

CHAPTER 17

Personal Adult Learning Style Inventory

Developed by Dr. Malcolm S. Knowles

This inventory is for anyone involved in organizing and administering adult learning activities. You might be a trainer, teacher, group facilitator, administrator, educator, or anyone who works with adults in teaching/learning relationships. Your responses to this inventory will give you some insight into your general orientation to adult learning, program development, learning methods, and program administration.

Self-assessments are not easy for anyone to make accurately. How we would like to be seen by others comes in conflict with how we really behave. Our vision of ourselves is likely to be somewhat optimistic. Please be as candid as possible in your responses so that you can obtain a better understanding of your HRD style.

Directions: Thirty pairs of items are listed on the next seven pages. The statements comprising each pair are labeled A and B. After reading each pair and considering your own approach, decide on the extent to which you agree with *each* statement. Place your response on the scale in the center of the page by circling *one* of the choices.

This inventory is designed to be used in a variety of settings; therefore, the words *facilitator* and *trainer* may be used interchangeably, as well as *learning* and *training*. Both words are included in the inventory and denoted with a slashmark (“/”).

Use the following key:

- A = I agree fully with statement A
- A>B = I agree more with statement A than B
- NANB = I do not agree with either statement A or B
- B>A = I agree more with statement B than A
- B = I agree fully with statement B

Go to the Next Page....

Note: Permission is granted to use this inventory without limitation.

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	A	A	A>B	NANB	B>A	B	B
1	There are a number of important differences between youths and adults as learners that can affect the learning process.	A	A>B	NANB	B>A	B	For the most part adults and youths do not differ greatly in terms of the learning process.
2	Effective learning/training design puts equal weight on content and process plans.	A	A>B	NANB	B>A	B	Effective learning/training design is concerned with content first and process second.
3	Effective facilitators/trainers model self-directed learning in their own behavior, both within and outside the learning session.	A	A>B	NANB	B>A	B	Effective facilitators/trainers show learners that they, the facilitators/trainers, are content experts, with the knowledge and skills to be “in the driver’s seat.”
4	Effective learning/training is based on sound methods for involving learners in assessing their own learning needs.	A	A>B	NANB	B>A	B	Effective learning/training rests on the trainer’s use of standard, valid methods for assessing learners’ needs.
5	Client system representatives must be involved in the	A	A>B	NANB	B>A	B	It is the program developer’s responsibility to provide clients

	planning of learning/training programs						with clear and detailed plans.
6	Program administrators must plan, work and share decision-making with client system members.	A	A>B	NANB	B>A	B	Program administrators must have full responsibility and be held accountable for their plans and decisions.
7	The role of the facilitator/trainer is best seen as that of a facilitator and resource person for self-directed learners.	A	A>B	NANB	B>A	B	The role of the facilitator/trainer is to provide the most current and accurate information possible for learners.
8	Effective learning designs take into account individual differences among learners.	A	A>B	NANB	B>A	B	Effective learning designs are those that apply broadly to most or all learners.
9	Effective facilitators/trainers are able to create a variety of learning experiences for helping trainees develop self-directed learning skills.	A	A>B	NANB	B>A	B	Effective facilitators/trainers concentrate on preparing learning /training sessions that effectively convey specific content.
10	Successful learning/training designs incorporate a variety of experiential learning methods.	A	A>B	NANB	B>A	B	Successful learning/training designs are grounded in carefully developed formal presentations.

