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## Handout 3-2. Introducing Design and Adult Learning Principles

**Designing** training programs is critical to the success of the program. A designer needs to have these characteristics:

- Be either an expert in the content or have the skills to draw the information out of a subject matter expert (SME).
- Have a big-picture perspective, as well as an eye for the details.
- Be both logical and creative.
- Apply adult learning principles as well as comprehend the role of a trainer.

As you can see, it takes a well-rounded person to be a successful training designer. Let's begin by exploring what it means to understand adult learning principles.

### UNDERSTAND ADULT LEARNING PRINCIPLES

Identify three things you learned in the past two months and why you learned them. List them here:

1. I learned .....  
because .....
2. I learned .....  
because .....
3. I learned .....  
because .....

What did you discover about the way you learn?

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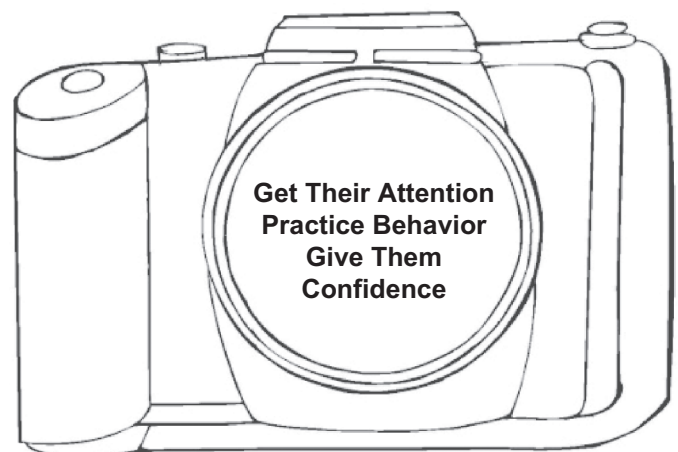
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### In Focus: Good Design ABCs



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### Handout 3-3. Malcolm Knowles and Adult Learning Principles

Malcolm Knowles is considered the father of adult learning theory in the United States. He took the topic of adult learning from theory to practice with his adult learning theory assumptions. Knowles popularized the word *andragogy* to describe the growing body of knowledge about how adults learn. First published in 1973 (and now in its third edition), his easy-to-read book, *The Adult Learner: A Neglected Species* (1984), took the topic from theoretical to practical.

Here are some things that Knowles believed about adults:

- Adults have a *need to know* why they should learn something before they invest time in a learning event. As trainers, we must ensure that learners know the purpose for training as early as possible. Participants need to know how this information and content will affect them and why they should care.
- Adults enter any learning situation with a *self-concept* of themselves as self-directing, responsible grown-ups. As trainers, we must help adults identify their needs and direct their own learning experience.
- Adults come to a learning opportunity with a wealth of *experience* and a great deal to contribute. Trainers will be more successful if they identify ways to build on and make use of adults' hard-earned experience.
- Adults have a strong *readiness to learn* those things that will help them cope with daily life effectively. Training that relates directly to situations adults face will be viewed as more relevant.
- Adults are willing to devote energy to learning those things that they believe will *help them* perform a task or solve a problem. Trainers who determine needs and interests, and then develop content in response to these needs, will be most helpful to adult learners.
- Adults are more responsive to internal *motivators*, such as increased self-esteem, than to external motivators, such as higher salaries. Trainers can ensure that this internal motivation is not blocked by barriers such as a poor self-concept or time constraints by creating a safe learning climate.

These assumptions lead to the kinds of questions participants ask themselves when entering a training session:

- Why do I need to know this?
- Will I be able to make some decisions, or are you going to recreate my grade-school memories?
- Why am I here? Why is she here? What do they think they can teach me?
- How is this going to simplify my life? How will this make my job easier?
- Do I want to learn this? How will it help me?
- Why would I want to learn this? Am I open to this information?