

## The Role of Andragogy in Support Staff Development

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**Abstract.** The paper is to yield the basic assumptions and practical elements to improve staffs training programs based on andragogic principles. Professional development of support staffs, as the ignored human resource in this study is treated as the grown individuals, who need specific attention for their development, especially the in-depth consideration of their experience is emphasized in this paper. Moreover, the study under the shade of andragogic assumptions and rules provides holistic approach to enrich training curriculum in different influential factors and components. In conclusion, universities will be benefit from this emergent approach from the nature of their workforce, which is called support staff and trainers will be aware from the characteristics of their trainees as the mature audiences.

**Keywords:** Andragogy, Support Staff, Professional Development, Training

### 1. Introduction

Continuing education has become, and will stay, a main theme in the majority of institutions [1]. Continuous learning for staffs with the objective to optimize systems is a crucial issue in competitive and ever-changing organizations [2]. Also as a result of the ever-increasing rate of technological changes – inducing by developments such as globalization and the current explosion of knowledge in different aspects - organizational learning and training capabilities are pinpointed as the key strategic factors for organizations in recent decades [3]. Universities and other higher education institutions with their strategic functions as the learning, competitive and developing organizations are not separated from the mentioned issues.

Universities propel three missions: education, research and services. The accomplishment of them strongly pertains to higher education managers' measures on macro-planning for each mission [4]. Several duties are considered for high level managers, in order to determine strategies and policies: foreseeing, recognizing and determining missions for implementing tasks and activities. universities goals setting for directing activities, policy making for implementing plans in order to achieve the aims, organizing human resources for better use of their capacities and originalities and at last controlling plans to find assurance for the accomplishment of goals and missions must be done reasonably [5]. Most policy makers and managers do best in all duties except for implementing because all planning in higher education has been launched and configured by many techniques. But if, all duties well be done, there is no guarantee for implementing the plans. So it is better the main focus assigned for the way to better implementation of activities [6].

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Nowadays, in-service education and human resource development in higher education are considered as one of the strategic way to enrich human capital and adjust systems to external changes. Therefore, the role and strategic importance of this issue has pretended in organization development and survival. Obviously, in-service education like every activity strongly pertains to meticulous and essential planning [7].

Most universities' studies contribute to missions, students and lecturers [8]. But the question is how universities can fulfill their duties without pay attention to their support staffs roles [9]. Universities support staffs are the key factor for services mission but Most of the studies ignore their essential needs especially in their training affairs. Comprehensive study to deep understanding about their needs to prepare the effective and efficient training naturally must stand at the acme of consideration. Here in our study the role of andragogy assumptions is treated as the fundamental principle for imparting support staff training process.

In developing training program for support staffs, finding the way to have efficient and effective learning is an urgent need for managers and developers. Involving the learners in the process of teaching-learning as an active element can increase the learning achievement [10].

More than one century specialists in the field of education have been accentuating the importance of andragogy to develop grown individuals learning strategies [10] [11] [12] but unfortunately, a paucity of attention has been assigned to the principles of andragogy.

Representing the assumptions of Andragogy and depicting influential elements to model professional development for support staff at universities are the purpose of the study. So the study can assist managers and developers to improve their educational status in accordance with andragogy scaffold.

## **2. Andragogy Common Assumption**

Central concept in andragogy term is individual's experience in different aspect of normal and work life. Adults utilized their experience as a touchstone to comprehend new concepts and reflect their responses for acceptance or rejection to the new learning context based on their background [10] [11] [12]. Likewise based on their experience mature people prefer to improve their knowledge as a imparting opportunity for their job and needful skills related to their careers or even some knowledge which they missed previously. In line with the mentioned reasons for adults learning they are interested to be self-directed in their learning styles and they are reluctant to be considered as child or unknown persons. Knowles indicated that mature learners anticipate being treated meritorious, respectful, and valuable character. They also do not like squeezed and stressful condition during their learning process. Knowles also added that the trainers and instructors should be measure as a facilitator and as a motivator try to make better self-concept and positive self-image for their grown learners.

Regarding to their experiences they have their own way of thinking, learning, and making decisions, sometimes they prefer to be alone or in some occasions with the groups. Thus, managers, developers, and trainers should provide the best condition for learning due to the individual differences.

## **3. Planning support staffs' training programs**

There many models for training programs but most of them are not suitable for support staffs as the adult learners. Curriculum for support staff in universities should be respect two sensitive aspects. Firstly, important state of staffs in universities as a strategic organizations for every countries, and secondly the maturity of support staff based on their solid background which is accumulated throughout their lifespan.

Frances klein [13] designed a model for curriculum development. He divided his model in three main sections in the name of levels of curriculum, elements of curriculum, and influential factors on curriculum. The model is showed in figure1.