(Continued on next page)

Personal Adult Learning Style Inventory (Continued)

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	A	A	A>B	NANB	B>A	B	B
11	Client system members should be involved in developing needs assessment instruments and procedures that provide the data for program planning.	A	A>B	NANB	B>A	B	Learning/training program developers are responsible for designing and using sound needs assessment instruments and procedures to generate valid data for program planning.
12	Program administrators must involve their clients in defining, modifying and applying financial policies and practices related to learning/training programs.	A	A>B	NANB	B>A	B	Program administrators must be able to explain clearly to their clients their financial policies and practices related to learning/training programs.
13	Effective facilitators/trainers must take into account recent research findings concerning the unique characteristics of adults as learners.	A	A>B	NANB	B>A	B	Effective facilitators/trainers must use the respected, traditional learning theories as they apply to <i>all</i> learners.
14	Effective learning requires a physical and psychological climate of mutual respect,	A	A>B	NANB	B>A	B	Effective learning depends on learners recognizing and relying on the expert knowledge and

	trust, openness, support-iveness and security.						skills of the trainer.
15	It is important to help learners understand the differences between didactic instruction and self-directed learning.	A	A>B	NANB	B>A	B	Learners should concentrate on the content of learning/training rather than the method or methods of instruction.
16	Effective facilitators/trainers are able to get learners involved in the learning/training.	A	A>B	NANB	B>A	B	Effective facilitators/trainers are able to get, focus and maintain the learners' attention.
17	Client system representatives need to be involved in revising and adapting learning/training programs, based on continuing needs assessment.	A	A>B	NANB	B>A	B	Learning/training program developers must develop and use on-going needs assessment data, to revise and adapt programs to better meet client needs.
18	Program administrators must involve organizational decision-makers in interpreting and applying modern approaches to adult education and learning/training.	A	A>B	NANB	B>A	B	Program administrators must be able to explain clearly and convincingly modern approaches to adult education and learning/training to organizational policy makers.

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Personal Adult Learning Style Inventory (Continued)

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	A	A	A>B	NANB	B>A	B	B
19	Effective learning requires the facilitator/trainer to assess and control the effects that factors such as groups, organizations and cultures have on learners.	A	A>B	NANB	B>A	B	Effective learning requires the facilitator/trainer to isolate learners from the possible effects of outside factors such as groups, organizations or cultures.
20	Effective learning/training design engages the learners in a responsible self-diagnosis of their learning needs.	A	A>B	NANB	B>A	B	Effective learning/training can take place only after experts have diagnosed the real learning needs of learners.
21	Effective facilitators/trainers involve learners in planning, implementing and evaluating their own learning activities.	A	A>B	NANB	B>A	B	Effective facilitators/trainers accept responsibility for the planning, implementation and evaluation of the learning activities they direct.
22	Use of group dynamics principles and small group discussion techniques is critical for effective learning.	A	A>B	NANB	B>A	B	Effective learning centers on the one-to-one relationship between the facilitator/trainer and the learner.
23	Program developers must help design and use program planning mechanisms such as client system advisory	A	A>B	NANB	B>A	B	Effective program planning is the result of the program developer's efforts to interpret and to use the client system data they collect.

	committees, task forces and others.						
24	Program administrators must collaborate with organizational members to experiment with program innovations, jointly assessing outcomes and effectiveness.	A	A>B	NANB	B>A	B	Program administrators must take the initiative to experiment with program innovations and assess their outcomes and effectiveness.
25	In preparing a learning/training activity, the facilitator/trainer should review those theories of learning relevant for particular adult learning situations.	A	A>B	NANB	B>A	B	In preparing a learning/training activity, the facilitator/trainer should rely on certain basic assumptions about the learning process that have been proven to be generally true.
26	Effective learning/training engages learners in formulating objectives that are meaningful to them.	A	A>B	NANB	B>A	B	Effective learning/training requires that the facilitator/trainer clearly define the goals that learners are expected to attain.
27	Effective facilitators/trainers begin the learning process by engaging adult learners in self-diagnosis of their own learning needs.	A	A>B	NANB	B>A	B	Effective facilitators/trainers start by making a careful diagnosis of participant learning needs.

