the overall success of the coaching, and which need to be considered thoughtfully before implementing this type of professional development. In a study completed between 2005 and 2008 at the University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning, researchers there worked with coaches, teachers, and administrators in schools and districts in over thirty five states. The data they gathered also included administrative support and a positive school climate as conditions

for success. For many teachers and coaches, these are not variables within their control. However, establishing clearly the role of a literacy coach within a school setting and communicating clearly and frequently with administrators can build relationships between teachers, coaches and administrators within the school. Postitive coaching experiences, which lead to improved teacher efficacy, can result in an improved school climate and additional administrator support (Knight, 2009; Matsumura, 2009).

Complexities of Literacy Coaching

While some research has shown the coaching model to have a positive correlation with implementation of learned instructional techniques and student achievement, one of the problems associated with it is the lack of continuity in how it is implemented. Because of this variability, the amount of coaching a teacher receives and the structure of the coaching relationship, the influence of coaching on student learning and instructional strategies has resulted in mixed results regarding overall effectiveness in some research (Matsumura, et al, 2009). Many coaches strive to implement instructional reform through this process, yet there are political and organizational issues within schools and districts that can impede their progress. Additional obstacles include the variability in qualifications of a coach, how the role of the coach is defined by administrators, teachers, and coaches, administrative support for the concept of coaching, the organization or structure of the coaching relationship, as well as school culture and climate (Knight, 2009; Matsumura, et al., 2009; Mraz, et al, 2009).

Throughout school districts and states, there is variability in the requirements needed to be a coach. This is an area that the IRA has addressed in their position statement on literacy coaching: "Reading coaching is a powerful intervention with great potential; however, that potential will be unfulfilled if reading coaches do not have sufficient depth of knowledge and range of skills to perform adequately in the coaching role" (IRA, 2004c, p.4).

In another recent study, a principal's views and overall endorsement of the coach showed a positive impact on how teachers received the coach and coaching overall. Teachers responded to the instructional leadership of their administrators (Matsumura, et al., 2009). Teachers who work in a learning community where they are respected and encouraged to take risks are more likely to collaborate with others, such as a coach (Knight, 2009).

An additional issue that impacts coaching is the cost associated with it. It is perceived to be far more economical for schools and districts to implement staff development in a one or two-day workshop, where a large group of participants receive a small amount of training, than it is to invest in individual teachers over an extended period of time. However, to bring about change takes time and intense, on-going support, and literacy coaching is a model that can accomplish this (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; Knight, 2009).

Conclusion and Research Implications

Although literacy coaching has shown a positive effect on the reading achievement in several studies, there is still not a large body of research regarding literacy coaching (Mraz, 2008, Matsumura et al., 2009). More research needs to be done in this area, as well as in the behavior of effective literacy coaches, as evidenced by instructional change and student achievement. What, specifically, do effective coaches do that support and help teachers to improve reading and writing instruction in their schools? How closely are these behaviors tied to the characteristics that support adult learning? These studies should involve mixed methodology, both qualitative and quantitative data. In an era of educational accountability, an effort to obtain more quantitative data in this research should be a consideration.

A clearly defined model of literacy coaching and its implementation, created after research has been synthesized, would provide continuity in how it is understood and used within schools. Looking to best practice in professional development, successful coaching data, and student achievement will help create a more standardized model that can then be shared with literacy coaches.

Professional development has played a key role in educational reform in the past century. Research indicates specific practices that can result in successful, productive professional development as it pertains to adult learners. Research in academic

psychology in the mid-1900s brought a better understanding of how adults learn, and established that having a sound understanding of adult learning theory was essential for professional development in the field of education. By incorporating various models of adult learning theory into professional development, schools and districts are more likely to provide effective, sustainable professional development for teachers.

Both adult learning theory and research within the educational community suggest that professional development should be on-going, related to personal needs, reflective, involve change, understand human development, and honor intuition and learner experience. As we move further into the twenty-first century, it is important to implement effective professional learning experiences that support adult learning. By making the effort to apply these practices, we are investing in our educators and our students. Incorporating these strategies will result in more effective professional development and ultimately improve instructional practice and increase student learning in literacy.

The past decade has brought about great change in professional development related to literacy by employing literacy coaches to build teacher capacity. Research has shown that literacy coaches can effectively impact a student population by improving the skills of teachers. Literacy coaches who encourage collaboration, reflection, and making decisions based on experiences and data support adult learning research. Literacy coaches who honor each adult learner as an individual, whose needs and interests are respected and incorporated into the coach/learner relationship can help to positively influence the climate and culture of a professional learning community. Research shows that the rate of transfer from learning into practice is higher for coaching verses other delivery models of professional development, and while the research done at this point in time is encouraging, more qualitative and quantitative research needs to be conducted in the area of qualities of effective literacy coaches, as well as coaching and how it affects student achievement. There is inconsistent delivery of the K-12 coaching model in education today, and steps need to be taken to resolve it. Additionally, there needs to be more uniformity in the way that the coaching model is implemented, as well as in the qualifications of a literacy coach, to ensure that the highest standards are in place for our students and our teachers.

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Handout 06

Characteristics of Adult Learners

by Connie Malamed

When it comes to learning, adults are not over-sized children. Maturity brings unique characteristics that affect how adults are motivated to learn. By appealing to the unique qualities of adult learners, we can design more effective and motivating online courses. Here's a list of generalized characteristics common to many but not all adult learners.

- **Autonomy.** Adults typically prefer a sense of control and self-direction. They like options and choice in their learning environment. Even adults who feel anxiety from self-direction may learn to appreciate this approach if given proper initial support.
- **Goal-oriented.** Many adults have specific goals they are trying to achieve. They prefer to partake in learning activities that help them reach their goals.
- **Practical.** Adults in the workplace prefer practical knowledge and experiences that will make work easier or provide important skills. In other words, adults need personal relevance in learning activities.
- **Competence and mastery.** Adults like to gain competence in workplace skills as it boosts confidence and improves self-esteem.
- **Learning by experience.** Many adults prefer to learn by doing rather than listening to lectures.
- **Wealth of Knowledge.** In the journey from childhood to adulthood, people accumulate a unique store of knowledge and experiences. They bring this depth and breadth of knowledge to the learning situation.
- **Purposeful.** Workplace training is often part of an initiative that involves change. Adults want to know the purpose of training and the motivation underlying an organization's training initiative.
- **Emotional Barriers.** Through experience, adults may fear a subject, have anxiety about a subject or feel anger about forced changes in job responsibilities or policies. These emotions can interfere with the learning process.
- **Results-oriented.** Adults are results-oriented. They have specific expectations for what they will get out of learning activities and will often drop out of voluntary learning if their expectations aren't met.
- **Outside responsibilities.** Most adult learners have numerous responsibilities and commitments to family, friends, community and work. Carving out time for learning affects adult learners.
- **Potential physical limitations.** Depending on their age and physical condition, adult learners may acquire psychomotor skills more slowly than younger students and have more difficulties reading small fonts and seeing small images on the computer screen.
- **Big Picture.** Adults require the big picture view of what they're learning. They need to know how the small parts fit into the larger landscape.
- **Responsible for Self**. Adult learners often take responsibility for their own success or failure at learning.
- **Need for Community.** Many self-directed adult learners prefer a learning community with whom they can interact and discuss questions and issues.