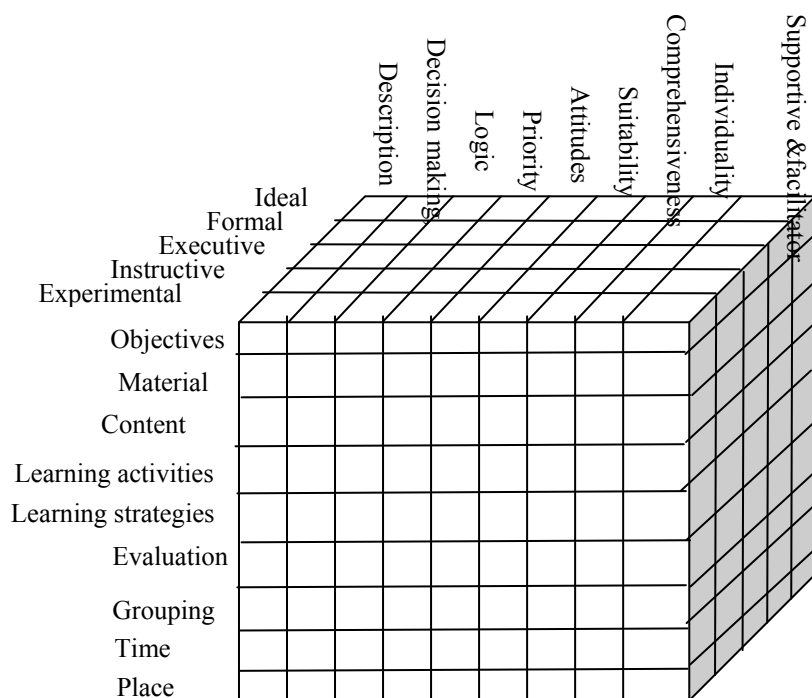


Figure1. Klein's final model of curriculum development

In second section, he indicated to nine elements; objective, material, content, learning activities, learning strategies, evaluation, grouping, time, and place. Also in the third part nine influential factors on curriculum were listed; description, decision making, logic, priority, attitudes, suitability, comprehensiveness, individuality, and supportive and facilitator factors. this model could be constructive for support staff training program. By infusing andragogy principles and assumption it would be a good model. For instance the objectives and goals should be clear enough for adult learners and other critical elements in teaching – learning process or curriculum like content evaluation, material should suitable with their ages, experience, learning styles and strategies without any stressful and delusive feeling from them. Briefly, the model can be instructive but, there is no indication to experience combination with new content and goals and also the model emphasis on grouping without any respect to learning style and preference of learners.

Even those models like Wheeler [14], Goodlad [15], Zais [16] who mentioned to the experience combination with curriculum have their own shortcoming that are not usable and should be adapted with support staff program based on andragogy rules. Here we depict wheeler's model in figure2 as a representative of abovementioned models by experts.

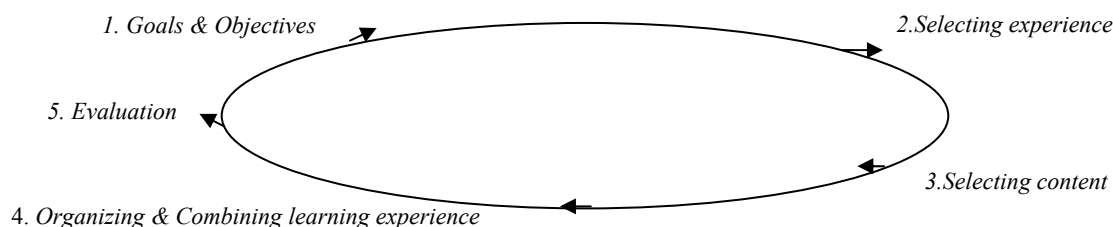


Figure2. Wheeler, d. K model for curriculum developing

The salient point in wheeler's model is the combining of learning experience. He believes learning experience can not be separated from the content of programs [14]. Developers and designers can be engaged learners with learning process by combing content with leaning experiences.

In a few words, each steps for conducting staff programs must be clear for learners and the initial competency for accomplishing the training courses should be taken into account in advance.

## 4. Conclusion

Basically, the development of universities relies on the development of human resources. Today universities are striving to seek the best ways to enhance the state of their professional development with specific training programs. The study demonstrates that generally by using different approaches models without meticulous attention to the internal sentiments and experiences of human resource and in particular support staffs which are indicated in this study as a effective resources to fulfill universities' missions and goals, all the training programs will be wane.

By putting support staffs training curriculum under the shade of andragogy assumptions and principles, revised programs would be effective and efficient. In line with the changing of the curriculum elements from vague and veiled state toward explicitly defined elements for staffs, the training programs will be more valuable and effectual.

In andragogic approach there is no place for up to down look; educators must be facilitator and guide the mature participants to achieve their actual aims. Trainers should believe that in this particular circumstance, they are not observed as experts or professionals. Trainers should be flexible and design their class based on their trainees' competencies, interests, experience, and needs. in some occasion they should be passive and sometime active. Teaching to the adult learners based on andragogic rule, are totally contingent and conditional and there no best and complete models.

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