

§2.6. COMPONENTS OF EFFECTIVE ADULT EDUCATION

Andragogy is the science of teaching adults. Although this term, in contrast to pedagogy, was introduced by the German teacher Alexander Kapp back in 1833, the approach itself was formed much later. Its creator is considered to be an American educator Malcolm Knowles. Knowles described his ideas on how to help mature people learn in the book *The Adult Learner*. Its first edition was published in 1973, then the book was repeatedly reprinted.

In *The Adult Learner*, Knowles gave an overview of existing theories of learning and teaching and spoke about the researchers who prepared the ground for the emergence of andragogy. Among them, the teacher mentioned, for example, the American education theorist Eduard Lindeman, author of the book "The Meaning of Adult Education" (*The Meaning of Adult Education*).

How does andragogy differ from pedagogy? Knowles identified several factors that should be taken into account when teaching. And then, describing the main characteristics inherent in child students, Knowles contrasted them with the traits of adult learners.

The need for knowledge. Students-children, according to Knowles, consider knowledge only as tools to help cope with academic tasks and get high grades. They have no idea how they will apply this knowledge in real life.

An adult student will not take up the study of anything until he understands why he needs it. Therefore, the first task facing a teacher working with adults is to explain to them the value of learning. For example, to show how studying will increase their productivity at work or quality of life. Even better is to create experimental conditions in which students themselves will feel the lack of knowledge that the teacher can share.

The student's idea of himself. Since the traditional teacher, according to Knowles, perceives children as dependent on him, the students themselves eventually begin to realize their subordination to the teacher. However, the older the children, the more independence they show. An adult is already fully aware of the responsibility for his own decisions and his life. Such self-awareness generates in mature people the need for others to respect their independence. Nevertheless, when a mature person is faced with the need to learn something again, he often recalls his experience of childhood addiction and, according to Knowles, "folds his hands, sits back and says, 'Teach me.'"

However, this erroneous assumption that obedience is required of him, as in childhood, soon comes into conflict with the current self-consciousness of a mature student. To overcome this discomfort, a person eventually just quits training. Therefore, Knowles advises: a teacher who wants to educate adults should first of all help them overcome the idea of a student as a dependent subject. Instead, it is worth offering a model of a student who chooses the direction of his studies himself.

Student's previous experience. The traditional teacher does not consider the personal experience of students as a starting point for learning. The experience that matters to him is his own or the experience of the textbook author. Therefore, the basis of the work is, for example, lectures and reading of literature chosen by the teacher himself, and not by the students. In andragogy, students' experience is viewed differently. Just because an adult has lived a longer life than a schoolboy, his experience is much more diverse. Moreover, it also differs from person to person. Therefore, training should help adults to show their individuality.

Group discussions, case studies, problem solving – that is, activities in which an adult student can express his point of view - will be useful here. Mutual learning also works. However, a lot of experience has a dark side. By adulthood, a person accumulates a lot of unhealthy mental habits and prejudices. The teacher should try to draw the attention of students to this and help them open up to new ideas. Such practices will be useful in this:

Clarification of values. A person ranks various values (health, family, freedom, cognition, and so on) from 1st to 10th place according to their priorities. Then he answers himself the questions whether he lives in accordance with these values; if not, why; how he can change the situation for the better.

Receptivity training. This is a psychological technique aimed at developing positive group dynamics and mutual trust. It consists of a group discussion of various topics in a safe atmosphere in which participants can freely express themselves and communicate with others, and then analyze their reactions.

Willingness to learn. This item is similar to the first one. According to Knowles, children are ready to systematically study only what, according to the teacher, will help them cope with control tasks and get the best grades.

Adults, on the other hand, are ready to study what will help them cope more successfully with problems and tasks that arise in real life. In addition, in order to increase the willingness of adults to learn, it is necessary to offer them educational tasks that correspond to their current abilities and level of development. In English-language psychology and pedagogy, they are called Developmental tasks (developmental tasks). According to Knowles, for an adult student, one of such tasks may be the development of dialectical thinking, that is, awareness of the complexity and inconsistency of the surrounding world.

