

Discussion 12

Analyze the e-learning case you picked up in Session 2, using the approach of adult learning theory.

After learning this chapter, it is very interesting when I related the approach of adult learning theory against my e-learning experience as well as to myself, being an adult learner. According to the e-learning case highlighted in Session 2, it was mentioned that most of the students who enrolled for the course 'IS 121' were working students or adult learners. This is because of the mode in which the course was designed, face to face and online learning. Because of the changes in technology, online educational environment is increasingly being used by adults and I feel that it would be most appropriate that it should be designed based on the needs of adult learners.

One of the models that best explained adult learning is Knowles' learning theory of andragogy, "the art and science of helping adults learn" (Clanton, 1999), (Suzuki, 2004, p.11-13). According to Knowles' the term was introduced as a learning theory that is designed to address the particular needs of adults, and it is based on the idea that there are differences in learning characteristics between children and adults. (Suzuki, 2004, p.11-13).

In analyzing my e-learning experience, I believed that many adults took advantage of the online course, primarily due to their busy schedules and the online format's convenience. Learning theories and models such as andragogy, are important for instructors to understand as they work with adults in an online environment.

At the end of the course, more adult students were able to successfully complete their course compared to first year students (fresh school leavers). Therefore, adult learners have different approach to learning from college students. This would be in line with the first assumption underlying andragogy which refers to adult learners' independent self-concept and ability to direct their own learning. Adult learners are self-directed towards goals.

If there were lot of interactions between first year students and adult learners, I think this could have reduce the number of first year students dropping out from the course. Adult students can build on their experience and knowledge and this could have been acknowledged by instructors as a learning resource. This would be related to the second assumption of adult learning models.

Most of the adult students were government employees and one reason why they choose this course because it introduces students to the study of the design and construction of information systems in commercial, scientific, and government enterprises. Therefore most of them knew what they want to learn and the program was organized towards their personal goals. They have a reason to learn that course because it is applicable to their works. This would be in line with the fourth assumption of Knowle's learning model.

I believed that some of the factors that motivated adult students towards learning include the promise of job satisfaction, self-esteem, and quality of life and this could be related to the fifth assumption of Knowles' learning model.