(Continued on next page)

Personal Adult Learning Style Inventory (Continued)

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	A	A	A>B	NANB	B>A	B	B
28	Learners must be involved in planning and developing evaluation instruments and procedures and in carrying out the evaluation of learning processes and outcomes.	A	A>B	NANB	B>A	B	Facilitators/trainers are responsible for planning and developing evaluation instruments and procedures and for carrying out evaluation of learning processes and outcomes.
29	Program developers must involve client system members in designing and using learning /training program evaluation plans.	A	A>B	NANB	B>A	B	Program developers are responsible for designing and implementing sound evaluation plans.
30	Program administrators must work with organizational members and decision makers to analyze and interpret legislation affecting organizational learning/training programs.	A	A>B	NANB	B>A	B	Program administrators are responsible for making and presenting to organizational authorities analyses of legislation that affects organizational learning/training programs.

SCORING THE INVENTORY

Directions: Circle the numbers in each column that correspond to the answers you chose on the survey (see key below) and then add down the columns. Enter the sum for each column in the box provided. You will have six scores (Subtotals). Then, add the Subtotals and place the sum in the Total box at the bottom.

- A = 5
- A>B = 4
- NANB = 3
- B>A = 2
- B = 1

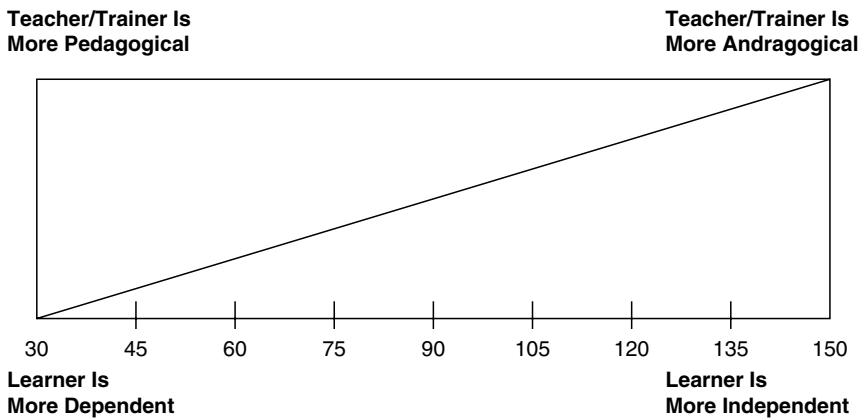
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<input type="text" value="2"/>	<input type="text" value="7"/>	<input type="text" value="12"/>	<input type="text" value="17"/>	<input type="text" value="22"/>	<input type="text" value="27"/>
5 4 3 2 1	5 4 3 2 1	5 4 3 2 1	5 4 3 2 1	5 4 3 2 1	5 4 3 2 1
<input type="text" value="3"/>	<input type="text" value="8"/>	<input type="text" value="13"/>	<input type="text" value="18"/>	<input type="text" value="21"/>	<input type="text" value="28"/>
5 4 3 2 1	5 4 3 2 1	5 4 3 2 1	5 4 3 2 1	5 4 3 2 1	5 4 3 2 1
<input type="text" value="4"/>	<input type="text" value="9"/>	<input type="text" value="14"/>	<input type="text" value="19"/>	<input type="text" value="24"/>	<input type="text" value="29"/>
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5 4 3 2 1	5 4 3 2 1	5 4 3 2 1	5 4 3 2 1	5 4 3 2 1	5 4 3 2 1
TOTAL					<input type="text"/>

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Graphing Your Results

To bring your results into sharper focus regarding your Andragogic or Pedagogic orientation, plot your results on the following graphs. Plot your Total score on the Pedagogy/Andragogy continuum below by placing an X at the appropriate point. Scores of 120-150 would suggest a stronger andragogical orientation. Scores of 60-30 would suggest a stronger pedagogical orientation.

Overall Results: *How Andragogic Am I*



Component Results: *To what extent am I andragogical in each of the six areas:*

	Pedagogically Oriented	My Scores	Andragogically Oriented
I	5-10		20-25
II	5-10		20-25
III	5-10		20-25
IV	5-10		20-25
V	5-10		20-25
VI	5-10		20-25

Place each of your six component scores in the column labeled, "My Scores." Compare your score for each component to the pedagogy/andragogy ranges.