Learning Focus. With the traditional approach, the training focuses on the study of individual subjects, for example geometry or Russian literature of the XX century. At the same time, children perceive learning as the acquisition of knowledge related to the subject. In andragogy, the training is focused on solving problems that will help students cope with problems in real life. New knowledge and skills with this approach are better absorbed when they are presented in the context of real life situations.

To emphasize the significance of the context, Knowles gives this example. For many years, the United States has been struggling with adult illiteracy by conducting courses in reading, writing and arithmetic. However, the students lacked motivation and many of them did not complete the training.

When the researchers began to look for the reasons for the failures, they realized that illiterate people were taught to read and write words very far from their real vocabulary. And mathematical problems did not even remotely help to cope with the difficulties that adult students faced in a store or bank. When the creators of the courses brought the tasks closer to the everyday life of the students, the results of the students improved.

Among the theories of adult learning are: andragogy, neuroscience, empirical (or experimental) learning, independent learning and transformational learning. All theories have one goal: they help to create effective corporate learning processes for adults. Adult learning theories are not just a set of terms, concepts, and ideas about how adults learn. These theories help to competently build courses at all stages — from concept creation to implementation — so that the training turns out to be as effective as possible.

Here are four reasons why developers and peddesigners simply HAVE to know the theories of adult learning:

- To create courses that meet the needs of students.
- To select learning strategies based on the actual learning context.

- To use technologies that best match learning strategies.
- To apply strategies that take into account modern learning features: digital technologies and student mobility.

Theory 1. Andragogy: emphasis on experience

The theory of andragogy is based on the characteristics of adult students, as well as the idea that adults rely on their accumulated experience in the learning process.

The theory itself was developed by Malcolm Knowles in the 1970s. According to Knowles, there are six key differences between adult learners and children:

1. The need for knowledge. Adults need to know "why" they should study.
2. Motivation. Adults are driven by internal motives. They learn when they want to learn. You will give an adult a powerful internal motivation if you convincingly answer the question "why do I need this?".
3. Desire. Adults have a desire and willingness to learn when they realize the importance of knowledge. It is important for them to understand how learning will help them change their lives for the better.
4. Foundation or experience. Adults have a wealth of experience behind them, which determines their learning. They analyze, explain, combine and create new ideas or "twist" old ones through the filter of their own experience. We, pedagogical designers, should use this experience to help them establish connections, understand the relevance of knowledge and find inspiration.
5. Independence. Adults are independent and want to be responsible for their own learning. They are independent and like to have everything under control.
6. Attitude to study. Adults learn best by doing something. For them, problem-oriented training is relevant, which they will be able to apply in their work. As part of such training, their ability to solve problems is trained and, as a result, there is confidence that they can cope with any tasks with the help of new knowledge.

Everyone has insights. These are flashes of inspiration that allow you to look at reality from a different angle. Grains of wisdom that change our attitudes in life. Deep realizations that break through established beliefs and conventions.

All these are transformational processes that take our consciousness to a new level. We should try to create such moments in training: they allow you to shake up the mind, evoke strong emotions and leave unforgettable impressions. Often such moments are able to radically change the way of thinking, point of view, attitude to the issue and patterns of behavior — that is, to launch those very "transformations".

Transformational learning theory explains how adults learn through such insights. The theory is based on the opinion that learning occurs when new knowledge is superimposed on old experience or old ideas are viewed in a new light.

There are three stages in the theory of transformational learning:

- Identification of a dilemma or crisis. We are talking about the moment when we realize that we have been holding a false opinion all this time or did not know something important. This usually pushes us to search for new information or to revise the system of thinking. To realize that we didn't know something or were wrong about something is always a crisis that takes us out of our comfort zone. Point out to students what they don't know — this will fuel their curiosity to take your course.
- Determination of personal gain. We are inspired to study by personal gain — the answer to the eternal question: "What is my interest in this matter?" From the very beginning of the course, it is important to create and maintain the right context — personal, professional or social — that will fuel the interest of students and keep them "on the hook". To motivate adults, give them the opportunity to present the future fruits of their labors.

- Critical thinking. Your students are reasonable, rational people, they have their own heads on their shoulders. Therefore, it is necessary to create moments of reflection so that they can reconsider their beliefs and views. Give people the opportunity to sort out their feelings and realize what needs to be worked on — then they will absorb knowledge with a much greater desire.

