

Understanding Adult Learners

The design of an online course begins with an understanding of the audience—the students. Generally, students who enroll in an online course are adults. Adult learners are diverse in their learning styles, life experiences, education, personalities, and in ways that they strategize to learn. They seek to make their learning meaningful as they move through life in that they want their learning to connect to their daily lives and to make sense (Lawler, 2003).

Malcolm Knowles (1980) proposed a theory of adult learning, pedagogy for adults, called Androgogy. He held that androgogy, which in Greek means “adult-leading,” should be distinguished from pedagogy that, in Greek, means “child-leading.”

Andragogy makes four assumptions about the design of learning:

1. Adults need to know why they need to learn something
2. Adults need to learn experientially
3. Adults approach learning as problem-solving
4. Adults learn best when the topic is of immediate value.

These assumptions indicate that the design of instruction for adults should focus on the “process of learning.” Process activities include case studies, role playing, simulations, and self-evaluation.

Principles of instruction supporting Knowles’ theory of adult learning include:

1. Adults need to be involved in the planning and evaluation of their instruction.
2. Experience (including mistakes) provide the basis for learning activities.
3. Adults are most interested in learning subjects that have immediate relevance to their job or personal life.
4. Adult learning is problem-centered rather than content-oriented.

The Theories of Adult Learning (CAL) model presented by K. P. Cross includes four principles to keep in mind regarding adult learning programs:

1. Adult learning programs should capitalize on the experience of participants.



Modeling the Use of ClassLive Pro

Hosts: Dr. Steve Shwiff
Dr. Leah Wickersham

Date: April 8th, 10:30-12:00 a.m.

Location: Faculty Lounge

Join us for an eFaculty LIVE! session as Drs. Shwiff and Wickersham present how they are using ClassLive Pro in their online courses.

ClassLive Pro (CLP) is a synchronous tool which provides for faculty and student interactions in real time. CLP features include a shared interactive whiteboard, application sharing, live webcam video, breakout rooms, chat, a graphing calculator, PowerPoint import, content import, record and playback features, polling, synchronized web browsing, and the archiving of sessions.

To **register** for this session go to www.tamu-commerce.edu/itde. Select the ‘training’ link under Instructional Design on the left navigation bar.

eCollege Tips

Threaded Discussions

- **Make threads read-only after a certain date.** This allows students to go back and reference threaded discussions, but they cannot add more posts after you ‘lock’ them.
- **Allow students to edit their posts.** Sometimes students make grammatical errors--or perhaps they just change their minds about a statement made. Threaded Discussions default to *not* allowing students the ability to edit, but you can change that. Keep in mind that when students do edit a post, the system does not retain the original post(s). The system will note, though, that a post has been edited and the date.

2. Adult learning programs should adapt to the aging limitations of the participants.
3. Adults should be challenged to move to increasingly advanced stages of personal development.
4. Adults should have as much choice as possible in the availability and organization of learning programs.

To read more about adult learning:

<http://adulthood.about.com/cs/learningtheory/>
<http://www.hcc.hawaii.edu/intranet/committees/FacDevCom/guidebk/teachtip/adults-2.htm>

Knowles, M. (1980). *The modern practice of adult education: From pedagogy to andragogy*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Cambridge Adult Education.

Lawler, P. (2003). *Teachers as adult learners: A new perspective* (New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, No. 98) San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Kearsley, G. (2008) Theories into practice. Retrieved March 3, 2008, from <http://tip.psychology.org/>

Gradebook Review Date

Remember to check the grade-book review date for your exams. These dates over-ride any grade-book setting in order to protect the integrity of the exam. If the grade is not viewable via the grade-book, make sure to check that this date has passed.

Edit Schedule Window

If you receive a blank page when saving changes in the Edit Schedule window, you will want to check for a popup blocker on your computer or hold down the CTRL button on your keyboard when clicking Save Changes. This will automatically bypass most popup blockers.

Contact information for online course assistance: Email: online@tamuc-commerce.edu
Phone: 903.886.5511



Assessing Student Readiness for Online Courses — May Mini and Summer Courses —

The Readiness for Education At a Distance Indicator (**READI**) is a web-based tool designed to serve as an early warning device to identify students who may be deficient in the skills and attributes necessary for successful distance learning. READI indicates the degree to which an individual student possesses attributes, skills and knowledge that contribute to success in online learning, including: self-motivation; time-management skills; self-discipline; reading comprehension; persistence; ability to use a laptop, printer, software and the Internet; and typing speed and accuracy.

READI provides an immediate score and diagnostic interpretation of results to the student and the instructor

If you would like your online students to take advantage of the resources provided through **READI**, please include this link in your online course <http://tamuc.readi.info/>. Students will login with the following username/password combination: [tamuc/online](#). Students will be directed to create a personal login and be given access to the assessment.

As instructors you may receive a summative report detailing the individual **READI** scores of your students. Results are presented in easy-to-interpret charts and graphs. The on-screen report consists of colorful charts that indicate the participant's level of READIness in reading speed & comprehension, technical competency, individual attributes, typing speed & accuracy, and preferred learning styles. To learn more about how to access these student reports, please e-mail online@tamuc-commerce.edu.

eCollege Training Sessions

Training sessions on specific eCollege components and instructional software tools are available for the design and development of your online course(s).

To find out more about each session or to register for one or more sessions, go to www.tamuc-commerce.edu/itde. Select the 'training' link under Instructional Design on

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www.tamuc.edu/edu. Select the 'training' link under Instructional Design on the left navigation bar.

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