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INTERPRETIVE GUIDE

The *Personal HRD Style Inventory* is a learning instrument designed to help you assess the assumptions that underlie your teaching/training activities. These assumptions may be useful or not useful, depending on the particular learner and the particular learning situation.

Teaching/learning assumptions may be categorized as *pedagogically* oriented or *andragogically* oriented. The body of theory and practice on which teacher-directed learning is based is often given the label “pedagogy,” from the Greek words *paid* (meaning child) and *agogos* (meaning guide or leader)—thus being defined as the art and science of teaching children.

The body of theory and practice on which self-directed learning is based is coming to be labeled *andragogy*, from the Greek word *aner* (meaning “adult”)—thus being defined as the art and science of helping adults (or, even better, maturing human beings) learn.

Traditional Learning: The Pedagogical Model

The pedagogical model is the one with which all of us have had the most experience. Teaching in our elementary schools, high schools, colleges, the military service, churches, and a variety of other institutions is largely pedagogically oriented. When we are asked to serve as instructors or prepare instruction for others, the pedagogical model comes quickly to mind and often takes control of our activities. That is easy to understand since pedagogy has dominated education and training practices since the seventh century.

Five assumptions about learners are inherent in the pedagogical model:

1. The learner is a dependent personality. The teacher/trainer is expected to take full responsibility for making the decisions about what is to be learned, how and when it should be learned, and whether it has been learned. The role of the learner is to carry out the teacher’s directions passively.
2. The learner enters into an educational activity with little experience that can be used in the learning process. The experience of the teacher/trainer is what is important. For that reason a

variety of one-way communication strategies are employed, including lectures, textbooks and manuals, and a variety of audiovisual techniques that can transmit information to the learner efficiently.

3. People are ready to learn when they are told what they have to learn in order to advance to the next grade level or achieve the next salary grade or job level.
4. People are motivated to learn primarily by external pressures from parents, teachers/trainers, employers, the consequences of failure, grades, certificates, and so on.

CONTEMPORARY LEARNING: THE ANDRAGOGICAL MODEL

During the 1960s, European adult educators coined the term *andragogy* to provide a label for a growing body of knowledge and technology in regard to adult learning. The following five assumptions underlie the andragogical model of learning:

1. The learner is self-directing. Adult learners want to take responsibility for their own lives, including the planning, implementing, and evaluating of their learning activities.
2. The learner enters an educational situation with a great deal of experience. This experience can be a valuable resource to the learner as well as to others. It needs to be valued and used in the learning process.
3. Adults are ready to learn when they perceive a need to know or do something in order to perform more effectively in some aspect of their lives. Their readiness to learn may be stimulated by helping them to assess the gaps between where they are now and where they want and need to be.
4. Adults are motivated to learn after they experience a need in their life situation. For that reason, learning needs to be problem-focused or task-centered. Adults want to apply what they have learned as quickly as possible. Learning activities need to be clearly relevant to the needs of the adult.
5. Adults are motivated to learn because of internal factors, such as self-esteem, recognition, better quality of life, greater

self-confidence, the opportunity to self-actualize, and so forth. External factors, such as pressure from authority figures, salary increases, and the like, are less important.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE MODELS FOR TEACHER/TRAINERS

A subscription to one model of learning or the other carries with it certain implications for the teacher/trainer. The basic concern of people with a pedagogical orientation is *content*. Teachers and trainers with a strong pedagogical orientation will be strongly concerned about what needs to be covered in the learning situation; how that content can be organized into manageable units; the most logical sequence for presenting these units; and the most efficient means of transmitting this content.

In contrast, the basic concern of people with an andragogical orientation is *process*. The andragogical process consists of eight elements: preparing the learners, considering the physical and psychological climate setting, involving the learners in planning for their learning, involving the learners in diagnosing their own needs for learning, involving the learners in formulating their own learning objectives, involving the learners in designing learning plans, helping the learners carry out their learning plans, and involving the learners in evaluating their own learning outcomes.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- 17.1 Taking the style inventory, how consistent are your results with what you imagined your style to be?
- 17.2 How would you like your style to grow and change in the future?