David A. Kolb identifies four stages of the experiential learning cycle:

1. Practical experience. Adults learn best outside of the usual classroom. As a result of practical training, a person acquires a powerful experience that he will not forget. Examples include kinesthetic learning (learning through simulations that require physical actions), as well as learning that elicits a strong emotional response (realistic scenarios that reveal causal relationships).

2. Reflexive observation. Adults need to constantly scroll through and comprehend their own experience — this allows us to learn lessons and gain knowledge. Therefore, after practical training, people need to be given time for reflection so that they can observe the process from the outside, analyze processes and procedures. To do this, you can use demonstrations, case studies and exercises with a clear scenario.

3. Abstract conceptualization. The secret of the success of empirical learning is that the student begins to deduce abstract concepts based on his reasoning, generalize ideas and realize their connection with reality. Develop exercises that will allow students to practice critical thinking so that they learn how to formulate concepts and procedures.

4. Active experimentation. Role-playing games, internships and other practical tasks allow students to apply their knowledge and really "learn through action". As a result of experimentation, experience is born and the cycle of empirical learning is resumed.

Place and time of the event. The place should be easily accessible – it should be easy for people to get to it and easy to find. If this condition is difficult to fulfill for some reason, detailed explanations are needed, up to the directions and numbers of transport with stops. Even within the same city, if it is large enough, it is not always easy to find a place for classes.

By time. It is best in the morning, from 10.00 or 10.30. Rushing and risking being late at rush hour is the best way to get stressed and lose a positive attitude. If the training is conducted with employees of the same institution where classes take place, then they can begin 15 minutes after the start of the working day.

Evening classes can be productive, but in this case, at the beginning it is necessary to provide a number of techniques that will reconfigure participants from the problems of the past day to training.

Weekend classes – only with high motivation.

Room. It is important to observe a certain golden mean here. The room should not be too cramped, it is fettering, not to mention sanitary standards. In excessively large rooms, the group may simply get lost, it will be difficult to create an atmosphere of a unified team. The classroom should be spacious enough to work in several groups, so that tables and chairs can move freely in it. The group should sit so that each of its members can be seen and heard by everyone. It is better not to clutter the audience with tables, and everything that the participants of the seminar should write down, prepare in advance in the form of handouts.

Psychological atmosphere. The atmosphere should be friendly first of all. And in relation to the presenter with the participants, and between the participants. There is no chief, there is no one who speaks the truth in the last instance. Everyone is a single team, united by the desire to achieve a certain goal. They (goals) can be different, the main thing is not to be directly opposite. The addition of all other vectors leads to movement in one direction.

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The composition of the participants. There are possible options. Sometimes the best result is given by a homogeneous group (professionally, age-wise, by work experience). In other cases, interesting solutions appear when looking at the problem from a completely "unprofessional, amateurish" point of view. Naive questions of a person who does not know thoroughly professional cuisine, make a professional think. If he's a professional.

Motivation and mood of the participants. The main thing is the mood of the participants to actively solve the problem together. During the training, it is important to create an appropriate atmosphere that allows the participants of the training to escape from their daily worries, overcome existing stereotypes and direct their energy to search for fresh ideas.

Comfort and safety. One of the most important requirements. Moreover, not only the physical, but also the psychological aspect is important.

Rules of work. Before starting the training, in order to create an atmosphere of cooperation and mutual assistance, it is possible to develop and adopt rules for conducting the seminar. They are developed jointly and are rather rigidly supported, first of all, by the group itself. For example, such:

- All participants of the training (including the presenter) are equal in rights to achievements and mistakes in the learning process.

- Respect the opinion of someone who studies or works next to you, creates or is just nearby.

- Each participant of the training is responsible for the learning outcome of the entire group.

- Support your partner in any situation, be ready to help him.

- Share your knowledge without regret, because the more we give, the more we get.

Operating mode. It depends on the topic, duration (one seminar or course), composition and number of the group. Breaks are mandatory both as a means of unloading and as a means of communication within the group. Especially if there is not a lot of such communication during training.

The program of a 4-hour seminar for 20 participants (groups of 5 people) can be something like this:

1. Introduction:

- Acquaintance 15-20 min.

- Expectations and fears 10 min.

- Rules of 10 min.

2. Game pause 10 min.

3. The first part:

- Theoretical introduction 30 min.

- Working out of the action module 30 min.

4. Coffee break 20 min.

5. The second part:

- Setting a task for working in groups of 15 min.

- Distribution by groups (game) 10 min.

- Work in groups of 40-50 min.

6. Coffee break 20 min

7. Presentation of the results of work in groups of 40 min.

8. Discussion of the results, reflection 20 min.

9. Summing up the results of the seminar 15 min.

Acquaintance of the participants. The acquaintance of the participants of the training is necessary not only to remember each other's names, it is enough to prepare

and distribute badges for this. Acquaintance is the first attempt to liberate the participants of the training, to set them up for relaxed creative work, to give everyone the opportunity to speak out.

There are different ways to conduct dating. You can invite each participant to introduce himself: to give his name, position and place of work, briefly describe his professional interests and existing problems. You can diversify the presentation of the participants by asking everyone some unexpected question: "Why were you called by that name?" or "Your greatest achievement last year?". Usually it immediately arouses the interest of others and helps to liberate yourself. You can divide the group into pairs and ask each participant to prepare a short story about his partner according to a pre-made plan (name, place of work, position, the biggest last success, the biggest last failure, general characteristics, etc.), and then present him to the group. In order for the acquaintance not to be delayed, it is recommended to regulate the time for preparation to five minutes, and for a speech – no more than one minute.

The "Snowball of Associations" method allows you to quickly and productively remember the names of all participants. The first one calls his name in a circle, accompanying it with some associative epithet, you can use the same letter ("lonely Olga", "active Anton", "lazy Lena", etc.). At the same time, the funnier or more unexpected the epithet, the better it is remembered. The second participant repeats the words of the previous one and calls himself, the third repeats all the previous ones and adds himself, etc. The presenter ends the acquaintance by naming the names and epithets of each participant in order.

The "Big Picture" method is quite long, but it allows you to set the right mood for the whole training. Before the start of classes, a large roll of paper (4-5 m) is rolled out on the tables shifted in the center, boxes with watercolor paints are placed, each participant is handed a brush. The participants have to draw this whole huge sheet of paper. During the drawing, each participant alternately introduces himself and answers the question: "What does he expect from this training?". After each performance, all participants move around the table one step clockwise, continuing to finish or redraw the picture. By the end of the acquaintance, the participants paint over the entire "canvas" and leave it to dry, and the training continues further. At the end of the training, each participant is given a sheet of A4 paper, from which a frame is cut out, which is superimposed on the overall picture at the request of each of the participants and selected fragments are cut out. The resulting pictures become memorable symbols of collaboration. In order to concretize the evaluation of the effectiveness of the training, you can invite its participants to write down their own assessment and wishes about their own activities in the future on the back of their fragments.

The "From associations to name" method allows you to quickly remember the names of all participants. Participants (no more than 15 people) they are sitting at a "round table". The first one calls his name in a circle, accompanying it with an associative epithet on the same letter with which the name begins (for example, "active Anna", "flirtatious Ksenia", "harsh Sergey", etc.). Usually, the funnier or more unusual the epithet, the better it is remembered. The second participant repeats the words of the previous one and calls himself, the next one repeats all the previous ones and adds himself, and so on in a circle. The most difficult task is for the presenter, who, closing the circle, repeats the names with epithets of all participants and introduces himself. This method is quite productive, as it operates on the principle of "Repetition is the mother of learning." Of course, with a large number of participants, it is very difficult to remember all the names, and there may be hitches, but you should not be afraid of this – the group will always help to name everyone. The main thing is that fun and a mood of "success" prevail in the audience.

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The "Let's get acquainted!" method allows you to get general information about the participants. Participants (10-12 people) sit in a circle and pass each other a toy. The one who has it in his hands says three sentences about himself, for example, name, hobbies, dream. After everyone has spoken, there is a performance again, but already of their neighbor on the right or left. For example: "My neighbor's name is... He loves... His dream...". The person they can't remember gets up, and the group has to guess his name from a hint from this person, for example: "My name in Greek means...".